

Week 5 Practice Questions

Public Opinion and the Media

October 6/7, 2020

Question 1 Does Saunders (2017) believe that an inexperienced principal delegates more or less credibly? Why or why not?

According to Saunders, a principal delegates *more* credibly to his agents. An receiving directions from a more experienced principal, an agent recognizes that she has an informational advantage over the principal, raising the possibility of bureaucratic drift.¹ The inexperienced principal “is also unlikely to fully grasp the complexities of policy options or ask probing questions [... thus leading the agents to] believe they have more authority.”

Question 2 What are action channels? According to Marsh (2014), how did the formal action channel in which President Obama reviewed his interagency strategy affect bargaining power of relevant bureaucratic agents?

Action channels are “regularized sets of procedures for producing government action.” Further details about the effect of using the NSC as an action channel for review are provided in Marsh.

Question 3 For each of the following descriptions, please provide (i) the appropriate term used to refer to groups based on their orientation; and (ii) an example of a politician or administrative official who can be classified in each group. For (ii), see if you can provide an example that wasn’t mentioned in class.

- A) Low MI, High CI: Doves
- B) Low CI, Low MI: Isolationists
- C) High CI, High MI: Interventionists
- D) High MI, Low CI: Hawks

¹This is simply “ the ability of an agency or other executive actors to enact outcomes different from the policies preferred by those who originally delegated power” (Epstein and O’halloran 1994).

Question 4 Please fill in the most appropriate term in the following quotation (McDougall 1997) (same answer for both blanks):

_____ rests on the conviction that most of the phenomena that threaten U.S. security are products of oppression and poverty, and that a wise foreign policy will attack causes rather than symptoms. _____ assumes that the United States possesses the power, prestige, technology, wealth, and altruism needed to reform whole nations, and that the U.S. government, having democratized Germany and Japan, rebuilt Europe, and presided over an unprecedented era of democratization and growth, knows how to uplift the poor and oppressed. Finally, it assumes that Americans want to dedicate their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to that purpose.

- A) Cooperative internationalism
- B) Global meliorism
- C) The Powell Doctrine
- D) Liberal internationalism

Question 5 What is the *ignorance challenge*, and what question is it trying to address?

Those who argue that leaders should not rely too much on public opinion or engage the public in policymaking raise the *ignorance challenge*. The ignorance challenge is the argument that the public is very simple and foreign policy is very divorced from their lives.

References

- [1] David Epstein and Sharyn O'halloran. "Administrative procedures, information, and agency discretion". In: *American Journal of Political Science* (1994), pp. 697–722.
- [2] Kevin Marsh. "Obama's surge: a bureaucratic politics analysis of the decision to order a troop surge in the Afghanistan war". In: *Foreign Policy Analysis* 10.3 (2014), pp. 265–288.
- [3] Walter A McDougall. "Back to Bedrock: The Eight Traditions of American Statecraft". In: *Foreign Aff.* 76 (1997), p. 134.
- [4] Elizabeth N Saunders. "No Substitute for Experience: Presidents, Advisers, and Information in Group Decision Making". In: *International Organization* 71.S1 (2017), S219–S247.