Social Policy Analysis & Social Justice

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Overview – 5 Themes

1. The Construction of Issues & Policies
2. Theories Underlying the Policy Process
3. Policy Components & Analytical Frames
4. The Meaning of Social Justice for Policy
5. Social Justice in a Multicultural Society

3 Key Questions for Social Policy Development

1. How does a private trouble become a public issue? – Role of Social Construction

2. Who should bear the costs of social & economic changes? How should these costs be calculated? By whom?

3. Who deserves help? To what extent? Who must provide this help? How?

Social welfare systems & social policies are not accidental

They reflect:
1. A society's priorities and values
2. A society's ideas about:
   - Individual & social responsibility
   - Human nature & human need
   - The nature of change
   - Concepts of property & the state
   - Interpretations of the past
   - Visions of the future

SW Systems Create Assigned Roles: e.g., "Benefactor," "Helper," "Client"

These roles reflect:

1. Different concepts of need & "helping"
2. Special treatment for certain individuals and groups
3. Stigmatization of certain forms of need or dependency
4. Maintenance of established social roles
5. Existing power relationships in society
6. Ideas about race, class, gender, etc.

SW Systems Construct Private Troubles Differently from Public Issues

Private "Troubles" Are

-- Individual   -- Limited   -- Personal

-- Immediate   -- Threats to values or goals

Public "Issues" Are

-- Institutional   -- Structural   -- Historical

-- Subject to value debates

Social Construction & Social Problems

- **All reality is socially constructed - reflected in laws, customs, traditions, & values**

- **Examples: Our conceptions of**

  - **-- Race**
  - **-- Poverty**
  - **-- Mental Illness**
  - **-- Crime**

  - **-- Gender**
  - **-- Substance Abuse**
  - **-- Homelessness**
  - **-- Sexual "Deviance"**

Social Construction is a Means of Social Control

- **Creates false narratives about excluded & marginalized individuals & groups**

- **Maintains status quo by how it interprets the causes of problems & potential policy solutions**

- **It has implications for the focus of social work**

Example 1: A "Natural" Disaster (Impact of Hurricane Sandy)

Example 2: Human Made Disasters

Example 3: Personal Disasters

Key Policy Questions

1. Who is responsible for assisting victims of these different disasters? Is anyone?

2. If so, <u>what</u> are we obligated to provide?

3. Should <u>all</u> affected persons be treated equally? What factors matter?

4. Who should answer these questions? How?

"Problems" Become "Issues" Thru

1. **Socio-economic changes**

2. **Demographic changes**

3. **Unforeseen catastrophes**

4. **External threats**

5. **Dissatisfaction with the status quo**

6. **New cultural norms and expectations**

7. **Political conflict/New societal priorities**

The Importance of Framing Issues

1. **For whom is this condition a problem?**
2. **How are different groups affected?**
3. **What are our underlying assumptions?**
4. **What are the actual causes of the issue?**
5. **Who are the potential winners & losers?**
6. **Can the issue be defined differently? If so, what are the policy implications?**
7. **What are the consequences of (in)action?**
8. **What might be the unintended consequences?**

Theories Underlying the Policy Process

1. **<u>Pluralist Theories</u>:**

   -- Systems Model (input-thru put-output)

   -- Interest Group Model

   -- Incremental Model ('muddling through')

2. **<u>Conflict Theories</u>:**

   -- Participatory Model

   -- Elite Model (The "Iron Triangle")

   -- Conflict Model

Implications for Policy Practice

- **Pluralist Theory**: Working within "System"

    -- Advocacy   -- Popular Education

    -- Negotiation   -- Compromise

- **Conflict Theory**: Working outside "System"

    -- Community Mobilization -- Protest

    -- Social Movements -- Civil Disobedience

Political Issues

- **Inclusiveness: Universal or Selective**

- **Role of Government – At What Level?**

- **Feasibility of Policy Goals**

- **Policy "Trigger"**

- **"Multiplier or Ripple Effect"**

- **Relationship to Social Justice**

- **Past and Future Precedents**

- **Unintended Consequences**

Structural Issues

- **Nature of Benefits**

- **Bases of Social Allocation (Eligibility)**

- **Administration of Benefits/Services**

   - Centralization/Decentralization

   - Public/Private/Nonprofit

   - Sectarian/Non-Sectarian

- **Financing Mechanisms**

- **Effectiveness, Efficiency, & Effect**

Distributive Issues

- Who benefits from the policy or is harmed by it directly or indirectly? How? To what extent?

- Who pays the cost? How much is the cost? What type of cost (social, fiscal, other)?

- Does the policy involve a shift in power or an alteration of status and social roles?

- Is the policy intended to be <u>redistributive</u>?

Value Considerations

- **To what extent is the policy compatible with current cultural values about equity?**

- **Does the policy conform to current cultural norms of behavior (if so, where?)**

- **Is the policy compatible with the NASW *Code of Ethics*? The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*?**

Issues of Power & Influence

- **Is the policy acceptable to those in formal decision making groups?**

- **Does the policy have the support of key stakeholders?**

- **Does the policy satisfy the requirements of relevant interest groups?**

Issues re Costs & Benefits

- **Is the policy <u>reasonably effective</u> at achieving its goals and objectives?**

- **Is the policy <u>cost-effective</u> (efficient) ?**

- **Is the policy <u>efficient</u> in implementation?**

- **What is its <u>overall effect</u> (impact)?**

Effectiveness, Efficiency, & Effect

- **<u>Effectiveness</u>: Relationship of policy or organizational output to its objectives. (Does it produce what is intended?)**

- **<u>Efficiency</u>: Output/Input Ratio. (Linked to cost benefit analysis)**

- **<u>Effect</u>: Impact of a policy or program, which may go beyond goals & objectives and include <u>unintended</u> consequences**

Social Policy & Social Science: 2 Views

"The role of social science lies not in the formulation of social policy but in the measurement of its results." - Former Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan

" The task for the social scientist is to invent objectively grounded normative stories, to participate in designing programs of intervention based upon them and to test the validity of stories that others command." - Martin Rein

Who is the Population-at-Risk?
What % is Covered?

QUESTIONS

(1) How do we <u>define</u> & <u>measure</u> risk?

(2) To what extent do its <u>causes matter</u> in determining eligibility for assistance?

Is the Policy Adequate?

QUESTIONS:

1. How do we measure different needs?

2. How do we factor in cultural differences?

3. How do we factor in different expectations?
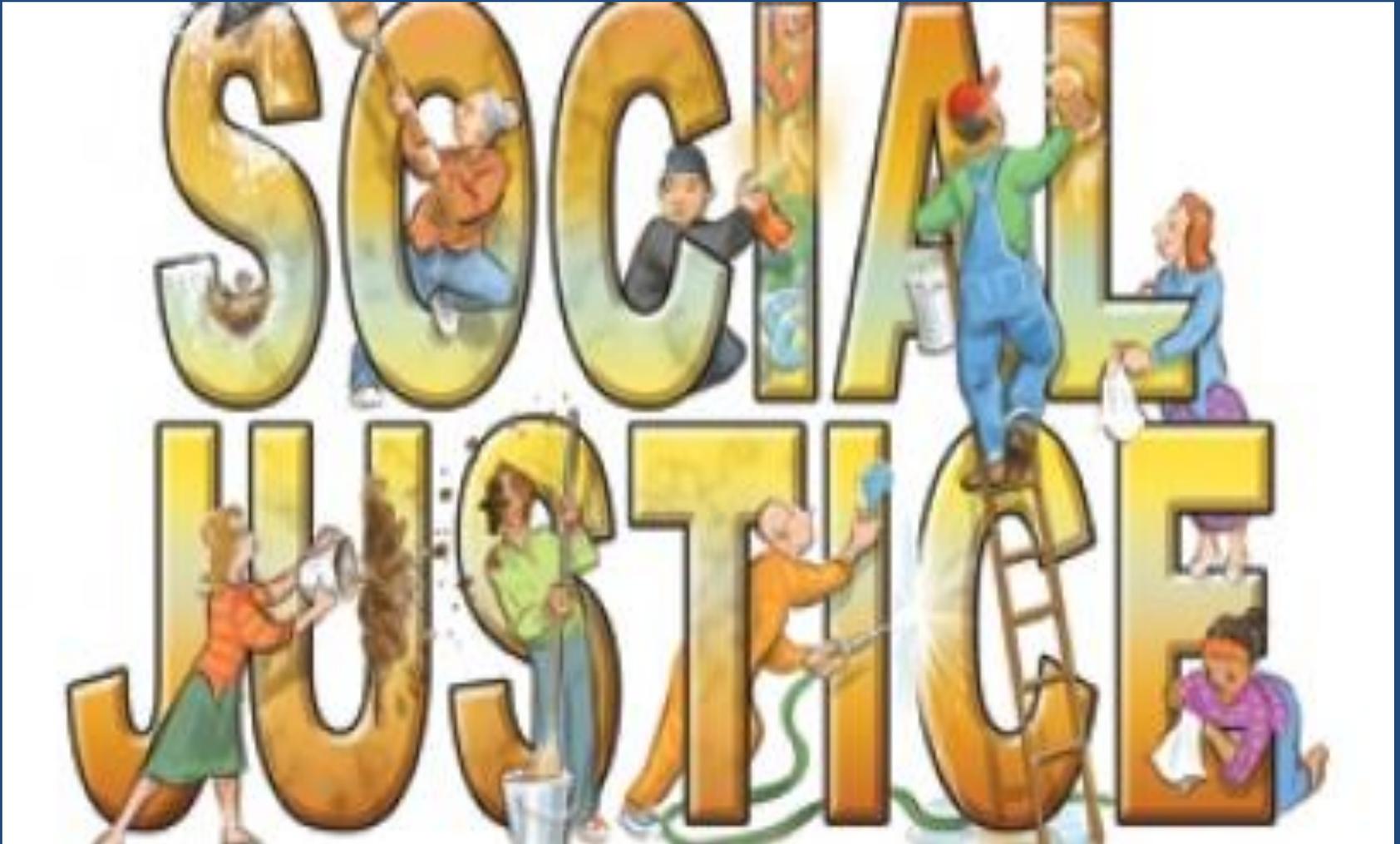
Is the Policy Equitable (Fair)?

- **Individual Equity: "You get what you pay for."**

- **Horizontal Equity: All persons in the same circumstances are treated equally regardless of other factors (e.g., past contributions).**

- **Vertical Equity: Individuals in different circumstances are treated differently.**

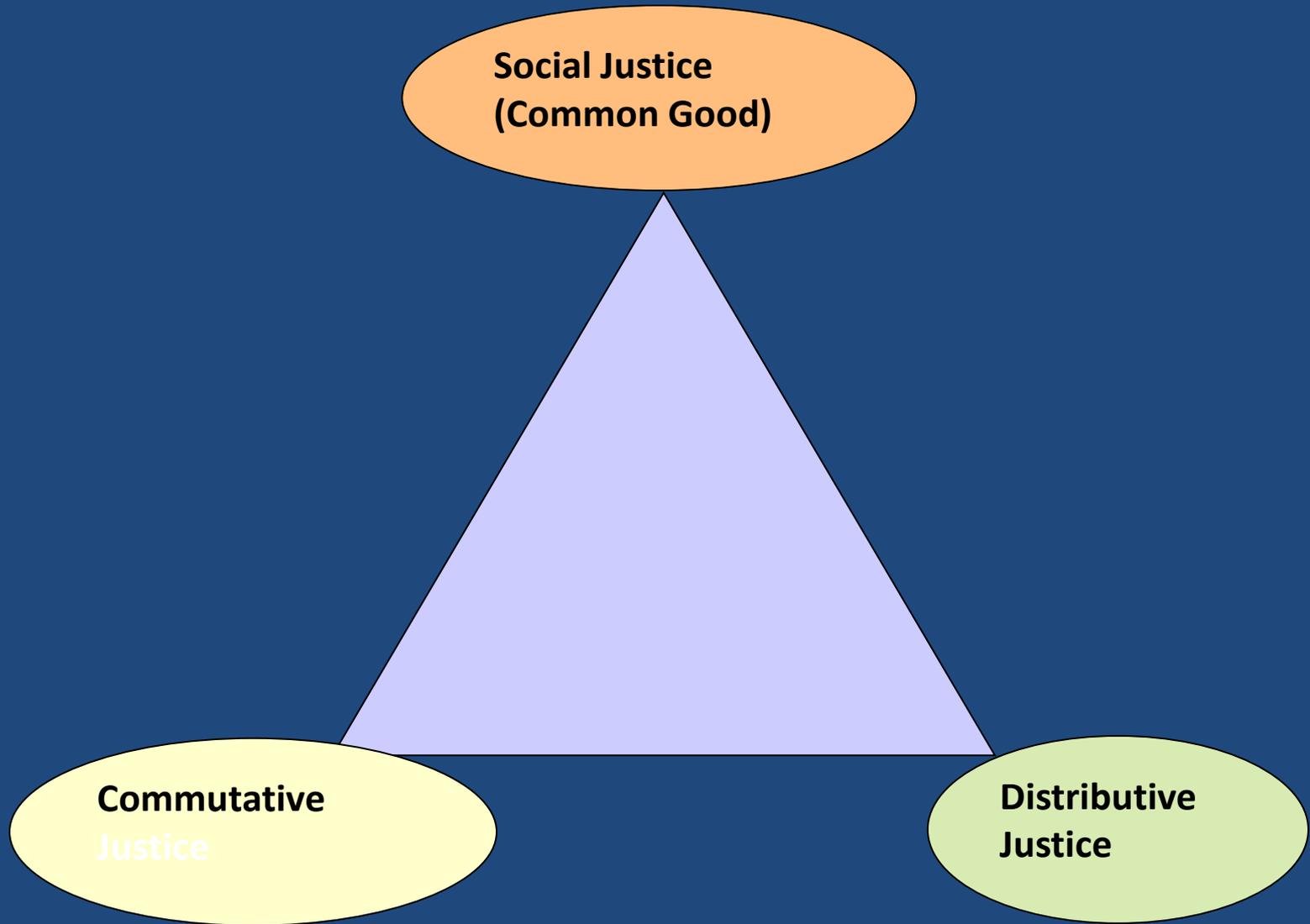**Q: How do we determine when differences exist?**

Issues re Knowledge Base of Policy

- **Is the policy based on reliable research (i.e., is it "evidence-based")?**

- **Is the policy <u>as designed</u> workable?**

- **Does a <u>viable administrative structure</u> exist to implement & evaluate the policy?**

What Does Social Justice Mean?

The 3 Sides of Justice (Maguire)

Long-Standing Assumptions About Social Justice in the U.S.

- **It requires a more egalitarian society**

- **It can be achieved in existing societal structure**

- **Social justice & freedom are complementary**

- **There is a universal definition of social justice which can be applied to all groups.**

Reality of Social Justice in U.S.

- **Different views of social justice exist in different regions and different groups**

- **They are reflected in language, policy priorities, models of service delivery, and organizational forms.**

- **SUM: Social justice in the U.S. today is an <u>evolving hybrid of diverse cultural norms</u>.**

Why Is There No Social Justice in US?

- **Façade of national unity, American exceptionalism & a focus on external "enemies" obscures the persistence of racial, gender, & social inequalities.**

- **The structure of communities hides long-standing divisions & isolates the disadvantaged.**

- **Proponents of social justice are often attacked as subversive & marginalized – including within the social work profession.**

5 Approaches to Social Justice

1. **"<u>Fair Play</u>":** Equality of opportunity (e.g., anti-discrimination laws)

2. **"<u>Fair Shares</u>":** Equality of outcomes

3. **<u>Compensation</u>** for past & present injustices (e.g., Affirmative Action)

4. **<u>Distributive Justice</u>**: Balance equality of rights with more equitable outcomes

5. **<u>Capabilities Approach</u>**: Focus on socially just processes & non-material outcomes

Persistent Debates

- **Universal vs. group-specific views**

- **Religious vs. secular views of justice**

- **Social change vs. social stability**

- **Freedom vs. equality/Ind. vs. group rights**

- **Fiscal vs. Social Costs**

Redistribution & Social Policy

1. How does the goal of redistribution relate to different perspectives on social justice?

2. What is the justification for using social policy for redistributive purposes?

3. What is/could be/should be redistributed?

4. What __methods__ are/could be/should be used for purposes of distribution & redistribution?

Justice in a Multicultural Society

1. Are social justice & multiculturalism compatible?

2. How can we reconcile diverse views of justice?

3. What values will guide policy development?

4. Who should bear the social & fiscal costs of economic & environmental changes?

5. Who is an American & deserves help?

Three 21st Century Dilemmas

1. How can we apply social justice concepts based on <u>individual rights</u> to address <u>group needs?</u>

2. How do we apply <u>universal</u> ideas about social justice to social policy when the concept has different meanings to different groups?

3. How can we achieve social justice through outmoded public and private institutions?

1: Challenge Outdated Assumptions

- **Social & cultural divisions in the U.S. & globally are far more complex than generally conceived.**

- **The expansion of social provision & political rights can not <u>by themselves</u> create a more socially just society.**

- **National governments, <u>as currently constructed</u>, can not correct problems created by a global market economy.**

- **Social and cultural diversity <u>alone</u> will not generate support for socially just policies.**

2: Move Beyond Outdated Assumptions

- **Analyze social divisions in dynamic ways. They no longer occur along a "majority-minority" axis.**

- **Make policies compatible w/new social justice paradigms.**

- **Address economic, social, political, & cultural inequalities <u>together</u>, not in policy silos**

3: Apply Specific Policy Justice Principles

- Hold vulnerable populations harmless in the allocation of scarce resources

- Emphasize mutual responsibility and common humanity

- Prioritize prevention over remediation

- Balance people's rights and needs.

- Stress multiple forms of helping & multiple points of access to services.

- Promote genuinely fair decision-making

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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