

## Book Reviews

R. JOSEPH MONSEN, JR., AND MARK W. CANNON. *The Makers of Public Policy: American Power Groups and Their Ideologies*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965. 355 pp.

Increasing interest in public policy decisions is revealed in both the dramatic behavior of citizens' interest groups and the proliferation of journal articles and books on public issues and the policy process. On the one hand are mounting citizen awareness and involvement in the process and, on the other, are efforts of social scientists to analyze and describe more effectively the realities of issues and processes.

In *The Makers of Public Policy*, R. Joseph Monsen, Jr., an economist in a school of business administration, and Mark W. Cannon, a political scientist, endeavor to articulate the ideologies of American power groups as a basis for understanding the motivations of citizens as they join groups in order to influence public policy.

The authors contend that ". . . the widespread ignorance of the influence of interest groups and their ideologies on public policy often handicaps reasoned policy formulation."<sup>1</sup> Hence, they have undertaken an effort to bring together in a single volume a succinct statement of the goals and ideologies of the major occupational groups which affect public policy at the national level. There are two major exceptions to this generalization: (1) one chapter is included on an ethnic group—the Negroes—who are largely dissatisfied with low occupational status, however; and (2) another chapter is included on the public school teachers who influence domestic policy at the local level.

The authors express three general hopes regarding their writing: ". . . first, that greater awareness may be gained about which groups dominate our legislative process and how they operate in the making of public policy; second, that by succinctly stating the positions and ideologies of the various major power groups in one volume it will be easier correctly to

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<sup>1</sup>Preface, p. v.

ascribe to a particular group the propaganda and arguments popularly heard regarding major domestic issues; third, that such information can raise discussion of public policy to a more rational and informed level in this country."<sup>2</sup>

The book is written somewhat as an "intelligence paper" as it reviews the ideology, organization, and techniques of the various power groups among the several major "publics." As such, it is a significant reference work. However, the authors sometimes appear to be writing for the layman and at other times for students of the political process. For example, since the appearance in the late 1930's of Pendleton Herring's two classics, *Group Representation Before Congress* and *Public Administration and the Public Interest*, it has been widely recognized by students of the political process that interest groups profoundly influence the determination of public policy in both the legislative and administrative arenas. Yet the authors make no reference to the extensive influence which their "power groups" wield upon policy determination in the administrative sphere in a volume which observes that "The makers of public policy—and their goals and ideologies—are strangely unidentified to the American public. Government decision making is not simply the congressional voting process that many suppose."<sup>3</sup>

The authors then proceed to make known the goals and ideologies of these power groups through eight well-written chapters. One chapter each is devoted to what they call the formal groups of business, labor, agriculture, Negroes, public school teachers—to which they might have added a chapter on the clergy—and the informal groups of intellectuals, civil bureaucracy, and military bureaucracy—to which they might have added a chapter on the reactionaries. The authors acknowledged that "in studying the expressed goals and ideologies of the groups, this work generally takes at face value the assertions and public statements of the groups themselves," despite "occasional camouflages."<sup>4</sup>

Throughout the work, Monsen and Cannon both imply and make explicit the notion that if the individual citizen desires to influence governmental policy, it is imperative that he join

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<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. vii.

<sup>3</sup>Chapter I, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.

groups which will give direction, purpose, and weight to the interests he espouses. The citizen ". . . must be represented by one or more of the major power groups if he is to feel any identification with society or public policy. In present American society it is membership in these groups that gives meaning to individual lives by providing common goals and values which are expressed by the groups in ideological form."<sup>5</sup>

They contend further, that since occupation is ". . . the most powerful economic thread that binds men together, the major occupational power groups discussed here and their ideologies have widely replaced religion with its theology as the major sociological institution in modern man's life."<sup>6</sup> On this point, the authors emphasize that for those who desire power, the chief way is to become one of the elite who effectively control a major group.

The entire volume is filled with quotable quotes and interesting insights. Of the eight "ideology" chapters, perhaps three of the better ones are on business, the public school teachers, and the military bureaucracy. Three other chapters especially invite quotation and comment.

Describing an emotional facet of the ideology of the intellectuals, one of their informal groups, the authors suggest that "The emotional support for Negro rights is so strong that other rights may be sacrificed in the process."<sup>7</sup>

"It is this quality of emotional involvement that helps make the majority position of the intellectuals an ideology rather than simply a consensus."<sup>8</sup> Yet earlier in the chapter the authors concluded that ". . . there is . . . sufficient political consensus among intellectuals . . . to classify them as a political community or group. . . ."<sup>9</sup>

If emotional support for a consensus becomes the rationale for the existence and description of "power groups," then this logic is negated when it comes to the chapter on farmers, among whom there are distinct cleavages rather than consensus. For example, "In the whole of the United States it would be difficult to find two organizations more opposed to each other on

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<sup>5</sup>Chapter XI, p. 329.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>7</sup>Chapter VII, p. 202.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 179.

social legislation than the Farm Bureau and the Farmers Union."<sup>10</sup>

Moving from this paradox to a bit of irony, the authors observed that it is highly interesting that the one farmer organization which has been nurtured by government, the Farm Bureau, ". . . would turn out to be ideologically the most hostile of all three farm groups to government intervention."<sup>11</sup>

The chapter on Negroes sets the present ideology in historical perspective which has led to the militancy of various groups representing the American Negro. "Strange as it seems now, in 1896 Negroes made up a majority of those registered in twenty-six parishes in the Deep South state of Louisiana. Six years later they did not comprise a majority in any parish. Stated numerically, Negro registration plummeted from 130,334 to 1,342 during this brief period. The Louisiana move to white political supremacy characterizes what took place in the rest of the South because of Negro economic dependence on the whites and judicial and legislative decisions weakening the intent of the Fourteenth Amendment."<sup>12</sup>

The oppression and deprivation which has ensued has engendered an overwhelming desire of the Negroes to be treated like men. This ". . . repudiates the notion of inherent inequality, but recognizes perhaps an environmental handicap—the environment that the Negroes want changed."<sup>13</sup>

In an otherwise excellent chapter, a comment which causes wonderment is the statement that "Negro progress in the North has taken place in a vacuum of opposition."<sup>14</sup> Undoubtedly the word "vacuum" is an inadvertence because despite some progress in the North on behalf of Negroes, there indeed has been and is opposition.

In a provocative final chapter on "How Democracy Really Works," the reader does not find out how democracy really works, but he does discover some interesting political insights. The authors develop the theory of "minority rule" as contrasted with "majority rule" as the basis for decision-making in American democracy. To support their case they cite examples of minority positions and minority elections which

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<sup>10</sup>Chapter IV, p. 118.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>12</sup>Chapter V, p. 140.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 149.

have become governmental policy. There is both reality and logic to their argument. They overlook, however, the element of consensus in the concept of what may be termed "passive majority rule" in American democracy; that is, the tacit general acceptance by the majority of the governmental policies not in conflict with their own interests, even when fabricated by a minority.

American democracy is characterized by pluralism and negotiation among contending interests. Traditional understanding of the concept of majority rule should be modified to comprehend that in a pluralistic democracy, the "will of the people" is determined and expressed by a coalition of minorities. This coalition of minorities will vary for every issue in dispute and every decision made. Each will be a transient coalition of groups. People are motivated by their interests. To make interests known and prevail, they join groups. They must act in concert, not unilaterally, if they are to succeed.

Monsen and Cannon have done a great favor to both students and laymen alike in preparing this volume. Even though there is no bibliography, every chapter contains excellent footnotes and each of the ideology chapters includes a pertinent case study which illustrates the ideology in application. All who read the book will find it fascinating reading as they discover new insights regarding the policy process in America.

Desmond L. Anderson  
Associate Dean  
School of Public Administration  
University of Southern California