Same but different: Conceptions and management of institutional policy in the United States, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea

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Institutional Policy Project

- How do higher education institutions conceive **policy**?
- How do higher education institutions conceive the **policy cycle**?
- How do higher education institutions **manage** institutional policy?

WHY THIS MATTERS

METHODOLOGY

Source: http://degreesearch.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/creative_education.jpg 17 August 2014

DEFINING POLICY

- Public policy = ‘anything a government chooses to do or not do’

  (Dye, 1972, p. 2)

- Policy = ‘authoritative allocation of values’ which ‘always sits at the intersection of the past, present and future, with the latter often expressed in policy texts as an imagined desired future’

  (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010, p. 44 and xi)

POLICY AS RATIONAL-PURPOSIVE CONCEPT

"[Policy is] the implicit or explicit specification of courses of purposive action being followed or to be followed in dealing with a recognised … problem or matter of concern, and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals. Policy also can be thought of as a position or stance developed in response to a problem or issue of conflict, and directed towards a particular … objective."

(Harman, 1984, p. 13)

POLICY AS MESSY *BRICOLAGE*

"National policy making is inevitably a process of *bricolage:* a matter of borrowing and copying bits and pieces of ideas from elsewhere … not infrequently flailing around for anything at all that looks as though it might work. Most policies are ramshackle, compromise, hit and miss affairs, that are reworked, tinkered with, nuanced and inflected through complex processes of influence, text production, dissemination and, ultimately, re-creation in contexts of practice" (Ball, 1998, p. 15)

POLICY CYCLE

"… policy processes generally unfold as a set of interrelated stages through which deliberations concerning some issue or problem flow in a more or less sequential fashion from being an 'input' to government deliberations to being an 'output' or subject of government action'"

(Howlett and Cashore, 2014, p. 22)

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

"[in universities] anything that requires the co-ordinated effort of the organisation in order to start is unlikely to be started. Anything that requires a co-ordinated effort of the organisation in order to be stopped is unlikely to be stopped."

(Cohen and March, 1986, p. 206)

QUESTION: WHAT DOES POLICY MEAN TO YOU?

Source: http://www.publicisdhealthcare.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Mental-Health-Policy.jpg 17 August 2014

Source: http://www.ushistory.org/betsy/images/faq3.jpg 17 August 2014

UNITED STATES CONCEPTIONS OF POLICY

- Enhance mission
- Increase efficiencies
- Mitigate risk
- Comply with, and operationalise legislation
- Authoritative source texts
- Formalities: instrument application; policy approval authorities

UNITED STATES EXAMPLE

"A University Policy is a policy with broad application throughout the University which enhances the University's mission, promotes operational efficiencies, reduces institutional risk, helps ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations, promotes ethical standards and integrity, and is approved in accordance with the procedures described in this Policy."

Source: http://us.123rf.com/450wm/shutterboythailand/shutterboythailand1404/shutterboythailand140401178/27883402-new-zealand-flag-painted-on-old-wood-texture.jpg 17 August 2014

NEW ZEALANDERS CONCEPTIONS OF POLICY

- Institutional position
- Institutional purpose, outcomes and decision-making parameters
- Authorities
- Expectations of staff and students
- Compliance with policy
- Quality assurance
- Maori and Pasifika access & participation

NEW ZEALAND EXAMPLE

"Principles that identify formal expectations of staff and students on specified University matters. Policies are formally documented and approved by Council or its delegated authority. Boundaries are defined and a framework provided within which operating procedures may be developed. Compliance is expected and non-compliance may result in censure, penalties or disciplinary action."

Source: http://www.mapsofworld.com/images/world-countries-flags/papua-new-guinea-flag.gif 17 August 2014

PNG's CONCEPTIONS OF POLICY

- Guiding document
- Achievement of country's objectives
- Institutional aims and objectives
- Link: vision and day-to-day operations
- Meet real challenges facing institutions
- Safeguard individual staff
- Institutional and personal safety

PNG's CONCEPTIONS OF POLICY

"… we are a government institution, and we are directed from the top, from the government downwards – they fund us and all that so we have to have policies, guidelines, to direct us to do what the country wants us to do to achieve the aims and objectives of the country. … So I think policy is really, to help us achieve those aims and objectives of the university, and eventually as a country as a whole."

QUESTION: WHAT DOES THE “POLICY CYCLE” MEAN TO YOU?

Source: http://www.naseeb.com/ui/6b/jb79638837db055d0ab3491080d7cbdd2a3b.jpg 17 August 2014

POLICY CYCLE STAGES

Answers	United States Response Percent (n=41)	New Zealand Response Percent (n=8)
Gain endorsement to proceed from a governing body/committee or senior officer	93%	88%
Consult faculty** at your institution	90%	75%
Consult staff at your institution	85%	100%
Consult employee/enterprise bargaining representatives	60%	83%
Monitor policy implementation	57%	100%
Consult students at your institution	5%	83%
Review policy implementation	54%	100%
Conduct research or benchmarking against other institution's equivalent policies	44%	25%
Evaluate policy implementation	42%	100%
Consult government/state legislators	15%	33%

UNITED STATES EXAMPLE

"This is the core of the problem with administrative policies at any institution of higher education in this country, and that is that, you know, the struggle between academic freedom and rules. So I mean I understand that culturally it is very, very difficult here. … I would love to be there [in Australia] where people were saying, we consider it important enough because they are checking … [to] see that we're implementing what we say we are implementing."

NEW ZEALAND EXAMPLE

"I mean monitoring and enforcing policy is hard in all universities because we are such broad disparate permissive institutions by definition and I'm sure I've visited hundreds of universities around the world, and the problems are always the same. You know, people think, it doesn't apply to them, people are never going to read a policy, let alone try and obey it. And that is the real challenge of it."

PNG EXAMPLE

"A policy cycle consists of a number of processes that are repeated at intervals of three to five years to ensure policies are relevant to current circumstances. A policy cycle is necessary to ensure policies are living documents and not written once and shelved. It may be that a policy is reviewed and no changes are considered to be required, but this still needs to be noted and approved."

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FACTORS THAT LED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF META-POLICY

Answers	United States Response Percent (n=36)	New Zealand Response Percent (n=7)
To increase transparency regarding the policy process	81%	86%
To raise awareness of the policy process in the institution	75%	71%
To embed good policy practice	75%	71%
To support the development of good policy	83%	57%
To increase accountability regarding the policy process	78%	57%
To increase consistency in policy texts	72%	29%
Directive from the institution's governing body or other position/committee	194%	14%
In response to an external authority's requirement or recommendation	19%	14%

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CATEGORIES OF POLICY & RANGE OF INSTRUMENTS

Governance policy instruments	• Policies • Procedures • Guidelines
Academic policy instruments	• Policies • Procedures • Guidelines
Administrative policy instruments	• Policies • Procedures • Guidelines

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INVOLVEMENT WITH POLICY

Answer Options	United States Response Percent (n=56)	New Zealand Response Percent (n=10)	Papua New Guinea Response Percent (n=x)
Consult staff at your institution about policy	89%	90%	75%
Draft policy	82%	80%	100%
Conduct research or benchmarking against other institution's equivalent policies	80%	80%	25%
Have custodianship of the policy endorsement and/or approval process	77%	40%	25%
Ensure that policy meets the requirements of the 'policy on policy' / 'policy framework'	77%	70%	25%
Manage the policy library	63%	50%	0%
Implement policy	61%	50%	75%
Monitor policy implementation	59%	50%	50%
Have oversight of policy	57%	30%	0%
Review policy implementation	512%	40%	25.00%
Enter policy texts in the policy library	50%	40%	0%
Evaluate policy implementation	39%	50%	25.00%
Consult students at your institution about policy	38%	50%	50%
Endorse policy	29%	20%	0%
Approve policy	16%	40%	0%

HUMAN RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Answer Options	United States Response Percent (n=33)	New Zealand Response Percent (n=5)	Papua New Guinea Response Percent (n=4)
Co-ordination of the development, endorsement and approval of policy	85%	80%	100%
Co-ordination of the amendment of policy texts	82%	80%	67%
Oversight of the implementation of the 'policy on policy' / 'policy framework'	82%	80%	75.00%
Co-ordination and conduct of consultation with policy stakeholders	82%	40%	0%
Maintenance of the policy library	76%	100%	25%
Co-ordination of the review of policy implementation	52%	50%	50%
Development and delivery of policy resources and policy-related professional development	52%	50%	100%
Co-ordination of the monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation	36%	25%	100%

VARIOUS VIEWS ABOUT POLICY

- Policy as compliance instrument:
  - US - government legislation
  - NZ - institutional policy
- Policy as equity instrument (NZ)
- Policy as instrument for the good of the country; promote personal and institutional safety (PNG)

CONSISTENCY ABOUT POLICY CYCLE

POLICY CYCLE STAGES	IDEALISED ALLOCATION OF POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES					
	Policy practitioner (general)	Policy technical expert	Policy endorser and approver*	Staff	Policy owner	Policy evaluator
Draft	✓	✓				
Consult	✓	✓		✓		
Endorse			✓			
Approve			✓			
Implement				✓	✓	
Monitor implementation					✓	✓
Evaluate implementation					✓	✓
Review implementation					✓	✓
Redraft	✓	✓				
Consult	✓	✓		✓		
Endorse			✓			
Approve			✓			
Implement				✓	✓	

POLICY AS RATIONAL-PURPOSIVE PROCESS

- Optimistic if somewhat simplistic perspective – that *having a policy* equals *having a policy implemented* [this is not true!]
- Policy processes are "messy" and loosely coupled.
- Policy practitioners (limited authority); policy implementation (devolved to 'coal face'); policy evaluation ignored.

Pervasive disconnect between:

- policy texts and policy practitioners
- policy governance
- policy implementation
- policy evaluation and review.

This dislocation impacts on ‘street level’ practices and outcomes for students, staff and communities.

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