

The reading by Bachrach and Baratz in Power and Poverty, Theory and Practice can be divided into two chapters; Decisions and Nondecisions and A Model of the Political Process. To begin they attempt a definition of 'decisions' that excludes the influence of power and instead focuses on force, influence and authority. In fact they clarify the limited role of power with reference to two important points. The first is that "every social decision involves interaction between the one of more persons seeking a given goal and the one of more persons whose compliance must be obtained" (40). As such if one party ignores the influence of power as exerted by another party, a decision will not be reached. Secondly should compliance be sought the combinations with regards to means by which compliance is sought and reasons why compliance is forthcoming are many. Essentially indicating the interconnected role of all four factors; power, influence, authority and force. The authors do concede that this approach is 'less workable' than that of Lasswell and Kaplan, who focus solely on the fact, that decisions are brought about by power. From this they do conclude, "while the decision-making frequently does involve power relationships, it very often does not" (42). In contrast they also begin a discussion of 'nondecision' making stating "it is a means by which demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are voiced" (44). The authors then go on to state that nondecision making can take many forms including; force (terrorism), power (through sanctions), invoking an existing bias in the political system (claiming a policy is socialist), and reshaping the mobilization of bias (to block challenges to existing values). In the end they

conclude that a broader focus of power allows a clearer understanding of the political behaviour of individuals and groups.

In their second chapter entitled A Model of the Political Process the authors see a model of policy merely as a useful frame of reference allowing analysis of the forces that shape policy change. Without going into extensive detail as to the steps of the model, the authors note very clearly the need to know about the impact of the outputs of the policy system. This model then becomes useful for the policy analyst in understanding the reaction specific policy development creates upon various groups. This reaction of targeted groups also comes into play with the existing structure of values in the community. This factor essentially raises the question of whether or not this policy would be allowed to continue. A potential answer as discussed by the author's relates to lines of communications between societal groups. If a certain group were essentially unaware of a certain policy they "would hardly be in a position to exercise power-authority-influence in opposition" (62). The concluding remarks are the strongest stating that as issues flow through the channel of policy choices they can directly "alter the structure and functioning of the political process" (62).

Upon reading both of these chapters I found it very interesting that they examined the multitude of factors that play a role in shaping not only decisions but the policy making process as well. Instead of focusing just on the role of power, they drew mention to other external influences. I feel that to the extent we focus only on power as the only contributor to decisions and policy we limit the scope and extent these decisions and policies encompass. This I feel is to be most noted with regards to policy choice. If one is only to look at how power within a governmental structure shapes the policies that come

to fruition we ignore the role of the community. Today's federalism has seen an increased role of non-governmental organizations, interest groups etc. and thus their influence is to be noted within the policy arena. This discussion is of course not to negate the role that power does play in shaping policy and decisions but to state simply that the authors bring up a good point when stating one should really understand power in relation to other factors such as authority, influence and force. I found throughout the reading I was also especially partial to the fact that the authors put this idea of power in a greater perspective essentially broadening its scope. This broadening and thus inclusion of other factors allows people to understand not only how decisions and policy come to be created but also their subsequent influence on various societal groups.

The second reading examined for this reading log is entitled The Legal Framework by Cotton. In this chapter, Cotton examines the dramatic involvement of environmental jurisprudence. Throughout the chapter various cases are cited to show the widespread publicity surrounding these environmental decisions. Without going into too much detail regarding the cases and the subsequent rulings of the Supreme Court judges, the conclusion of this Chapter provides a very well considered and discussion summary of the many implications of environmental law. This author explicitly states, "in today's society, environmental law touches almost all aspects of life" (55). Environmental law considerations as such are found in many other aspects of law including administrative hearings, litigation and corporate law. This growing pervasiveness of environmental law does of course have benefits, namely the increasing importance as assigned to such areas as environmental compliance. In fact this author states, "the most effective way for a company to ensure that environmental standards are being complied with is to conduct an

environmental compliance review..." (56). This review then allows environmental consultants to comprehensively review all environmental issues a company presents in every facet of production. This review then connects to the authors discussion on due diligence, which is often a common defense, stating a company did everything within its power to prevent the issue from happening, and is thus not at fault. Increased penalties as noted within the courts have thus made this defense of due diligence increasingly common. In one final point before the conclusion the author is seen to stray from the world of corporations stating, "there is more for society to gain from encouraging proactive environmental activities by businesses..." (55). This is of course to state that it is better for a business to show action then to merely increase the disclosure of information that will only increase the number of court convictions for corporate environmental offences.

I found that throughout this chapter the author directed most of his attention to the role of corporations within environmental law. He often discussed ways in which corporations must deal with environmental issues on a case-by-case basis as "there are no magic formulas" (56). Increasingly however I have felt the individual has also played a role within environmental jurisprudence. This is perhaps most noted in the area of private prosecutions, whereby an individual instead of the Crown is able to take legal action. This action of course adds to the environmental jurisprudence. However in the large scheme of things I do understand why such a large focus is placed on the corporation, as it is these large companies that are often to blame for large-scale environmental damage. As such increasing awareness within corporations of the need to understand and become involved with environmental law is imperative. That being said I felt his use of pertinent

Canadian environmental law cases really helped to illustrate the increasing pervasiveness and overall inclusion of environmental jurisprudence.

The third article as assessed for this reading long is entitled The Governmental Role in Environmental Policy by Judith McKenzie. She begins her article stating quite simply that governments in Canada at all three levels have been involved in environmental issues. Canada's federated system has meant that often tasks are delegated to the provinces, which often then also become responsibilities of the municipalities. This result of decentralization McKenzie says, "has been a patchwork quilt of programs and regulations... rather than a comprehensive approach..." (105). Of main focus to this article is then the constitutional ambiguities and jurisdictional overlap as they relate to environmental issues. With regards to jurisdictional overlap this author notes quite importantly that although the environmental policy arena can be characterized by disputes and tension, the federal and provincial governments have often times cooperated, forging successful agreements. Issues with the constitution arise mainly out of the fact the 'environment' was essentially left out. This then leaves it the responsibility of the courts to decide under the division of powers, which level of government is allowed to act. Federal governments according to McKenzie are often seen to act under the Fisheries Act, the Peace Order and Good Government (POGG) clause and from such things as international obligations. The provinces on the other hand gained increasing power after WWII with regards to resource management, pollution regulations, parks services etc. Furthering on these areas of governmental environmental jurisdiction McKenzie goes on to discuss the varying eras of policy making as a means to discuss the relationships between the two levels of government. McKenzie's concluding remarks are

perhaps the most unsettling, claiming an essential decline in Federal and Provincial attention and funding towards environmental issues and subsequent policies. In fact she states that as these issues become less salient both levels of government become increasingly vulnerable to environmental disasters such as Walkerton. In the end she shifts the readers attention back to the 'Issue Cycle Attention Model', whereby "public policy priorities changes as the public's attention shifts from one issue to another" (109), claiming it is ultimately hard to predict when the environment will emerge again as priority.

I felt McKenzie's discuss on the issues attention model to be quite pertinent especially to the Canadian political climate. As a federal system that is based heavily on regional identities, it is imperative for the different levels of government to be responsive to the public's opinions. For the environment to become priority on the governments list it may take a major catastrophe, however with regards to the environment it is viewed by many that it will be too late to act at this point. The question then becomes one of how can the environment come to be on the top of Canadian's mind especially with such shifts as we see today in the economic climate. It is interesting to note that although McKenzie talks about jurisdictional overlap and constitutional issues as contributors to failed environmental policy, she ultimately states the public's failure to draw governmental attention to this issue. In the end I found myself thinking of a point that has been brought up in many other classes, that being the fact that solving environmental issues is done over the long term. The public it appears is much more responsive to short-term immediate action, and is at this point unable to see the long-term benefits of precautionary policy.

The fourth reading for this reading log is entitled Policy Communities and Policy Networks: A Structural Approach by William D. Coleman and Grace Skogstad. This article is well structured into four sections that ultimately help to prove the main point of the importance of structures at both the meso and macro levels. It is endurance according to Coleman and Skogstad of these institutions over time that must be included in the analysis of public policy. To begin and to further develop this point the authors examine the issue of disaggregating the state. This involves two factors; state autonomy (or separation from societal interests) and state capacity (or the ability to draw on institutional resources). These two may not occur together and vary significantly across differing agencies in the same state. It is exactly this unevenness that Coleman and Skogstad feel contributes to the power of the state. Secondly Coleman and Skogstad review Sectoral Analysis and Macropolitical Institutions, in short claiming, "the overall institutional configuration of the polity will affect the policy process at the meso level, but in an indirect fashion" (19). They further solidify claims of policy making at the sectoral level by stating that these will reflect macropolitical constraints. Furthermore by claiming Canada is an adversarial polity, "conventional pressure group politics becomes the normal mode of state-society relations" (19). Thirdly Coleman and Skogstad develop this idea of conceptualizing organized interests to help support their initial hypothesis. Organized interests refer to such things as policy advocacy and participation. Logically stating that these properties present an opportunity to the state to bargain and seek consensus among organizations. This subsequently renders a "strong associational system" (23). Lastly Coleman and Skogstad explore the area of policy communities and networks. They essentially conclude that policy communities are institutions themselves,

that varying types of policy networks exist within the same policy community and that some types of policy networks are ultimately susceptible to change over time. These four areas then relate back to the structural approach taken by Coleman and Skogstad.

I personally found this structural approach to policy communities and networks to be a little bit confusing and repetitive. Although providing four areas of exploration to prove their original hypothesis, I felt one main theme to run through the entire article. Essentially they continued to say that policy communities and networks are not held constant over time, different states or even within agencies of one state. This is however an important point to note especially when studying policy creation. It becomes hard in this sense to create a tried and tested model whereby all policy can be created. Often times, and as is especially true in Canada, external non-state institutional influences play a strong role. In Canada this is of course most noted with Quebec and Aboriginal influences. I also found Coleman and Skogstad's discussion of these non-state interests to be very applicable. Policy advocacy and participation are properties through which the state is able to bargain and later seek consensus amongst the potentially competing views. Overall I felt the major point put forth in this article is defiantly of importance especially with regards to environmental policy making whereby influence from ENGO's and interest groups in the policy making area is quite large. As such this understanding of policy creation, networks, and communities is quite valid.

The fifth reading as analyzed for this reading log is entitled Business and Environmental Politics by Douglas McDonald. Overall this chapter is used to present one coherent view of the interests, strategies, and the power of business in the arena of environmental politics. The chapter itself focuses around a table that presents specific

periods of business engagement with environmental politics, and then seeks to understand the interest, strategy and power of business at a given time. First off political interest is discussed in terms of adaptive or interventionist responses to regulatory demands, concluding that policy intervention is stimulated by the severity of regulatory threat and not the internal corporate culture. The search for legitimacy is also included in the discussion of political interest claiming the search for legitimacy is another political goal for business along with the search for profitability. An important discussion is provided with the search for legitimacy. MacDonald ultimately questions whether or not legitimacy should be seen as a goal separate from or conflicting to the search for profit. Strategy is understood in each time period with regards to private and public lobbying, relations to environmentalists and legitimacy strategies. It is important to note in all three of these sub categories the over arching connection to the businesses search for legitimacy. Business seeks public support as a means of increasing legitimacy through relations with environmentalists and by paying attention to public and private lobbying pressure. Power is the final category as discussed by MacDonald. As discussed here, MacDonald claims it is hard to definitively speak of power, however understands the growing political power of environmentalists providing them with more clout in the policy making process. This factor alone has caused a change in business power since the beginning of the environmentalist movement. Overall this helps MacDonald to conclude "fluctuations in business power lead to the conclusions that the firm's own political activity (agency power) is a less important source of its power then are events and ideas outside its boundaries (inherent, or structural power)" (186). The final section in this chapter on the future provides further important points, namely the fact that although

business certainly has power to influence policy this power is limited. This then leads to the fact that the adaptive and legitimacy seeking nature of business can lead to a positive outcome however the future lies in the hands of those outside the firms, those who exert pressure and buy products that shape the direction business will follow.

“Business has certainly influenced environmental policy, but it has not fully shaped it” (187). I felt this was an important point that seemed to connect the entirety of this chapter by MacDonald. Although he discussed the change in business interest, power and strategy throughout the decades since 1950 he ultimately kept returning to the point of legitimacy as a means of business shaping environmental policy. I especially felt his conclusion on the future to be quite poignant. He was able to critically discuss business power, while at the same time understanding its unique ability to adapt to external influence. It is exactly this point that gives such hope to the environmental movement. As long as the external pressure from interest and lobby groups remains, business, as a means of retaining legitimacy, will be forced to adapt and change the direction and means through which power is exerted. This concern for legitimacy however only became a defining factor in the 1980’s when this concept of sustainable development began to take shape. Overall I completely agree with the points MacDonald is attempting to push forward and feel the means in which he has done so to be very effective. Business might not be as much of an evil as environmentalists put it out to be. In fact as long as external pressures remain, business power can potentially be a driving force in environmental change.

The final article reviewed for this reading log is to be found in the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario’s Annual Report entitled Environmental Assessment: A Vision

Lost. This article appears focused around the point that the EA system is one where the hard questions are not being asked and important decisions are not being made. This report appears to blame the EA's shortcomings on its abundant grey areas of modern bureaucracy that leave it misunderstood and misused. A new vision is then needed should everyday Ontarians wish to see movement on a sustainable path. This article begins with a discussion on what the Environmental Assessment Act (EAA) was intended to do which was essentially the betterment of the people of Ontario "by providing for the protection, conservation and wise management in Ontario of the environment" (29). It is interesting to note here the author's discussion of what actually happened under the EAA, claiming that it was not a total and utter failure. It did bring public attention to certain issues and encouraged debate that was not possible prior. With limited successes to claim, the EA underwent major reform efforts beginning in the 1990s whereby the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) began to suggest such things as an independent provincial advisory body, and improvements to involve First Nations. However as of June 2008, the MOE is unsure as to how to better integrate the EA with other provincial planning processes. Over the course of 32 years then the EAA itself barely resembles its original form. Of key concern in this article is the way in which projects are approved, as the Ministry has refused only two individual EA's. The need for certain projects then often becomes shielded from scrutiny. Furthermore, and it would appear less so in this article the EAA also appears to neglect the principle of 'betterment', discredits the consultation process and has weak monitoring, compliance and enforcement. Essentially this paper sees the necessity of the EAA, however notes it must be drastically improved.

In Ontario the EAA is the only way to avert poor decisions by questioning the fundamental need of a project before it has even began.

I felt this article was very well compiled and very well argued. Overall by discussing with the reader both the upsides and the downfalls of the EAA and subsequent EA, it is easy at the end to conclude how necessary the EAA is as long as it is improved dramatically. I also felt that I agreed on this point. Having taken an Environmental Law course I found that environmental assessment was one of the most important ways for the Ontario public to become involved in an issue, and essentially voice their concern over a certain project. However flaws in the EAA itself, such as the fact only two EA's have been refused, have meant that it is not only under utilized by the public, but that the public does not see a use to it in any sense. I found the fact that this article did not completely dismiss the necessity of the EAA to be very important. As it stands this is the only approval issuing process that looks first at the implications a project might have as opposed to dealing with poor policy decisions after the harm has been done. At this stage in the fight to protect the environment I feel it is imperative to move as quickly as possible, thus it is imperative the EA process is improved upon instead of completely disposed of. Creating another approval issuing process could potentially waste valuable time, and could also cause Ontarians to have further distrust in the Ministry of Environments capability.