Policy-Making Processes
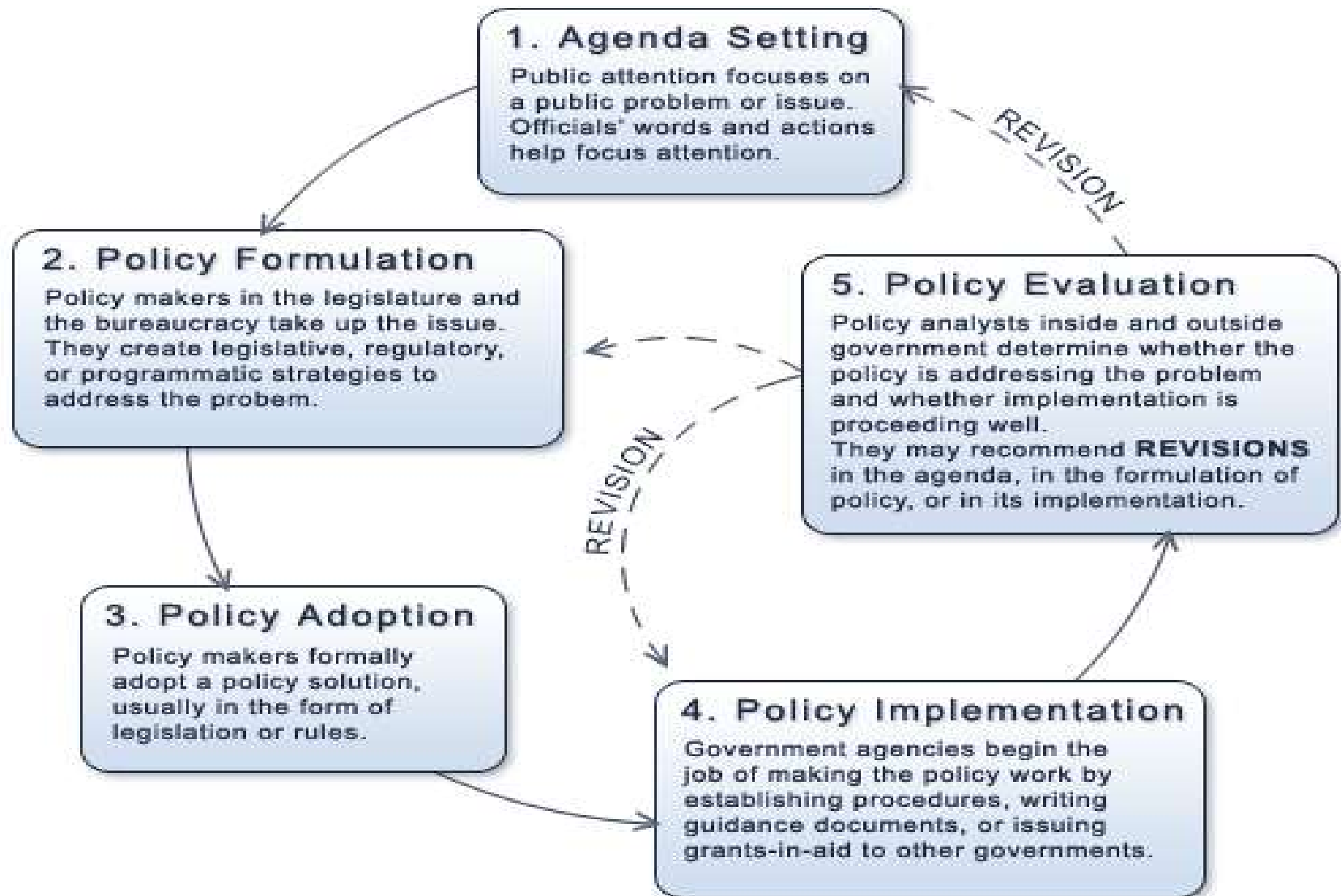
Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Quiz

- Log on to www.socrative.com and join room 917563 to take the quiz.

- Yu may use any notes that you took on the reading.

Policy making process once the problem is identified:

1. Agenda Setting
Public attention focuses on a public problem or issue. Officials' words and actions help focus attention.

2. Policy Formulation
Policy makers in the legislature and the bureaucracy take up the issue. They create legislative, regulatory, or programmatic strategies to address the probem.

3. Policy Adoption
Policy makers formally adopt a policy solution, usually in the form of legislation or rules.

4. Policy Implementation
Government agencies begin the job of making the policy work by establishing procedures, writing guidance documents, or issuing grants-in-aid to other governments.

5. Policy Evaluation
Policy analysts inside and outside government determine whether the policy is addressing the problem and whether implementation is proceeding well.
They may recommend **REVISIONS** in the agenda, in the formulation of policy, or in its implementation.

REVISION

REVISION

Setting the Political Agenda

- **The political agenda**: deciding what to make policy about

- The current political agenda includes military, homeland security, taxes, energy, welfare, and civil rights

- Who sets? Business, media, interest groups, politicians with agendas?

- Shared beliefs determine what is legitimate for the government to do—Examples?

Scope of Government Action

- Government always gets larger, policies persist
- People generally believe that government should continue to do what it is doing now
- Changes in attitudes and events tend to increase government activities
  - War, crisis, natural disaster, recessions/depressions
- Government growth cannot be attributed to one political party
- For more rules that we have covered, check out the inset on the next slide!

Some "Rules of Politics,"

From **American Government** textbook by James Q. Wilson (14th edition)

- Policies, once adopted tend to persist. (It is easier to start programs than end one).

- Almost all electoral politics are local.

- Whatever the size of the staff or budget, government is always overworked. More resources produces more work. Government never gets smaller.

- Proposals that confer wide-spread and immediate benefits are always enacted regardless of long-term costs.

- "Planning" in government always takes place after a crisis.

- The mass media never covers what is going well. Thus, the number of problems in society is of the number of reporters.

American System of Policymaking

- **Separation of Powers**
  - ☐ Stalemate between President & Congress is inevitable (even with unified government.)
  - ☐ Different constituencies lead to pork barrel politics, different timetables, different demands
- **Federalism**
  - ☐ "All politics are local" in the US
  - ☐ Funding and mandates may come from Washington, but implementation is by states

American System of Policymaking

- **The Power of Judicial Review**

  - Can declare actions, laws by any branch at any level unconstitutional.

  - When other levels or branches ignore decisions, gives "standing" for lawsuits.

- **The First (and Foremost) Rights**

  - Free speech now includes lobbying lawmakers, airing campaign ads, protesting funerals, giving campaign contributions, etc.

  - Limiting these is rarely upheld unless a compelling reason is demonstrated.

Other Influences

- Groups may react to a sense of **relative deprivation**

- The media helps place issues on the political agenda (rarely report what goes well)

- The national government may later adopt ideas pioneered by the states **(Bottom up approach!)**

Costs, Benefits, and Policy

- **Cost**: any burden, monetary or non-monetary, that some people must, or expect, to bear from the policy

- **Benefit**: any satisfaction, monetary or non-monetary, that some people must, or expect, to receive from the policy

- Politics is a process of settling disputes over who benefits/pays and who ought to benefit/pay

Figure 17.1: A Way of Classifying and Explaining Politics of Different Policy Issues
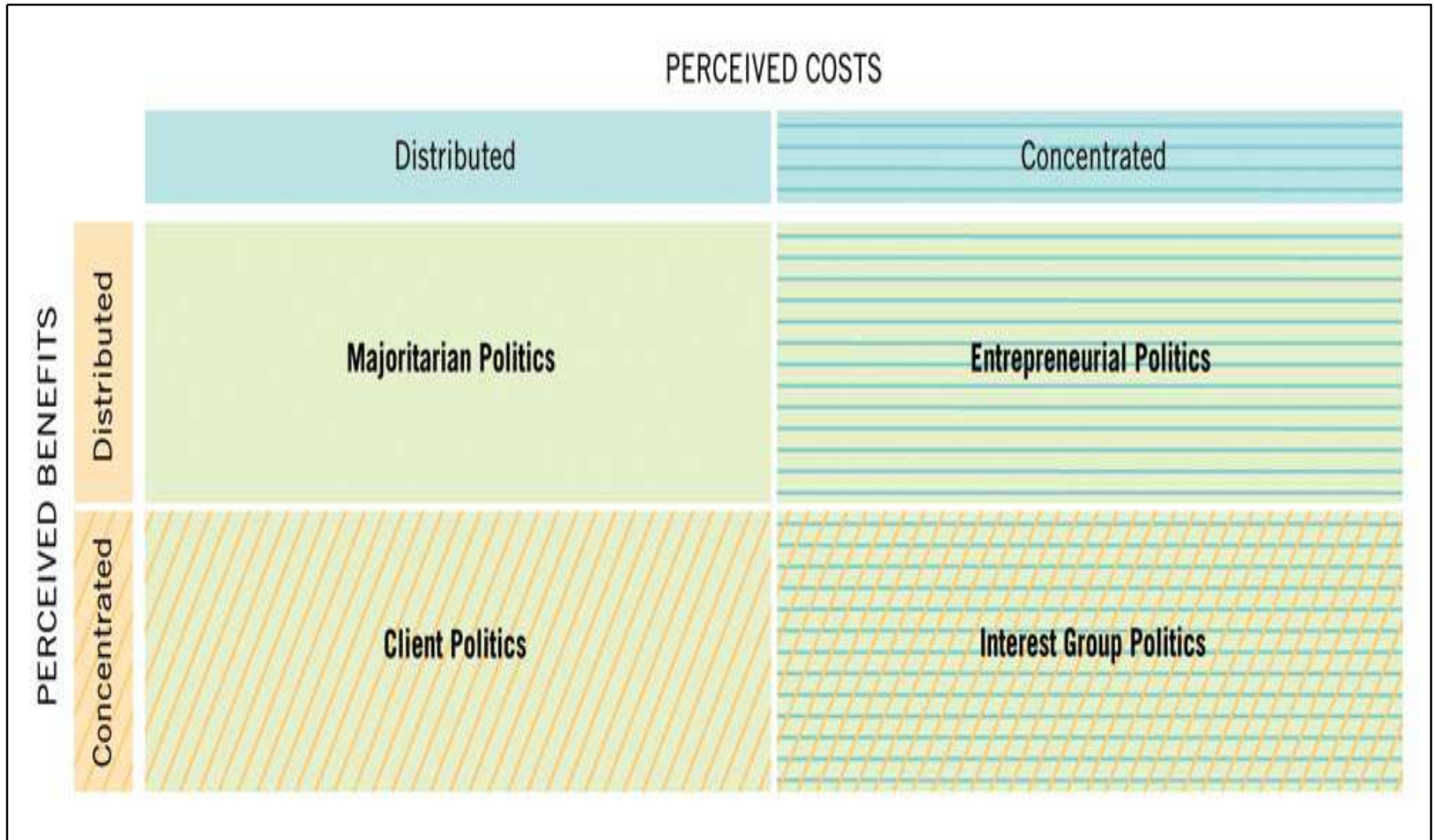
Kinds of Politics

- **Majoritarian politics**: distributed benefits, distributed costs
- **Interest group politics**: concentrated benefits, concentrated costs
- **Client politics**: concentrated benefits, distributed costs
- **Entrepreneurial politics**: distributed benefits, concentrated costs

Majoritarian Politics

- Distributed costs & distributed benefits.
- Generally little opposition.
- Ex.: Military & Security Spending
  - Everyone pays in the form of taxes
  - Everyone benefits from the security provided
  - Budgets of military and homeland security have grown.
  - People demand security.

Interest Group Politics

- Concentrated costs & concentrated benefits…**Crossfire!**

- Ex: labor unions seek government protection of rights; businesses oppose to preserve competitiveness in market

- Dems. are pro-labor; Repubs. are pro-biz

- The party in power, as well as crisis & events, shape legislation.

Client Politics

- Concentrated benefit & distributed costs
- Iron triangles are great examples
- Recipient must be seen as deserving or they lose legitimacy
- "Agency capture" is likely when benefits are focused and costs are dispersed—an agency is created to serve a group's needs
- Ex. 1: Pork Barrel Legislation
  - Everybody pays taxes, a small district benefits
- Ex: natural disaster victims
  - Everybody pays taxes, victims benefit

Entrepreneurial Politics

- Distributed benefits & concentrated costs
- Relies on entrepreneurs to galvanize public opinion and mobilize congressional support
  - Rachel Carson, Ralph Nader are best examples
  - Policy Entrepreneur versus Captain of Industry
- Ex: Environmental protection statutes (Clean Air Act, NEPA, etc.)
  - Corporations pay the costs, everyone benefits
- Ex. 2: Consumer protection & recalls
  - Corporations cover cost, everyone benefits

Here & Now *or* Worry over Future?

- Policies are not made sometimes on actual costs, but perceived costs
- Values also affect perception—Doing the "right" thing
- These perceptions also come in 2 camps:
  - Here & now
  - Future quality of life
- Ex: Gas dependency

Classification Activity

- Form groups of 4
- Take dots per team
- For each scenario station:
  1. Read the scenario
  2. Place dot in the politics category it belongs
  3. Move clockwise to next station
- Review answers.

Assignment

- Read the red tile 1 on policy Symbaloo board to introduce the difference between fiscal and monetary policy.

- Read pp. 492-509 in the old Wilson textbook. Take notes by headings.

- Bring a charged Chrome book to class.

- Due Tuesday!