Introduction to Political Science

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Week 5: What is Good Policy?

From what policy is to what it should be

- Just: people treated the way they deserve
- Effective: producing greatest good at least cost
- What is "just"; what is "effective"?
- What if these two are in conflict?

What is just? Substantive justice

- Treat people as they deserve
- Treat everyone equally
- Contribute more, get more (what about luck?)
- Those in need get special treatment
- Does this mean justice is not a workable concept?

Procedural justice

- Arbitrary action vs. due process
- Special basic rights (which ones?)
- Overriding social needs: do ends justify means?

Effectiveness

- Are gains greater than costs?
- Is it as efficient as can possibly be?
- Any unanticipated consequences?

The Mayor of Ozzville decides to help parents raise their children. There will be money for every child.

- How to make it fair?

- What would be an effective policy? An ineffective one?

- Any unanticipated consequences?

Market vs. Government

- Market: the "invisible hand"
- Government authority: rules, laws, etc.
- Government can tweak markets or use semi-market mechanisms
- Which one is better?

Problems with the two types of mechanisms

Authority (gov-nt)

- Not optimal
- No incentives
- Not efficient
- Not flexible

Market

- Can re-enforce inequality
- Need-blind
- Cannot produce a public good
- Negative externalities
- Not enough positive externalities

FOR DISCUSSION: GOVERNMENT OR MARKET?

Group work

- How should the [institution/resource] be managed?
- By the government, by the market, both?
- Why? Justice and effectiveness
- Any positive or negative externalities?