Understanding the Policy Process: The Work of Henry Mintzberg

Do Henry Mintzberg’s writings make an enduring, invaluable contribution to our understanding of the contemporary public policy process? Mintzberg argues that organizations display eight structural configurations and corresponding coordinating mechanisms. Such structural configurations are shaped by a variety of contingency factors, especially power and environmental ones. Using Mintzberg’s work, eight policy modes, corresponding to structural configurations within government organizations and political systems, are identified and placed on a matrix that comprises two dimensions: standardization and centralization. Six polarities in the policy process arise from this matrix. Mintzberg’s work, the paper argues, remains of enduring value because it provides a seminal framework for a richer understanding of the current policy process, by offering a contingency theory of structures and policy modes, as well as by frank acknowledgment of the protean nature of the policy process.

Henry Mintzberg is one of the world’s most influential writers in the field of management, particularly on the topic of strategy. His influence on the study of public policy, however, has been limited. This article argues that Mintzberg’s work can also shed valuable light on the public policy process. Historically, students of public policy have paid little attention to the literature on corporate strategy. One reason for this may be that corporate strategy, unlike public policy, is not perceived to be the product of a political process that involves negotiation and bargaining between actors located in the public arena. There are grounds for doubting that this perception is valid, though. As Mintzberg (1983) observes, we may identify both an external coalition and an internal coalition as sources of influence on corporate decision making. The former comprises owners, associates such as clients, partners, competitors, and suppliers, and various publics such as the general public, local and national governments, government agencies, and interest groups, whereas the latter comprises the chief executive officer, line managers, operators, analysts, and support staff. As Mintzberg observes, corporate strategy can be the product of a political process involving the members of these coalitions.

It is true that politics generally plays a greater role in shaping public policy than it does in shaping corporate strategy, because states share power with external policy actors to a greater degree than do corporate bureaucracies. Yet this is not always the case. Authoritarian states, for example, do not willingly share power with external policy actors. In such instances, policy making is an “intraorganizational” activity if we view the state as being a single organization. Another problem with the view that public policy making is an interorganizational rather than an intraorganizational process is that the boundaries of organizations are often vague. As Collins (1988) observes, government agencies can be regarded as subparts of one large employer, the state, or as a single agency or subagency (or, in the case of the U.S. federal bureaucracy, as a sub-subagency). He notes that it is possible for organizations to permeate other organizations as well as to be linked together in organizational sets, pyramided into larger units and connected in other ways. This is particularly true of businesses that are buying and selling and competing or engaging in collusion with other businesses, as well as of governmental units, whose environment is other agencies, organized political groups, or private organizations that they regulate. Collins concludes that organization theory does not depend on the identification of strict organizational boundaries. As he notes, organizational goals often shift as result of organizational power struggles. Organizations under such conditions are more akin to loosely affiliated, independent units than they are to a single, unified entity. Collins argues that a linked set of organizations may itself be analyzed as if it were
a single organization. The principles of organization theory, then, could work just as well for a linked set of organizations as they do for a bounded unit. If this is the case, then it should be possible to apply such principles to the study of public policy as well as to the study of corporate strategy.

This article will do precisely this. It will use Mintzberg’s theory of organizational structure (1979, 1989) as its analytical framework. Mintzberg’s theory is useful for this purpose because it seeks to connect organizational structures and organizational strategies. Indeed, Mintzberg (1989) argues that organization theory may have more to offer than political science and economics in understanding a society of big organizations, because the influence of such organizations can overshadow that of conventional politics and markets. Colebatch likewise argues that “Policy is above all else about organization. ‘Policy,’ ‘politics’ and ‘management’ are all labels for ways of steering organization” (2002, 73). As he notes, although the study of policy has been grounded in perceptions of the way organizations work, the organizational dimension of public policy often is not specifically addressed in the policy literature.

Mintzberg argues that an organization is the sum total of the ways in which it divides its labor into distinct tasks and then achieves coordination among them. Six coordinating mechanisms can be identified. These are (1) mutual adjustment, (2) direct supervision, (3) standardization of work processes, (4) standardization of work outputs, (5) standardization of workers’ skills, and (6) standardization of workers’ norms. Mutual adjustment achieves the coordination of work by the simple process of informal communication. Examples include liaison devices, task forces and standing committees, integrating managers, and matrix structures. Direct supervision involves having one individual take responsibility for the work of others, issuing instructions to them and monitoring their actions. Standardization of work processes or “behavior formalization” involves imposing the means by which decisions and actions are to be carried out by specifying rules or guidelines. Standardization of work outputs occurs through “performance control,” or specifying goals and monitoring the extent to which they have been attained. Midway between behavior formalization and performance control lies “action planning.” This method of coordination imposes specific decisions and actions to be carried out at specific points in time. The standardization of workers’ skills occurs through “training,” or a process in which job-related skills and knowledge are taught. The standardization of workers’ norms, by contrast, occurs through a process of “indoctrination” in which people acquire values and beliefs.

Mintzberg argues that the use of different coordinating mechanisms gives rise to different organizational structures. Organizational structures comprise nine “design parameters” and six basic “organizational parts.” The six organizational parts are (1) the “operating core” that does the basic work of the organization; (2) the “strategic apex,” or the managers who are located at the top; (3) the “middle line,” or the managers who link the strategic apex to the operating core; (4) the “technostructure,” or the analysts who standardize the work of others; (5) the “support staff” who support the functioning of the operating core indirectly, such as research and development, cafeteria, legal council, payroll and public relations; and (6) the organization’s “ideology,” which Mintzberg labels a “force” rather than a “part,” because it is all-pervasive within organizations. “Politics” is also a force within organizations. Mintzberg does not view it as being an organizational part, though, because he sees politics as being a divisive force within organizations. If we regard politics as being a way of resolving conflict through mutual adjustment, then it, too, could be seen as a form of coordination and therefore as forming a seventh organizational part.

Mintzberg argues that an organization’s structures are shaped by 11 contingency factors that fall into four broad groupings (see column 1, table 1). These factors shape nine organizational design parameters (column 2, table 1). He argues that contingency factors, design parameters, and coordinating mechanisms fall into eight natural clusters or “configurations” (column 3, table 1). These are the simple structure, of which there are two variants: (1) the autocratic and (2) the charismatic, (3) the machine bureaucracy, (4) the professional bureaucracy, (5) the diversified organization, (6) the innovative organization, (7) the political organization, and (8) the missionary organization. These eight structural configurations correspond to eight different “modes” of strategy making (column 4, table 1). The connections between the various contingency factors, design parameters, structural configurations and policy modes are depicted in table 1. The arrows that link the four columns of this table show the causal links that exist between these four elements. Eleven contingency factors shape nine design parameters. Different combinations of contingency factors and design parameters give rise to eight structural configurations. These

Table 1: Contingency Factors, Organizational Design Parameters, Structural Configurations, and Policy Modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contingency factors</th>
<th>Design parameters</th>
<th>Structural configurations</th>
<th>Policy modes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>– age</td>
<td>Job specialization</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Expert</td>
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<tr>
<td>– size</td>
<td>Formalization</td>
<td>Missionary</td>
<td>Ideological</td>
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<tr>
<td>– hostility</td>
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<tr>
<td>– ownership</td>
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<td>– power needs</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>– culture</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical system</td>
<td>Training and</td>
<td>Political</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– regulation</td>
<td>Inductionation</td>
<td>Network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– sophistication</td>
<td>Unit grouping</td>
<td>Machine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– size</td>
<td>Unit size</td>
<td>Diversified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Planning and</td>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– stability</td>
<td>Control systems</td>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– complexity</td>
<td>Liaison devices</td>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– diversity</td>
<td>Decentralization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– hostility</td>
<td>– vertical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>– horizontal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
structural configurations in turn underlie eight corresponding policy modes.

Table 2 shows how various structural configurations correspond to certain coordinating mechanisms and organizational parts (see columns 1, 2, and 3). In each structural configuration, a different one of the coordinating mechanisms is dominant and a different part of the organization plays the most important role. Column 4 lists those elements of the political system that correspond to Mintzberg's organizational parts insofar as they display the same coordinating mechanisms and structural configurations. Column 5 lists the corresponding manifestations of policy, while column 6 lists the corresponding policy modes.

This article uses Mintzberg's ideas to identify eight different styles or "modes" of policy making and corresponding structural configurations. It shows that the two key dimensions of structure that Mintzberg identifies, namely, centralization and standardization, are shaped by a variety of power and environmental contingency factors. These factors in turn underlie different structural configurations and corresponding policy styles. The article uses examples drawn from a wide variety of political systems to demonstrate this. It concludes that Mintzberg's theory is valuable because it provides (1) a framework in which to locate and compare different theories of public policy, (2) a theory that accounts for why policy styles vary in terms of differences in structural configurations and their associated power and environmental contingency factors, and (3) a comprehensive picture of the various policy modes to which these differences in structural configurations and contingency factors give rise.

Mintzberg devised his theory of organizations in order to explain the structures that are present within bounded units such as private firms and government agencies. He did not have in mind the application of his theory to entire political systems. Yet the principles that underlie Mintzberg's theory can be applied more broadly. This is because the two underlying dimensions of structure that he identifies—standardization and centralization—are also key structural dimensions of political systems. As Hill (2005) observes, two crucial dimensions of variation in policy systems are the extent to which there is a rule framework and variations in administrative structures, especially in terms of the degree of centralization. What defines an "organization" for Mintzberg is not the presence of authority structures and clearly defined organizational boundaries but the presence of a division of labor and coordinating mechanisms. Defined in these terms, political systems are also organizations. Lindblom (1977), for example, in his survey of the world's political and economic systems, defines these as being essentially different forms of coordination. Collins (1988) likewise argues that capitalism and socialism are "super-organizations" that make up linked sets of organizations. Regarded in this way, the formulation of public policy can be viewed as an organizational process because it is the product of a process of coordination among different policy actors. "Politics" in this view is simply one type of coordination, namely, that of partisan mutual adjustment. This occurs when power in political systems is decentralized, as it is within liberal democracies. Public policy can, however, equally be the product of a command-driven process, as it is within authoritarian states. Such was the case within nearly all preindustrial states and throughout much of the world today. Historically, the formulation of public policy has not been a "political" process involving partisan mutual adjustment among various policy actors but one in which autocrats decide. Only with the rise of democracy in the last 200 years has this situation begun to change.

**Organizational Structures: Standardization and Centralization**

Mintzberg argues that standardization and centralization are the two key dimensions of organizational structure. Both of these dimensions are shaped by a variety of contingency factors. Among these, the levels of environmental "stability" and "complexity" are especially important. The former is the degree to which environments are predictable, while the latter is the degree to which they require sophisticated knowledge in order to comprehend them. We may accordingly contrast "stable" environments with "dynamic" ones and "complex" environments with "simple" ones. Different combinations of environmental stability and complexity give rise to four broad categories of organizations (see figure 1). The horizontal axis in this matrix represents the degree of standardization (which reflects the level of environmental stability),
while the vertical axis represents the degree of centralization (which reflects the level of environmental complexity). In each cell are located two of Mintzberg’s structural configurations, together with their corresponding coordinating mechanisms, policy types, and policy modes. We may distinguish expertise, ideology, politics, and authority as the primary sources of public policy. Mintzberg (1983) identifies these factors as the four major “systems of influence” within organizations. The captions “stable” and “dynamic” and “complex” and “simple” that are located above and to the left of the matrix refer to the environment. Surrounding the matrix and superimposed on it are six pairs of captions that are linked by double-headed arrows. These linked pairs represent six “polarities” in the policy process. These contrast the alternative coordinating mechanisms that are found within each cell. Mintzberg argues that his structural configurations may also be regarded as separate “forces” that coexist within organizations. The polarities represent the tensions between these contrasting forces.

The horizontal axis in this matrix contrasts bureaucratic and organic structures, whereas the vertical axis contrasts centralized and decentralized structures. Stable environments favor bureaucratic structures, whereas dynamic environments favor organic structures. This is because predictable environments allow for decisions to be standardized through the use of rules, goals, plans, training, and indoctrination. Unpredictable environments, by contrast, necessitate reliance on organic or flexible coordinating mechanisms such as direct supervision and mutual adjustment. Simple environments favor centralized structures, because they can be comprehended by a single individual and allow for decisions to be governed by centrally imposed rules and plans. By contrast, complex environments require that decisions be delegated to those who have the knowledge to comprehend them. Accordingly, organizations that employ experts and professionals typically permit them a high level of autonomy.

Levels of standardization and centralization are shaped by a variety of contingency factors in addition to environmental complexity and stability. In the case of standardization, they include organizational ownership, age, and size. In the case of centralization, they include the distribution of power resources among organizational members, the extent of their legal rights, the organization’s culture, its ownership, and the level of environmental hostility. Given that organizational structures reflect both environmental and power contingency factors, organizations may choose structures that are not called for by their environments. In such cases, structures reflect power and cultural factors such as the presence of outside control of the organization, the personal needs of its members, the fashion of the day, and the national culture.

Centralization is an attribute not only of organizations but also of political systems. For example, the degree to which power is concentrated as opposed to shared is a key dimension in studying policy network structures (Adam and Kriesi 2007). The dimension of centralization underlies such contrasts in the policy literature as those between the vertical and horizontal dimensions of policy, the elitist and pluralist models, unitary and federal states, the “top-down” and “bottom-up” models of implementation, and the notion of “strong” versus “weak” states (see table 3). The dimension of standardization underlies such contrasts as those between rationality and incrementalism, policy and administration, and anticipative and reactive policy styles.

Levels of standardization and centralization combine to yield different types of organizations. These are depicted in the four cells

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**Figure 1  Mintzberg’s Matrix and Six Polarities in the Policy Process**
Table 3 Standardization and Centralization: Key Conceptual Dichotomies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standardized</th>
<th>Nonstandardized</th>
<th>Centralized</th>
<th>Decentralized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>Horizontal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>Hierarchies</td>
<td>Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Top down</td>
<td>Bottom up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Incremental</td>
<td>Unitary</td>
<td>Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipative</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Elitist</td>
<td>Pluralist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmed</td>
<td>Nonprogrammed</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescribed</td>
<td>Discretionary</td>
<td>Strong state</td>
<td>Weak state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of figure 1. In the two lower cells, power is centralized. This can be standardized or rule governed, as in the case of rational-legal authority, or nonstandardized, as in the case of Max Weber’s traditional and charismatic types of authority. We may accordingly contrast bureaucratic authority (in the lower-left cell) and personal authority (in the lower-right cell). Weber, for example, contrasted the “imper-sonal” character of rational-legal authority with the “personal” character of both traditional and charismatic authority. Mintzberg’s simple structure corresponds to the administrative staff of traditional and charismatic authority, while his machine bureaucracy corresponds to the administrative staff of rational-legal authority. In the two upper cells of figure 1, power is decentralized. In the upper-left cell, decisions are both decentralized and standardized; the use of training and indoctrination as coordinating mechanisms allows for this to occur. The left-hand vertical polarity is accordingly one between delegation and control. This is what Mintzberg calls “vertical decentralization.” The issue of delegation is addressed in “principal–agent” theory. Fukuyama (2004) notes that one solution to the principal–agent problem is to socialize agents so as to ensure that they come to share the same goals or values as principals. Mintzberg labels this process one of “indoctrination.” Fukuyama cites as examples of such cultural control the U.S. Forest Service studied by Kaufman (1960) and the Tennessee Valley Authority studied by Selznick (1949).

Indoctrination is encountered not only within organizations but also within political systems. The best examples are totalitarian states that seek to mould their citizens’ outlooks through indoctrination and propaganda. Even citizens of democratic states undergo political indoctrination. Lindblom (1980), for example, attributes the high level of consensus on underlying policy issues in democratic nations to a process of indoctrination that is undergone by citizens at the hands of the political and business elites. Values are embodied in political ideologies. Political systems vary in terms of the extent to which ideology shapes policy making. Accordingly, we may identify a horizontal polarity between ideology (the upper-left cell) and political pragmatism (the upper-right cell). A related contrast is that drawn by Popper (1966) between the “closed society” unified by a shared, unquestioned belief system and the “open society” that encourages diverse viewpoints and debate. Within the upper-left cell, “expertise” and “ideology” are two separate sources of policy. Expertise is a skill that is acquired through training, whereas ideology embodies values and is acquired through indoctrination. This distinction can blur in reality. This is because the assumptions that underlie expertise frequently embody values and because expertise is often used for partisan purposes. Within totalitarian states, expertise and ideology can form rival bases for policy decisions. An example is the cyclical alternation of “red” and “expert” phases in the policies of Maoist China.

When training and indoctrination are used as coordinating mechanisms, decisions are based on expertise and ideology. This typically occurs in environments that are complex but predictable. In environments that are complex but unpredictable, standardizing skills and norms does not suffice to coordinate tasks. Instead, coordination must be effected through a process of mutual adjustment that allows people to respond flexibly to changes on an ad hoc basis. The presence of diversity in the values and interests of policy actors also necessitates reliance on mutual adjustment, because it means that decisions cannot be based on a single technical or ideological criterion. As Bernard Crick observes (cited in Spicer 2007), if there were unanimity in society on the great issues, politics would be unnecessary. In the presence of such disagreements, coordination can be attained in only two ways: through the use of authority to impose a solution or through mutual adjustment. In the latter case, we encounter what Crick called “politics,” which he defined as being “that solution to the problem of order which chooses conciliation rather than violence and coercion.”

Lindblom (1965) coined the term “mutual adjustment” to describe how actors can accommodate each other’s interests when they are not subject to a central authority. Lindblom argues that mutual adjustment takes two forms: partisan and nonpartisan. In the former case, actor’s interests are partly complementary and partly opposed. Mutual adjustment in this case takes the form of bargaining or negotiation. Nonpartisan mutual adjustment arises when the interests of actors are largely complementary and therefore allow for cooperation. Examples are bipartisanship and policy communities. Adam and Kriesi (2007) likewise identify conflict, bargaining, and cooperation as representing different degrees of cooperation among policy actors.

We may identify two structural configurations that correspond to politics and collaboration, respectively, as two key forms of mutual adjustment. These are what Mintzberg calls the “political organization” and the “innovative organization” (the latter is here relabeled the “network organization”). Mintzberg argues that in the former instance, there is no corresponding coordinating mechanism, because it is the fluidity of informal power marshaled to win individual issues for sectional interests that determines organizational choices. Politics in its broadest sense, however, consists not only of such conflicts but also of the means by which they can be resolved. These include procedures for bargaining, power sharing, voting, and adjudication. Defined in these terms, politics can also be a coordinating mechanism. In network organizations, coordination is accomplished through mutual adjustment and collaboration. Policy networks, for example, are characterized by decentralized power, the absence of an ability of government agents to unilaterally impose their will, and horizontal ties among actors that enable them to coordinate their actions through negotiation and consultation (Adam and Kriesi 2007). Adam and Kriesi note that an absence of sharp conflicts of interest is considered by most authors to be a precondition of network management. Collaboration is encountered within both the executive and legislative branches of government. Examples are interagency working parties and congressional committees. Bipartisanship is less common in Westminster systems than it is in U.S. government, but it can emerge when values and interests are
widely shared, as they are when a nation unites to confront a common enemy or to solve an intractable problem.

In the lower-right cell, power is centralized but nonstandardized. This combination yields what Mintzberg calls the “simple structure.” This structure typifies small organizations that are located in dynamic environments. The “autocratic” and “charismatic” organizations are variants of the simple structure. The former arises when a chief executive hoards power, whereas the latter arises when leaders have power lavished on them by their followers. We may accordingly contrast “imposition” and “negotiation” as alternative sources of policy (see the right-hand vertical polarity). Politics as a form of coordination (located in the upper-right cell) may therefore be contrasted with a variety of alternative coordinating mechanisms. These include expertise or “analysis” and ideology or the “closed society” (the dual horizontal polarity from top right to top left), rules and plans or “administration” (the diagonal polarity from the upper right to the lower left), and authority or “coercion” (the right-hand vertical polarity). These four polarities underlie the depictions of politics that are provided by Charles Lindblom, Karl Popper, Woodrow Wilson, and Bernard Crick, respectively. Politics or “partisan mutual adjustment” can also be contrasted with “collaboration” as the two alternative forms of mutual adjustment (both located in the upper-right cell). The final polarity is between expertise and authority (the diagonal polarity from the upper left to the lower right). This polarity arises in relations between civil servants and politicians and was explored by Weber. The coordinating mechanisms that Mintzberg identifies correspond to the universal and fundamental features of all political systems that are identified by Lindblom (1980). These include analysis, mutual adjustment, rules, persuasion, exchange, and authority. Hood (1983) similarly identifies persuasion, authority, organization, and treasure as “tools” of government. The first three of these tools correspond to the coordinating mechanisms of indoctrination, direct supervision, and standardization, respectively. “Treasure” is an organizational resource rather than a coordinating mechanism. It nonetheless facilitates the use of “exchange,” which is a species of mutual adjustment.

**Modes of Policy Making**

Another aspect of organizations that Mintzberg identifies is their “strategy.” He argues that strategy is the mediating force between an organization and its environment. Strategy formulation therefore involves the interpretation of the environment and the development of consistent patterns in streams of organizational decisions (strategies) to deal with it. This task is primarily the responsibility of the strategic apex. Public policies likewise reflect interpretations of policy issues and are ideally consistent (Colebatch 2002). Mintzberg notes that strategy corresponds to what the literature on government calls “policy.” Mintzberg (1973) identifies three “modes” of strategy making, namely, the planning, adaptive, and entrepreneurial, that correspond to three structural configurations. The planning mode is characterized by a systematic, stepwise process of comprehensive analysis that seeks to integrate strategies and decisions. It corresponds to the rational comprehensive model of policy making and to machine bureaucracy and the diversified organization. The planning mode arises when environments are stable and predictable and when organizations are large enough to afford the costs of formal analysis. Mintzberg argues that the planning mode tends to characterize government agencies that have clear, apolitical mandates.

The second mode of strategy making is the “adaptive” mode. It is characterized by an absence of clear goals because of a division of power and bargaining among different groups, a “reactive” focus on existing problems rather than a “proactive” search for new opportunities, incremental or serial decision making, and disjointed decisions. It tends to arise when the organization faces a complex, dynamic environment and a divided coalition of influence forces. It corresponds to both the innovative or “network” configuration and the political configuration. The third mode of strategy making is the “entrepreneurial.” This mode is characterized by an active search for new opportunities, centralized power and visionary guidance, large, bold decisions, and the pursuit of growth as a goal. It tends to arise when strategy-making authority rests with one powerful individual, when organizations are small and/or young, and when organizations are in trouble. Mintzberg argues that a governmental body with a powerful leader who has a strong mandate fits these conditions. He notes that the entrepreneurial mode is often found in conjunction with charismatic leadership. The entrepreneurial mode corresponds to the “simple structure.” Simple structures are typically found at the strategic apex. A typical example in government is a powerful chief executive who is surrounded by a small coterie of trusted advisors.

Mintzberg and Waters (1985) identify a number of additional strategy modes, namely, the process, ideological, umbrella, unconnected, consensus, and imposed. Table 4 identifies eight policy modes based on their work. The adaptive mode here has been split into two modes: the “political” and the “collaborative.” The former corresponds to the political structure, while the latter corresponds to the network structure. The entrepreneurial mode has likewise been split into two modes: the “autocratic” and the “visionary.” These correspond to the autocratic and charismatic structures, respectively. Two additional strategy modes presented in table 4 are the “expert” and the “ideological.” The former corresponds to professional bureaucracy, while the latter corresponds to the missionary organization. Table 4 therefore identifies eight modes of policy making and corresponding structural configurations.

The eight policy modes identified here partly correspond to the four “governance types” that are identified by Considine and Lewis (2003). These are the procedural, corporate, market, and network forms of bureaucracy. Procedural bureaucracy relies on rules; corporate bureaucracy relies on targets, while network bureaucracy relies on coproduction. These three governance types correspond to the procedural, planning, and collaborative modes, respectively. Market bureaucracy relies on quasi-markets and does not correspond to any of the eight policy modes identified here. The market secures mutual adjustment by relying on price signals rather than on collaboration.
Policy style

Manifestation of policy

Criterion of valid policy

Basis of decisions

Character of decisions

Criterion of valid policy

Policy style

Deliberate and emergent

Expert judgment

Theorical

Proficiency

Deliberate

Attributes of Modes

Deliberate and emergent

Table 4 Eight Policy Modes Compared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of Modes</th>
<th>EXPERT</th>
<th>IDEOLOGICAL</th>
<th>POLITICAL</th>
<th>COLLABORATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size of moves</td>
<td>Incremental</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>Incremental</td>
<td>Incremental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation between decisions</td>
<td>Disjointed</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>Disjointed</td>
<td>Disjointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of flexibility</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of decisions</td>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>Bargaining</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character of decisions</td>
<td>Theoretical</td>
<td>Doctrinaire</td>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>Accommodative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manifestation of policy</td>
<td>Expert judgment</td>
<td>Ideological stance</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
<td>Consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy style</td>
<td>Deliberate and emergent</td>
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<td>A compromise</td>
<td>A consensus</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Attributes of Modes</th>
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<th>AUTOCRATIC</th>
<th>VISIONARY</th>
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<td>Varied</td>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>Bold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation between decisions</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>Loosely coupled</td>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of decisions</td>
<td>Rules and precedents</td>
<td>Goals and plans</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Leader's vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character of decisions</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Predictable</td>
<td>Capricious</td>
<td>Visionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion of valid policy</td>
<td>Rule conformity</td>
<td>Goal attainment</td>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manifestation of policy</td>
<td>Rules and laws</td>
<td>Goals and plans</td>
<td>A command</td>
<td>A vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy style</td>
<td>Deliberate</td>
<td>Deliberate and emergent</td>
<td>Deliberate and emergent</td>
<td>Deliberate and emergent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

or bargaining. A “market mode” and “market structure” could therefore be identified in addition to the eight policy modes and corresponding structures presented in Table 4.

The expert mode arises when power is decentralized to skilled professionals. Mintzberg depicts the process of strategy making under such conditions as being bottom up and disjointed, because power is diffused and decentralized. Indeed, he maintains that the notion of strategy loses a good deal of its meaning under these conditions. The expert mode is analytical but disjointed. This is because when training is used to coordinate tasks, decisions tend to be based on expertise. Strategy under these conditions tends to emerge from the actions that are taken by individual professionals and tends to emanate upward from the bottom of organizations rather than flowing downward from the top. The expert mode corresponds to what Mintzberg and Waters call the “unconnected strategy.” Such strategies arise when a part of the organization that enjoys considerable discretion is able to create strategy without being subject to central direction or control by the wider organization. They note that unconnected strategies typify organizations of experts. The expert mode is chiefl y encountered in two parts of government: among policy advisors located at the strategic apex and among professionals who work as street-level bureaucrats in the operating core. The former shape policy when they advise chief executives, whereas the latter shape policy when they exercise discretion during program delivery. Senior officials who provide policy advice resemble professionals, because they are experts who exercise high levels of discretion when making complex judgments. This enables them to create policy from the bottom up. This situation is especially likely to arise if, as Weber observed, politicians fail to provide direction to such officials. He argued that in the absence of such central direction, disjointed policy making or “satrapic” conflicts between departments typically arise. Independent central banks, for example, can take decisions on interest rates that conflict with the strategies that politicians have for reelection. The expert mode is theoretical, integrated, and moderately flexible, because although the decision making of professionals is standardized by virtue of their professional training, they must exercise discretion when judging complex situations.

The second policy mode is the ideological. It corresponds to indoctrination as a coordinating mechanism and to the missionary structure. Policy in the ideological mode is norm or value based, integrated, inflexible, and doctrinaire. This mode is best exemplified by what Etzioni (1961) calls “normative organizations,” such as religious organizations and political parties. Historically, socialist parties have experienced a conflict between remaining faithful to their ideological principles and compromising them by yielding to the demands of political pragmatism. This conflict was prefigured in the history of Christianity in what German sociologist and historian Ernst Troeltsch called the problem of “The Church and the ‘World.’” Troeltsch points out that the central ideals and values of Christianity cannot be realized within this world apart from compromise, and therefore the history of Christianity “becomes the story of a constantly renewed search for this compromise and a fresh opposition to this spirit of compromise” (cited in O’Dea and O’Dea-Aviad 1983, 82). O’Dea and O’Dea-Aviad note that a similar pattern can be discerned in other religious movements and, indeed, in all political movements of a quasi-religious kind involving utopian aspirations. Under Deng Xiaoping, for example, China abandoned Maoist ideology as the foundation of its economic policies in favor of pragmatism.

The dominant theories of public policy, which contrast rationality and incrementalism, tend to overlook the ideological mode. As Hill (2005) observes, the most significant challenge to incrementalism has come not from administrator-dominated “rational” decision processes but from those whose ideological commitments lead them to demand bold steps. Examples are the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution in Maoist China and Thatcherism in the United Kingdom. The neoconservative doctrine of preventive war likewise supplant incrementalism in U.S. foreign policy in the aftermath of 9/11. Mintzberg argues that the different modes of strategy making can form hybrids. As he notes, few organizations rely on a pure mode. For example, totalitarian states typically combine the ideological, autocratic, and visionary modes. Glover (2001) argues that policy making in Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, and Maoist China was characterized by grandiosity, rigidity, and the centrality of belief. As Kershaw (2007) observes, the decision
to initiate the Holocaust was driven by Nazi ideology and Hitler’s sense of a personal “mission” to eliminate the Jews. The attributes identified by Glover also characterize the policies that derive from contemporary ideologies such as neocorporatism and Islamism.

For example, Halper and Clarke (2005) argue that neocorporatives have substituted a rigid, ideological approach to American foreign policy that is overly ambitious, risky, and adventurous for one that was interest based, pragmatic, consensus seeking, and risk conscious. Whereas neocorporatives yearn to democratize the Middle East by using military force, Islamists such as Osama bin Laden dream of restoring the caliphate and securing the global triumph of Islam by conducting terrorist attacks on infidels.

The third policy mode is the political. It largely corresponds to what Mintzberg calls the adaptive mode. The need for adaptation arises when environments are both dynamic and complex. As Schlagler (2007) observes, policy environments are typically characterized by uncertainty and complexity. Coordination in such instances is best accomplished through a process of mutual adjustment rather than through reliance on expertise, ideology, or authority. In addition to environmental uncertainty and complexity, the presence of diverse values and interests among policy actors also necessitates reliance on mutual adjustment. As Lindblom (1980) has noted, the need for politics in the policy process arises from the presence of a diversity of interests and values in society, the fallibility of analysis, and the inability of a purely analytic solution to the problem of how to formulate the policy problem. The political mode has been extensively analyzed by writers such as Lindblom, Sabatier, and Kingdon.

Policy making in such instances involves dispersed power, conflict, disjuncted decision making, and bargaining. Accordingly, we find that the political mode is the dominant policy mode in pluralist democracies. It is not, however, the only policy mode that is present here, as authority (in both its personal and impersonal forms), expertise, and ideology also shape public policy within democracies. As Colebatch (2002) observes, policy as a concept is characterized by three key attributes, namely, authority, expertise, and order, in addition to that of politics.

The fourth policy mode is the “collaborative.” It corresponds to the network structure and to what Mintzberg and Waters call the “consensus” strategy. Networks tend to yield policies that are incremental, disjointed, flexible, accommodative, and collaborative. Many writers have drawn attention to the rise of “policy networks” as a method of policy coordination in modern states. For example, Rhodes maintains that “governance” or “self-organizing, interorganizational networks” (1997, 219) possessing interdependence caused by the need to exchange resources, continuing interactions between network members, game-like interactions rooted in trust and regulated by rules of the game, and a significant degree of autonomy from the state have emerged as a key governing structure alongside markets and hierarchies. He maintains that “[i]f there is one phrase that captures the nature of networks management, it is ‘mutual adjustment.’” Whereas markets involve “low-trust” economic exchange, networks involve “high-trust” social exchange (Alford 2002). Fukuyama (1999) likewise defines a network as being a moral relationship of trust or a form of social capital. As advocacy coalition theory observes, shared beliefs facilitate collaboration among policy actors. Dunleavy (1991) similarly maintains that shared beliefs based on professional training underlie “ideological corporatism,” because they create ideological cohesion in policy communities. As Mintzberg (1989) observes, ideology underlies organizational cooperation. Fukuyama (1995) likewise argues that shared cultural norms can facilitate collaboration among economic actors.

The fifth and sixth policy modes are the “procedural” and “planning.” The former arises when organizations rely on rules to coordinate tasks, whereas the latter arises when they rely on planning to do so. Mintzberg and Waters (1985), for example, identify the “process strategy” as one in which leadership controls the process of strategy making rather than its content. An example is the specification of procedures. Within government, the chief coordinating mechanism has historically been the standardization of behavior (rules) rather than the standardization of outputs (goals). Considine and Lewis (2003), for example, distinguish a “procedural” type of governance that relies on rules from a “corporate” type based on plans and target setting. The procedural mode typifies machine bureaucracies. Policy making here is conservative, integrated, inflexible, and consistent. As Weber noted, bureaucracies are averse to innovation and prone to routinization and inflexibility (Beetham 1985; Mommsen 1989).

The planning mode is more flexible than the procedural mode, because plans prescribe specific actions at specific points in time rather than standing rules. The planning mode typifies the diversified organization. This is one in which a central “headquarters” monitors the performance of numerous “divisions.” Mintzberg argues that one can view the entire government as being a giant diversified form, because it is subject to monitoring by central agencies. The planning mode typifies the New Public Management; it also typified Soviet communism. Mintzberg (1989) argues that communist states are “closed-system” machine bureaucracies insofar as they serve the interests of their ruling elites and are impervious to external influences. Mintzberg has trenchantly criticized the concept of strategic planning. His advocacy of the alternative notion of “crafting” strategy in an emergent, learning fashion strongly resembles Wildavsky’s (1979) view of implementation as an evolutionary learning process rather than one of top-down planning. Mintzberg, like Wildavsky, sees strategy/policy making as being an art or craft rather than an exact science.

The seventh mode is the “autocratic.” It largely corresponds to Mintzberg’s entrepreneurial mode. This mode arises when power is centralized and unconstrained by rules. It is characterized by decisions that are bold, loosely coupled, flexible, capricious, highly intuitive, and nonanalytical. This mode thrives on uncertainty and involves the exercise of personal volition. It is exemplified by absolute rulers, powerful chief executive officers, and dictators. Even within rule-of-law states, the executive needs to be able to exercise discretion in circumscribed areas and thereby provide what the Federalist Papers called “energy in the executive” (Fukuyama 2004). Accordingly, the autocratic mode is often exhibited by chief executives in democracies, because they may be required to take bold decisions when dealing with dynamic or hostile environments. In foreign and defense policy, for example, chief executives are subject to fewer institutional restraints because they must be able to respond decisively to external threats. Mintzberg argues that dynamic and hostile environments favor centralized structures because a single person can more easily react quickly and flexibly to changes. Those who seek high office often have a predilection for exercising power.
When this is allied with a preference for bold, risky decisions that are based on intuition rather than analysis, radical policy change can result. For example, former President George W. Bush reportedly preferred to take “instinctive” decisions rather than to engage in protracted deliberation (Brookhiser 2003). His decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was a bold one that overturned previous U.S. policy. Prime Ministers Tony Blair and John Howard also displayed boldness in deciding to invade Iraq alongside Bush, as they both faced considerable domestic opposition.

The eighth mode is what Mintzberg calls the “visionary” mode. This mode corresponds to the “charismatic structure.” For Weber, charismatic authority was personal in nature, arose in times of distress, was based on a belief in the sanctity of a leader and her or his “mission,” and was inherently unstable. Kershaw (1999) argues that the government of Nazi Germany exemplified these features. It thereby differed from that of Stalinist Russia, which was more bureaucratic in nature. He observes that by virtue of its stress on personal leadership and its lack of coherent planning, Nazi government was antithetical to orderly and rational decision making. In place of such plans, it was the utopian “vision” of national redemption through racial purification and racial empire embodied by the Führer that provided “guidelines” for action. Weber noted that charismatic leadership played a significant role in modern democracy, because it was a means by which political leaders could gain electoral support. A contemporary example is Barack Obama. “Obamamania” constitutes the type of collective excitement that Weber saw as underlying charismatic leadership. Obama has been endowed with messianic attributes by many of his supporters and has emerged in a crisis of America’s time for America. Obama (2007) argues that America needs “visionary leadership” to overcome this crisis and outlines a vision for America’s future. Nelson Mandela’s vision of a racially harmonious South Africa, for example, enabled him to guide it peacefully through the transition from apartheid to democracy. Other examples of visionary leaders include John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Abraham Lincoln, Pope John Paul II, and Winston Churchill.

These different modes can coexist within a single political system and can combine to form “mixed modes.” Mintzberg argues that different modes may be mixed by being located in different functional areas within an organization. Table 2 shows how different organizational parts (column 3) and elements of the political system (column 4) correspond to certain policy modes (column 6). Different modes tend to combine, because organizations and political systems comprise a mixture of structures. Indeed, Mintzberg (1989) argues that his structural configurations can be viewed not as separate categories of organization but as separate forces that tend to coexist within a single organization. A “configuration” emerges when one of these forces dominates an organization. A “hybrid” emerges when these forces combine within an organization. For example, expertise and autocracy when combined yield “technocracy,” while ideology and autocracy when combined yield “ideocracy.” A “cleavage” emerges when different forces within an organization conflict. An example is the conflict between professional expertise and authority. Mintzberg notes that modes may vary by stage of development of the organization. Organizations typically start with the entrepreneurial mode and then shift to the adaptive or planning modes. Modes may also vary by stage of the policy process. For example, a correlation between the policy cycle and various policy modes may be discerned moving clockwise around figure 1. Identification and analysis of issues (ideological and expert modes) is followed by consultation with stakeholders (collaborative mode). A decision is then taken by those in authority (autocratic mode) and implemented by bureaucrats (planning and procedural modes).

**Mintzberg’s Ideas and Theories of Public Policy**

How do Mintzberg’s ideas relate to contemporary theories of public policy? Theories of public policy vary in the relative degree of importance that they accord to the different coordinating mechanisms in their account of the policy process. The following diagram illustrates this by locating these theories on Mintzberg’s matrix.

Theories of public policy divide broadly into two schools: those that focus on power and decision making and those that focus on rationality and decision making (Ham and Hill 1984). The first of these schools addresses the centralization dimension, whereas the second addresses the standardization dimension. In the upper-left quadrant, we can locate those theories that address the role of ideas and expertise in the policy process. Advocacy coalition theory can also be located in this quadrant, as it examines the role of scientific and technical information and of normative belief systems in the policy process. In the upper-right quadrant, we can locate those theories that focus on the process of mutual adjustment among policy actors. These are the most influential theories of public policy, as the political mode is the dominant policy mode in democratic states. The lower-right quadrant is occupied by those theories that focus on the role of authority in the policy process. Rational actor theory falls within this quadrant, because it assumes that policy is made by a single authoritative agent (Mintzberg 1983). Elite theory and corporatist theory, unlike pluralist theory, see policy making as being the preserve of elites or as involving the subordination of interest groups to government. Various “state-centered” theories view the state as an independent actor in the policy process that can impose its preferences on other policy actors. Also located in this quadrant are various leadership or “great man” theories, which view policy as the brainchild of political leaders. Multiple streams theory, for example, attributes such a role to policy entrepreneurs. Weber also argued that charismatic leaders could exercise personal control over the bureaucratic apparatus and thereby generate policy innovations (Mommsen 1989).

In the lower-left quadrant, we can locate those theories that focus on the standardization of behavior through rules and plans. Such theories can be both empirical and normative. As Spicer (2007) observes, many writers in the field of public administration have advocated a more “scientific” approach to government in which instrumental rationality would be employed in...
the pursuit of predetermined goals. He notes, for example, that Kenneth Meier has called for “more bureaucracy and less democracy” in American governance. Policy analysis likewise seeks to use rationality to solve policy problems. Indeed, the discipline of public administration originated as an attempt to develop a more rational form of governance, a stance that was exemplified by Woodrow Wilson’s insistence that questions of politics could be separated from those of administration. Punctuated equilibrium theory does not fall neatly into any of the four quadrants in figure 2, because it sees policy as being the product of the alternation of long periods of stability with short episodes of dynamism. Mintzberg (1989) argues that such a pattern tends to typify strategy making in machine bureaucracies, which usually resist change and must overlay or revert to more organic configurations in order to accomplish this.

What is clear from this diagram is that each theoretical perspective sheds light on a different aspect of the policy process, and therefore each perspective has value. To understand policy making, then, we need to combine multiple theoretical perspectives, as Sabatier (2007) and Zahariadis (2007) have argued. Allison (1971) adopted this approach in his classic study of the Cuban missile crisis. The three models of decision making that he identified, namely, rational actor, organizational process, and bureaucratic politics, can be located in figure 2 in the lower-right, lower-left, and upper-right quadrants, respectively. The comparative value of these theories will depend, however, on which mode the policy process in question primarily exemplifies. Theories that focus on the political mode are valuable when studying democracies, but they are less useful when studying authoritarian states, where the plan ning, ideological, and autocratic modes are dominant. The virtue of Mintzberg’s theory is that it recognizes the contingent nature of the policy process. Critics of advocacy coalition theory, for example, have noted that it reflects its empirical origins in American pluralism and makes tacit assumptions about well-organized interest groups, weak political parties, and multiple decision-making venues that do not apply in European corporatist regimes (Sabatier and Weible 2007). To understand policy making in different types of political systems, different theories are required.

Kershaw (2007), in a comparative study of foreign and defense policy decisions made during World War II by the governments of Great Britain, the United States, Russia, Germany, Italy, and Japan, notes that stark contrasts separated the processes of decision making in the democratic and nondemocratic states. Only in the United States was public opinion a factor of first importance in the making of decisions. In the four authoritarian states, public opinion was shaped by propaganda and indoctrination and did not act as an independent influence on decision making. In Germany, Hitler exercised unrestrained power and often took decisions alone. In the United States, by contrast, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had to negotiate and compromise with Congress, while in Britain, Prime Minister Winston Churchill was constrained by the collective nature of cabinet government. He notes that, notwithstanding such differences, in all six states, decisions were shaped by such factors as bureaucratic planning, ideology, and the personalities of leaders. The relative importance of different policy modes, then, varies according to institutional context. Different modes, however, typically coexist within government because it relies on a variety of coordinating mechanisms.

Mintzberg’s theory does not supplant current theories of public policy. What it does do is provide a conceptual framework in which we can locate such theories. Ostrom (2007) argues that we may distinguish “frameworks” from “theories” on the grounds that the former identify the components and relationships among those elements that one needs to consider for institutional analysis. Frameworks organize enquiry and provide a meta-theoretical language that can be used to compare theories. Theories, by contrast, explain and predict behavior. Mintzberg’s work provides us with both a framework and a theory, because it identifies the key elements of the policy process (coordinating mechanisms, structural configurations, and policy modes), shows how they are connected, and seeks to explain why they vary in terms of certain contingency factors.

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**Figure 2** Theories of the Policy Process Located on Mintzberg’s Matrix
in terms of certain contingency factors. Schlager (2007) notes that policy scholars tend not to explicitly identify the framework within which their work is situated. With the use of Mintzberg's matrix (see figure 2), we can locate a diverse range of theories within a single framework.

How does Mintzberg's framework compare with alternative frameworks within the public policy literature? We may identify four such frameworks. The first is that of Considine and Lewis (2003). They contrast three modes of governance: the procedural (reliant on rules), the enterprise (reliant on a mix of targets and markets), and the network (reliant on coproduction). Procedural, enterprise, and network governance correspond to the procedural, planning/market, and collaborative policy modes, respectively. Considine and Lewis's framework therefore fits comfortably within that of Mintzberg. A second framework is that proposed by James Q. Wilson (1989), who distinguishes "craft," "coping," "procedural," and "production" organizations in public management. Wilson locates these organizations on a matrix adapted from that of Mintzberg. Rather than use centralization and standardization as the key dimensions, Wilson uses the extent to which production processes are visible to outside observers and the extent to which agency outputs are easily measured. Wilson's procedural organization corresponds to Mintzberg's machine bureaucracy, his production organization to the diversified organization, his craft organization to the professional bureaucracy, and his coping organization to the innovative organization. Wilson's framework therefore fits comfortably within that of Mintzberg.

A third framework is that of Hood (1998), who uses the grid–group theory of Mary Douglas to construct a matrix that comprises four modes of governance. The vertical axis in this matrix or the "grid" dimension is the degree to which our lives are circumscribed by conventions or rules. It therefore corresponds to what Émile Durkheim called "social solidarity." This matrix yields four combinations of grid and group and corresponding modes of governance. These are the "fatalist way" (low group–high grid), the "individualist way" (low group–low grid), the "hierarchist way" (high group–high grid), and the "egalitarian way" (high group–low grid). Hood identifies four generic types of control, each of which is loosely linked to one of the polar ways of life identified by Douglas's cultural theory. These are "bossism" (control by oversight), "choicism" (control by competition), "groupism" (control by mutuality), and "chancism" (control by contrived randomness). The first three of these types of control correspond to certain of the coordinating mechanisms identified here. Bossism, choicism, and groupism correspond to direct supervision, markets/bargaining, and collaboration, respectively. The hierarchist way stresses rules and oversight and corresponds to a mixture of behavior formalization and direct supervision. Hood argues that it corresponds to machine bureaucracy. The individualist way stresses negotiation and bargaining and therefore corresponds to the market and political modes of mutual adjustment. The egalitarian way involves reliance on control by mutuality and therefore corresponds to the collaborative mode of mutual adjustment. The fatalist way involves control by contrived randomness and arises when low levels of social solidarity are conjoined with a high level of reliance on rules. Other than in its reliance on rules, the fatalist way does not correspond to any of Mintzberg's coordinating mechanisms, because it is characterized by an absence of coordination.

Douglas's grid dimension can be seen as comprising two separate dimensions when interpreted in terms of Mintzberg's theoretical framework. One is a contrast between direct supervision (the hierarchist way) and the two major species of mutual adjustment: the collaborative (the egalitarian way) and the "partisan" in the form of markets and bargaining (the individualist way). The other is a contrast between behavior formalization (the fatalist and hierarchist ways) and mutual adjustment (the individualist and egalitarian ways). Rather than view the grid dimension as referring to the extent of behavior formalization, Collins (1988) interprets it as referring to the extent of asymmetry in power relations. High grid therefore equates to "deference" relations, while low grid equates to "egalitarian" relations. If we adopt Collins's interpretation, we can resolve certain anomalies in Douglas's scheme. Hood notes, for example, that the fatalist way is the most problematic and the least explored of the four generic types of control. Douglas (1996) also used the term "atomised subordination" to describe the low group–high grid "fatalist" cell. If we interpret grid as the extent of asymmetry in power relations, then the low group–high grid cell represents low solidarity deference. We can contrast such gesellschaft-like authority, involving low trust relationships and mutual antagonism or indifference (what Thomas Carlyle called the "cash nexus"), with gemeinschaft-like paternalistic authority, involving high trust relationships and mutual affection (the high group–high grid "hierarchist" cell). Defined as gesellschaft-like authority rather than as rule-governed individualism, the low group–high grid cell corresponds to "bossism" as a control method rather than to "contrived randomness." This explains why the fatalist way is the most problematic and least researched of the four ways of life, because fatalism is an invalid category. The low group–high grid "fatalist" cell actually comprises gesellschaft-like authority.

If we adopt Collins's interpretation of the grid dimension, Douglas's grid–group matrix comprises two dimensions of social life: power relations and social solidarity. The first of these dimensions contrasts two of Mintzberg's coordinating mechanisms, namely, direct supervision (high grid) with mutual adjustment (low grid), whereas the second contrasts gemeinschaft (high group) with gesellschaft (low group). In contrast to Douglas's matrix, which comprises two dimensions of social relations, Mintzberg's matrix comprises two dimensions of organizational structure. His matrix accordingly identifies the full gamut of coordinating mechanisms, whereas Douglas's matrix identifies only two: direct supervision and mutual adjustment. Her four cells comprise the high and low group variations of each, and they fall within the two right-hand cells of Mintzberg's matrix in figure 1. Mintzberg's matrix is not, therefore, superior to that of Douglas, because their explanatory purposes differ. Mintzberg's matrix seeks to explain variations in organizational structure, whereas Douglas's matrix seeks to explain variations in group cultures. We can derive a greater variety of modes of governance from Mintzberg's matrix than from that of Douglas, though. Douglas's grid dimension can be defined to incorporate behavior formalization as an additional coordinating mechanism, but this gives rise to the problematic category of fatalism.
A fourth framework comprises the trichotomy of hierarchies, markets, and networks as forms of coordination (Thompson et al. 1991). Other theorists write in a similar vein of bureaucracies, markets, and clans (Ouchi 1980); bureaucracy, markets, and community (Colebatch and Larmour 1993); and authority, transaction, and persuasion (Hill and Hupe 2003). Hood’s hierarchist, individualist, and egalitarian ways make up a similar trichotomy. All of these frameworks contrast authority in both its bureaucratic and nonbureaucratic forms with the two species of mutual adjustment identified previously, namely, economic exchange or “markets” and social exchange or “networks.” For example, Colebatch and Larmour (1993) see “bureaucracy” as involving reliance on rules, authority, and hierarchy, the “market” as involving reliance on incentives and prices, and “community” as involving reliance on norms, values, affiliations, and networks. Mintzberg’s framework can accommodate this trichotomy. Mintzberg’s framework is more fine-grained and comprehensive, as it recognizes that authority assumes both a mechanistic (bureaucratic) and an organic (simple structure) form. It also identifies training and indoctrination as additional coordinating mechanisms. “Community” in the foregoing trichotomies comprises a mixture of mutual adjustment and indoctrination, or the acquisition of norms and values, as coordinating mechanisms. In the absence of such shared norms, mutual adjustment takes the form of markets or bargaining rather than of high-trust networks involving collaboration. As Dunleavy (1981) has noted, the presence of “ideological corporatism” or social cohesion based on shared beliefs obviates the need for bargaining and negotiation. “Community” is therefore a hybrid of the ideological and collaborative modes. Hill (2005) seeks to refine this trichotomy by distinguishing “authority” (reliance on hierarchy and rules), “transaction” (reliance on markets and assessing results or outputs), and “persuasion” (reliance on collaboration or coproduction within policy networks). Hill’s “authority” combines direct supervision with rules; his “transaction” combines markets with the use of performance control, while his “persuasion” combines indoctrination with mutual adjustment in the form of collaborative networks. While coordinating mechanisms are often combined in this way in practice, Mintzberg’s theory recognizes that they are analytically distinct.

Conclusion
This article has argued that Mintzberg’s theory of organizations and strategy modes provides valuable insights into the public policy process. What advantages does his theory provide? First, it provides us with what Ostrom calls a “framework,” as it identifies the key elements of the policy process and indicates how they are connected. Ostrom argues that frameworks enable us to organize enquiry and provide a meta-theoretical language that can be used to compare theories. The study of public policy is characterized by theoretical diversity and a profusion of concepts. With Mintzberg’s model, we can make sense of this theoretical diversity by locating a wide range of theories on the two dimensions of standardization and centralization.

Second, Mintzberg also provides us with a theory, because he explains variations in policy modes and in their related structural configurations and coordinating mechanisms in terms of certain contingency factors. As a contingency theorist, Mintzberg seeks to establish not which theory is correct but under what conditions each applies: “Not planning versus muddling through, but when planning and when muddling through” (Mintzberg 1979). Writers on public policy, by contrast, have sometimes assumed that only one theory can be correct. Mintzberg’s theory therefore provides us with a means of resolving such long-standing disputes as those over the relative merits of rationality and incrementalism and the top-down and bottom-up models of implementation. It should be noted that Mintzberg’s theory of strategy focuses not on the content of particular decisions but on the process by which such decisions are made. To use Hogwood and Gunn’s (1981) typology of public policy studies, Mintzberg’s theory focuses on the policy “process” rather than on policy “content.” To explain the content of public policies, we need to examine the role of three key factors, namely, the policy environment, the properties of policy actors (including their interests, ideas, values, power, and resources), and the institutions that govern their behavior (Ostrom 2007). These three factors roughly correspond to the three main determinants of strategy that are identified by Mintzberg, namely, the “environment,” “leadership” and “organization.” “Organization” broadly corresponds to the various forms of standardization, while “leadership” can be coupled with the other organic coordinating mechanism of mutual adjustment. In the cases of leadership and mutual adjustment, it is actors rather than “standards” or institutions that shape policy.

Mintzberg’s theory recognizes that policy environments vary considerably and that so, too, do policy modes. Hogwood and Gunn (1984) likewise advocate a contingency approach to policy making that recognizes the diverse requirements of different types of decisions. As Hill (2005) argues, we need to recognize the great diversity of policy processes and understand how this arises from differences in the policy environment. He observes that in the cases of foreign policy and economic policy, the environment is more complex and dynamic than it is in the case of income maintenance policy. The policy process in the latter instance is likely to display defined stages, whereas in the former instance, policy formulation and policy implementation are likely to be fused. Hill argues that the extent to which policy is concretized during the implementation process depends on the extent of conflict among policy actors, the need for local knowledge and expertise, and the level of predictability. For Mintzberg, likewise, such factors as environmental complexity, diversity, and stability determine whether strategy will be planned or emergent.

Third, Mintzberg’s theory enables us to grasp the protean nature of the policy process. The dominant theories of public policy tend to focus on a single policy mode, namely, the political. This is not surprising, given that democracies decentralize power and achieve coordination through a process of partisan mutual adjustment. Within authoritarian states, by contrast, it is the autocratic, ideological, and planning modes that are dominant. Even within democracies, advocacy coalition theory, to take one example, may be less applicable to certain policy areas than it is to others. Greenaway et al. (cited in Parsons 1995) note that while advocacy coalition theory applied in the United Kingdom to issues such as AIDS, nuclear power, and trade union law reform, it was less applicable to those issues where decision making was less pluralistic, such as defense policy and the Falklands War. Parsons concludes that the advocacy coalition theory may be most suited to those areas in which the policy style is
consultative and reactive rather than one where it involves imposition and planning.

Given that the dominant theories of public policy focus on the political mode, their applicability is accordingly limited to those situations where the combination of low standardization and low centralization that underlies the political mode arises. Within any single political system, however, we will encounter different such combinations and, accordingly, different structural configurations and policy modes. For example, democratic states centralize power in chief executives and accordingly display an autocratic mode, while within authoritarian states, differences in interests and values arise that are resolved through bureaucratic politics. Thus, we require multiple theories to understand the policy process, because this is usually not “mono-modal.” Even a single mode may display multiple variations. Mintzberg (1983), for example, identifies no fewer than 13 political “games” that are played within organizations. Advocacy coalition theory, policy networks theory, and multiple streams theory likewise identify different variations of the political mode. Such variation is not surprising, given that political actors possess diverse interests, ideas, values, power, and resources are governed by varied institutions and encounter different environments. The preoccupation of public policy theorists with the political mode, however, has led them to overlook alternative modes that predominate within nondemocratic states, such as the ideological, planning, and autocratic. A final virtue of Mintzberg’s theory is that it can encompass not only the formulation of policy but also its implementation. The same types of contingency factors, coordinating mechanisms, structural configurations, and policy modes are present in each instance.

To conclude, Mintzberg’s work provides us with both a framework and a theory for understanding the public policy process. It meets the criteria that Greenaway et al. (cited in Parsons 1995) have proposed for evaluating the worth of theories in politics, namely, coherence, consistency, comprehensiveness, and parsimony. It can incorporate a diverse array of theoretical perspectives within a single framework. It can also accommodate the dominant frameworks in the public policy literature. It links the study of organizations with that of public policy and the study of the formulation of policy with that of its implementation. By adopting a contingency approach, it acknowledges that policy processes vary as a result of differences in structural configurations, coordinating mechanisms, and contingency factors. It therefore suggests that theories should be used selectively, because their applicability tends to be confined to those policy modes and structural configurations to which they correspond, but also in combination, because the policy process typically displays a variety of such policy modes and structural configurations rather than just one alone.

References
Considine, Mark, and Jenny M. Lewis. 2003. Bureaucracy, Network, or Cal, planning, and autocratic. A final virtue of Mintzberg’s theory is that predominate within nondemocratic states, such as the ideological mode. Such variation is not surprising, given that political actors possess diverse interests, ideas, values, power, and resources are governed by varied institutions and encounter different environments. The preoccupation of public policy theorists with the political mode, however, has led them to overlook alternative modes that predominate within nondemocratic states, such as the ideological, planning, and autocratic. A final virtue of Mintzberg’s theory is that it can encompass not only the formulation of policy but also its implementation. The same types of contingency factors, coordinating mechanisms, structural configurations, and policy modes are present in each instance.

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References

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