

Reflection Journal Topic #1

What do you think the roles of interest groups are in the policymaking process? What are the positives and negatives to interest group involvement in the policymaking process? Given this comparison of positives and negatives, do you feel that interest groups should play an active part in the policymaking process?

Reflection Journal Topic #2

Sabatier (1991) is critical of the policy process/stages model, suggesting it "has outlived its usefulness and must be replaced, in large part because it is not a causal theory" (147). What in your view is the value of the policy process model in understanding public policy? Do you feel the policy process model can be improved? If yes, describe the ways in which it can be improved. If not, why do you think the policy process model does not need any changes?

Reflection Journal Topic #3

Why do you think issues that can get on the systemic agenda sometimes fail to get on the institutional agenda? Do you feel that issues that the public is highly aware of and deeply care about should always receive active and serious consideration by decision-makers? Why or why not? Name three issues you think that are currently salient in the public that are not on the institutional agenda.

Reflection Journal Topic #4

Assume you are a legislator that has a goal of reducing the dropout rate of high school students in your region. Give two potential policy alternatives that can address this problem. Assess the general costs and benefits of each alternative. If you had to pick one of the alternatives, which one would you select? Why?

Reflection Journal Topic #5

Assess the potential positive and negative consequences of an alternative setup where all measures approved by legislatures must be approved by popular vote before the measure can become a law. Given this analysis, do you think this increased popular involvement in policymaking is a viable idea?