

Ch. 3 Policymaking
Process

Feb 27, 2006
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Agenda setting from top down

See: Table 3-2 Public Opinion on Key Policy Issues

Table 3-3 Popular Attitudes Toward Gov't Policy making

Summary - Name one example of each:

- ① Public policy differs from national opinion polls and public policy more likely to conform to elite opinion rather than mass opinion.
- ② Policy issues do not just happen. Interest groups try to prevent certain topics from becoming policy issues.
- ③ The media play major role in agenda setting.
- ④ Much policy formulation occurs outside government: Non-profit and private interests formulate government also.
- ⑤ Non-governmental leaders ^{business, finance} formulate much policy.

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- ⑥ Congress is primary instrument of policy, but Congress rules make policy changes difficult.
 - ⑦ Congress influenced by lobbyists and campaign contributors more than voters.
 - ⑧ Partisanship on rise in Congress, voting on party lines.
 - ⑨ Presidents initiate lawmaking.
Presidents are more successful in agenda when their party controls Congress.
 - ⑩ Bureaucrats implement policy and seek to expand their budgets to expand their powers.

Table 3-2 Public Opinion on Key Policy Issues

| | Text Book | | | Class | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-------|-----------|------------|
| | % For | % Against | No Opinion | % For | % Against | No Opinion |
| Death penalty for murder | 79 | 18 | 3 | 71 | 18 | 11 |
| Prayer in public schools | 73 | 25 | 2 | 33 | 52 | 15 |
| Reducing defense spending | 42 | 54 | 4 | 37 | 37 | 26 |
| Legalize marijuana | 24 | 73 | 3 | 62 | 29 | 28 |
| Abortion ban | 42 | 56 | 2 | 32 | 61 | 7 |
| Federal flat tax | 49 | 39 | 12 | 40 | 30 | 30 |

Table 3-3 Public Attitudes Toward Government Policymaking

1. How much attention do you feel the government pays to what the people think when it decides what to do?

| | Text Book | Class |
|-------------|-----------|-------|
| A good deal | 7% | 10% |
| Some | 36 | 47 |
| Not much | 54 | 40 |
| Don't know | 3 | 3 |

2. Do you think people in government understand what people like you think?

| | Text Book | Class |
|-----------------|-----------|-------|
| Very well | 2% | 3% |
| Somewhat well | 27 | 43 |
| Not that well | 33 | 40 |
| Not well at all | 35 | 13 |
| Don't know | 3 | 0 |

3. Is the government run by few big businesses or is it run for the benefit of the people?

| | Text Book | Class |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------|
| A few big interests | 75% | 48% |
| Benefit of all the people | 19 | 34 |
| Don't know | 7 | 18 |