Public Policy and Public Administration Examination
Fall 2003

Student ID#

Directions:

You have 72 hours to prepare your answers to these examination questions. Budget your time carefully, including time to think and organize, as well as rest, while preparing and writing the answers. Focus on preparing coherent, well-organized essays that not only demonstrate your mastery of the literature, but also indicate how that literature expands our collective knowledge. Answers should range from 5-8 double-spaced pages per question; please do not write more than 10 pages on any one question.

Number your pages consecutively for the entire examination.

Cite sources throughout your examination using a standard format and provide a bibliography that covers all materials used in preparing your answers.

Clearly label each answer with the number of the question you are answering.

Please put your Student ID number at the top of each page of your examination. Do not write your name anywhere on the examination.

MA Minors: please answer one question from each of the three sections, a total a 3 answers.
MA Majors: please answer a total of a total a 4 questions. One question must be chosen from each of the sections.
PhD Minors: please answer a total of a total a 4 questions. One question must be chosen from each of the sections.
PhD Majors: please answer a total of a total a 5 questions, with at least one question from each of the sections.
Part I: Theoretical Approaches

1. Write an essay on the roles played by groups of various kinds (PACs, activist, pressure, interest, and advocacy groups; NGOs) and ordinary citizens in public policy making. What are some of the tensions between undue influence by special interests and aspirations for greater public participation of many policy scholars? How might public participation be structured to make the policy process more democratic and still avoid the problem of cooptation by local elites or "agency capture"? (You may find the views of authors ranging from Skocpol to Eisner to Lowi to deLeon relevant in this regard). Be sure to define key terms like "capture" or "democratic" clearly in your answer.

1. Policy scholars have argued at length over positivist versus post-positivist approaches to policy analysis, including arguments over the proper role of techniques like cost-benefit analysis (CBA). Write an essay discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the positivist approach to policy analysis, including a discussion of CBA as a specific policy analysis tool.

1. Which leading policy theory most accurately describes the course of U.S. public policy changes in the twentieth century: Incrementalism, the Garbage Can, the Punctuated Equilibrium model, or the Advocacy Coalition framework? Support your thesis with specific examples from a policy domain of your choosing, and be sure to demonstrate your mastery of the key ideas of at least three of the four theories in your answer.

1. Drawing upon at least two historians of policy (e.g., Skocpol, Eisner, Steinmo, Thelen, Esping-Andersen, Ambler), explain why some scholars find historical institutionalist explanations for policy development so compelling. Why does this approach seem to be especially useful to scholars who are interested in comparative work? Do you see any important limitations or problems with the historical approach to understanding public policy? Be sure to draw on other sorts of explanations or analyses of policy development and their relative strengths or weaknesses versus the historical institutionalist approach in your answer.

5. Distinguish between participatory democracy and deliberative democracy. If fully embraced, what would be the implications of each for the ways that policy processes are institutionalized? What is the legitimate role of expert-based policy analysis in both participatory democracy and deliberative democracy?

6. Some argue that individual agents or people are important in explaining policy outcomes. Others emphasize the key role of groups and associations, while still others focus more on social structures and how they influence behavior. What is your view of the relative importance of these different perspectives in analyzing public policy outcomes? Apply your view to the specific question of whether policy scholars should pay greater attention to women's movements in explaining public policies? Why or why not?
Part II: Policy Research

1. Imagine you are giving advice to a new PhD student who would like to study the following policy question for her thesis: “Is the Endangered Species Act a successful public policy?” What would you tell this student to do to create a legitimate, testable research question for her Ph.D. thesis? What new questions might you suggest she answer? What methods might you suggest to help answer those questions? Be sure to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the various techniques and approaches you are suggesting in your answer.

2. While we are familiar and well-read with respect to comparative approaches to policy research, we often beg a central question about the point of such studies: how best to go about doing comparative work, given what we would like to learn. Write an essay on comparative policy research design, considering the following specific questions:
   - What sorts of insights or understandings do policy scholars hope for when they do comparative work? Feel free to lay out multiple goals.
   - How should one go about designing a comparative study of social welfare (or any other area) policies? Why would one choose one set of countries or case studies to compare rather than another? How does one justify taking a comparative approach at all?

3. In *Public Policy for Democracy*, Smith and Ingram write that “Policy analysis can contribute to an expansion of the criteria to judge the merits of public policies by focusing on questions of political and social citizenship.” Do you agree that focusing on issues of citizenship will improve policy analysis? Why or why not?

4. Several scholars suggest that we can better understand the politics of policy design if we attend to powerful and weak groups in American society, and the power of the media and policy makers to cast stakeholders in a sympathetic or hostile light, as powerful or weak (e.g., Clawson; Josephson). Offer your assessment of the utility of Ingram and Schneider’s notion of social constructions of target populations for understanding a significant policy development, such as the repeal of AFDC and design of TANF, or the passage of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act

5. What is distinctive about doing policy research in political science? How (if at all) is the idea different from the craft of policy analysis? Should policy researchers be optimistic about the actual “policy-relevance” and impact of their studies, based on prior history? What should be the appropriate role of the academic researcher in the policy process, and what steps can we take as researchers to best play that role?
Part III: Substantive Policies

1. Compare two countries from different political traditions or “families” (such as Esping-Andersen’s conservative, social democratic, liberal regimes; North vs. South; familialist vs. individualist) with regard to their approach to family policy. What are their main priorities? Why do these issues take precedence? What approaches or policy repertoires do they favor for bringing about family policy (e.g., tax policy, targeted vs. universal programs, private vs. public sector)? What are their institutional, political, social and cultural resources for bringing about family policy, and how do these shape their policies, as well as their problems or success in implementation?

2. Describe the U.S. approach to environmental policy in the post-WWII era. What strategies and kinds of policy tools have policy-makers used to address environmental problems? Has the approach changed substantially over time? Has the modern U.S. environmental policy structure largely succeeded in achieving its goals? Why or why not? Be sure to refer to specific policy examples to support your answer.

3. What has been the impact on environmental policy and environmental policy scholarship of developments over the last two decades in democratic theory and the increasing attention of political scientists to democratic practice?

4. Recently a number of feminist attacks on mainstream ways of looking at comparing welfare states have enlivened cross-national research on social welfare policy. In light of this controversy, write an essay on what accounts for the variation in the structure of welfare states across nations. Be sure to describe this variation in some detail, as well as reviewing conventional and critical explanations of how and why welfare states vary in this manner. Which of these views do you agree with, and which do you dispute in the end?
Public Policy and Public Administration Examination

Spring 2003

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PhD Majors: please answer a total of a total a 5 questions, with at least one question from each of the sections.
Part I: Theoretical Approaches

1. What are the basic criticisms of at least two schools of political economy for the traditional policy process and microanalytic approaches to policy research? Are these well founded? What does political economy offer theoretically that does, or might, lead to deeper understanding of policy institutions, processes, and development?

2. Write an essay on the roles played by groups of various kinds (PACs, and activist, pressure, interest, and advocacy groups; NGOs) and of ordinary citizens in public policy making. Is “agency capture” still an important concern for policy analysts? Why or why not? What are some of the tensions between the idea of “capture” and the democratic aspirations of many policy scholars? How should group activities and citizen participation be encouraged or dampened to make the policy process more democratic? (Be sure to explain clearly what you mean by the term “capture” and any other key terms in your answer.)

3. Policy scholars have argued at great length over positivist versus post-positivist approaches to policy analysis, including arguments over the proper role of techniques like cost-benefit analysis. Write an essay discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the positivist approach to policy analysis, including a discussion of CBA as a specific policy analysis tool. You may find Deborah Stone’s ideas regarding “The Rationality Project” useful as part of your answer (whether you find her ideas persuasive or not!)

4. Which leading policy theory seems to most accurately describe the course of U.S. public policy changes in the twentieth century: Incrementalism, the Garbage Can, the Punctuated Equilibrium model, or the Advocacy Coalition framework? Support your thesis with specific examples from a policy domain of your choosing, and be sure to demonstrate your mastery of the key ideas of at least three of the four theories in your answer.

Part II: Policy Research

1. Imagine you are giving advice to a new PhD student who would like to study the following policy question for her thesis: “Has the 1996 welfare reform act been a success?” What would you tell this student to do to create a legitimate, testable research question for her Ph.D. thesis? What new questions might you suggest she answer? What methods might you suggest to help answer those questions? Be sure to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the various techniques and approaches you are suggesting in your answer.

2. While we are familiar and well-read with respect to comparative approaches to policy research, we often beg central questions about the point of such studies, and how best to go about doing comparative work, given what we would like to learn. Please respond to the following:
• What sorts of insight or understanding do policy scholars hope for when they do comparative work?
• How should one go about designing a comparative study of social welfare (or environmental, family support, or anti-domestic violence) policies? Why would one choose one set of countries or case studies to compare rather than another? How does one justify taking a comparative approach at all?

3. In *Public Policy for Democracy*, Smith and Ingram write that “Policy analysis can contribute to an expansion of the criteria to judge the merits of public policies by focusing on questions of political and social citizenship.” Do you agree that focusing on issues of citizenship will improve policy analysis? Why or why not?

**Part III: Substantive Policies**

1. Explain and evaluate institutionalist and political culture approaches to comparative policy research with respect to a particular area of social policy, such as family support policies, anti-poverty policy, or policies aimed at protecting workers from the ravages of the market (unemployment, disability, pensions, medical coverage, and the like).

2. Compare two countries from different political traditions or “families” (such as Esping-Andersen’s conservative, social democratic, liberal regimes; North vs. South; familialist vs. individualist) with regard to their approach to family policy. What are their main priorities? Why do these issues take precedence? What approaches do they favor for bringing about family policy (e.g., tax policy, targeted vs. universal programs, private vs. public sector)? What are their institutional, political, social and cultural resources for bringing about family policy, and how do these shape their policies, as well as their problems or success in implementation?

3. Describe the U.S. approach to environmental policy. How have policy-makers here approached environmental problems? What are some of the leading policies in that approach? Has the modern U.S. environmental policy structure largely succeeded in achieving its goals? Has that structure changed substantially over time? Be sure to refer to specific policy examples in your answer.

4. What has been the impact on environmental policy and environmental policy scholarship of developments over the last two decades in democratic theory and the increasing attention of political scientists to democratic practice?

5. Recently a number of feminist attacks on canonical ways of looking at comparing welfare states have enlivened cross-national research on social welfare policy. Assess this debate, reviewing the established ways of thinking about comparing welfare states (e.g., Esping-Andersen, Ginsburg, Castles) and at least two of the feminist critics of such approaches (e.g., Lewis, Orloff, Sainsbury, Gornick and Meyers). Then offer your own views about the most useful ways to think about comparing welfare states in the early 21st century.