Chapter Two: Literature Review

The problem for the Monroe Public Schools is that the automatic budget referendum currently defined by town charter impedes the process of getting the schools the funding that they need to run efficiently. While allowing the taxpayer an ongoing voice in the budget process, the automatic budget referendum often puts the school budget months behind. School officials cannot establish operating expenses. Procedures such as the hiring of teachers are thrown into confusion as other districts hire teachers ahead of Monroe while the district cuts the budget and places it before the community time and time again until it passes. The nature of the problem appears as an either/or proposition. Does the community do away with the automatic budget referendum to establish a school budget within the town budget with no automatic voting down the budget? Or does the community, as defined by town charter, vote repeatedly until satisfied with sufficient cuts in the school budget? In the either/or proposition, the school suffers from a delayed budget with severe cuts or the taxpayer suffers if denied the opportunities to vote on the budget. Table 1 below displays the political issue of the automatic budget referendum in terms of goals, problems, and possible solutions.

Table 1

Goals, Problems, and Solutions of the Automatic Budget Referendum

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<th>GOALS</th>
<th>PROBLEMS</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
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<td>Make funding more readily available to schools.</td>
<td>The automatic budget referendum repeatedly defeats the town budget, slowing or limiting funding to schools.</td>
<td>Eliminate automatic budget referendum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limit and control spending.</td>
<td>School officials lack accountability with regard to budget.</td>
<td>Maintain the automatic budget referendum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain people’s right to vote on town budget.</td>
<td>Taxes are increasing and should be controlled</td>
<td>Control taxes by maintaining the right to vote on budget.</td>
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Political issues such as the Monroe Town automatic budget referendum need to be examined in light of current thinking of academics and experts who can provide a conceptual background from which one may understand and critically evaluate the findings of a study. In *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*, the authors Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal (1997), offer a detailed overview of the four perspectives, or conceptual frameworks, from which one can view and understand organizations. The authors contend that using the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames interchangeably allow leaders and managers to reframe their viewpoints on their organizations in order to perceive organizational needs, change, and growth or decline. Multi-frame thinking allows leaders to reframe situations to respond to the complexity and ambiguity of contemporary organizations (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p.34). The political conceptual framework is a challenging, thoughtful process for community leaders.

Power and politics present complex problems for organizations. Organizations and communities respond to political pressures, exert political power, engage in conflict, and form coalitions. A rationalist notion of hierarchal authority places power in the hands of those with position, however the political perspective suggests that other groups will vie for and obtain power. Exercise of power is a “natural part of an ongoing process” (Bolman & Deal, p. 175). Coalitions may form that engage in constructive conflicts that move the political process forward rather than solidifying the power and decision-making with one group or coalition.

Groups that stand in opposition to one another with the sole goal of gaining power rarely move the political process forward and do little to improve an organization, a
community, or a school. School leaders, in particular, must believe that “politics in organizations can be appreciated for their potential to create opportunities, for understanding sources of power and influence, for learning how to resolve inevitable conflict” (Carlson, 1996, p. 64). Educational community stakeholders must recognize the precarious position of schools given the glaring spotlight placed on them to outperform foreign schools, solve social ills, and avoid the potential for negative influence of external macro level forces of local, state, and national politics. Politics can create further challenges for schools when self-interested individuals press their own political agendas (p.65). Rather than seek to avoid conflict, school and community leaders must accept conflict as part of the political process. School and community leaders must be willing to engage in constructive dialogue to minimize the effects of differences and disagreements.

Deborah Stone’s *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* offers a way to perceive the analysis of politics and policy that makes sense of the paradoxes that abound in communities and schools grappling with issues important to the interests of individual political actors and to members of the polis, a term she uses for the political community (Stone, 1997, p. 10). Stone argues that a rational approach to politics misses the point of politics, which is to engage opposing points of view that are contradictory and often cannot be explained logically. She asserts that a rational approach to politics, which she calls “the rationality project,” is an “impossible dream” (p. 7). From Stone’s point of view, attempts to view politics rationally look crazy and illogical. Politics becomes a sloppy mess that can’t be explained, let alone useful in developing public policy. A rational approach to politics sets up categories of logic. These categories of logic, used to make sense of things in the political world, are by nature, at least, subject to
disagreement, can be confusing and ambiguous, and often paradoxical. The rationality project seems to have the answer to understanding messy politics by asserting a better, more sensible way to judge what is valuable and important in the community or polis.

The rationality project establishes a bias of logic that Stone deconstructs. Political thought defies logic since essentially political thought is fraught with abstract notions with multiple meanings. The bias for the categories of rational political thought is exposed by Stone’s argument that “analysis is itself a creature of politics; it is Strategically crafted argument, designed to create ambiguities and paradoxes and to resolve them in a particular direction” (p. 7). Political actors present an analysis and argument that seems rational but actually is a strategic representation of a point of view designed to win the case.

The graphic below shows the two essential aims of Stone’s Policy Paradox.

**Figure 1.** Two aims of Deborah Stone’s Policy Paradox
Stone envisions two concepts of society: the market model and the polis model. Competing interests about what best works in a society specifically define each model. The market is a model of individuals with competing self-interests ruled by laws of matter engaging in material exchange. The polis is a community model where public interest competes self-interest allowing groups and organizations to follow laws of passion and establish loyalties fostering cooperation and alliances.

Goals of the community, the polis or political community, and the market or the exchange network of the business economy, need definition and understanding in light of the complexity and ambiguity that results from paradoxical and multiple perspectives. Stone’s framework of political decision-making and policy formation allow for many points of view that may conflict as groups attempt to assert values and reach goals. Exchange, gain and self-interest drive the market causing individuals to secure goods, services and resources with no intent to redistribute. The polis, however, thrives on balancing individual needs against community needs. Self-interest is replaced by collective will and effort, the intention of which is to improve community.

Equity, efficiency, security, and liberty are common goals of a community, each expressing the “enduring values of the community that give rise to controversy” (p. 12). As such, these values may be used as justifications for policies. Individual social actors, or coalitions, in a specific socio-political context, may seek to establish and limit criteria and standards regarding community values to justify their interpretation of goals. In order to control perception and action in the polis, groups will try to get their viewpoint to prevail.
Coalitions and political actors may go as far as attempting to apply a rational, objective and neutral standard to the goals and values of a community policy debate. Their expressed intention may be to remove messy politics, and the interests of political actors, from the debate. However, the effect of rational analysis is actually to restrict debate, to control and lessen conflict, to ignore ambiguity and multiple meanings, and to deny the paradoxes inherent in political debate and policy making.

**Defining Goals: Equity**

Equity is a goal of the community that seeks fairness and distributive justice. When seeking equity one asks: Who gets what, when and how? (p.39) However, perceptions about fairness of distribution vary according to one’s point of view. Conflict comes about as a result of how one views distribution of equal shares. Members of the community support schools by sharing a tax burden. How is that burden distributed fairly? The simple definition of equality dictates that community members share the same size tax burden to support schools.

However, community members and officials subject the process of sharing the tax burden to examination, questioning who will receive the distribution, how much will be distributed, and what process will be used to cause the distribution. Different groups will answer these questions differently. If the value of property, and the taxes derived from property to support schools, is perceived as created by the individual, then the point of view that limits distribution to individual determination is supported. If the property and value are perceived as socially created, functioning in the polis, then one’s point of view is more likely to favor redistribution assuring a fair access of taxed-based support for schools (p.59).
Defining Goals: Efficiency

Efficiency, getting the most out of a given input or achieving an objective for the lowest cost, is a goal of the community according to Deborah Stone that tends to dominate discussion in America about public policy. Efficiency is a more a process rather than a goal in and of itself because efficiency helps individuals and communities acquire things of value (p.61). There is an expectation of efficiency in all we do: efficient people get a lot of things done. Efficiency helps us attain more of what we want. With regard to the funding of schools and the subsequent tax burden placed on the community, efficient use of resources yields the most value for the overall population.

Efficiency functions as an ideal in both the polis and the market. Efficiency is impossible to measure and is subjected to varying interpretations according to one’s point of view. One of the imperfections of the market view of efficiency is called externalities, situations that arise where an exchange between two parties affects, usually negatively, a third party. Communities must remember that any exchange between two groups may have a potential effect and cost on a third group (p. 72). For example, taxpayers who support schools may seek an efficient exchange between the community and the school board to allocate funds for school programs, but taxpayers on limited income, senior citizens, may suffer an economic harm as a result of increased taxes. There may also be a social cost as a result of the economic harm in that senior citizens or others on fixed incomes may no longer support school programs, feel alienated from the school community and have philosophical differences with the community effort to support the school. An efficient exchange that does not consider the reality of the needs of the polis,
the community, ignores important aspects of the relationship between individual welfare and the welfare of others.

When considering efficiency, one of the realities of the polis is that people will not generally engage in a voluntary exchange. The market relies on voluntary exchanges based on self-interest and perceived gain, but the polis requires something more in that people may derive a benefit from supporting and participating in the collective welfare. Supporting schools through taxes is an exchange that benefits the not only the social welfare of all in the community, but also the personal welfare of individuals who are part of the community. However, if people perceive no incentive to pay school taxes, legal obligation is the only way to secure funding necessary for the collective welfare of school. The challenge of efficiency in the polis is to provide information that is direct and honest, not deliberately manipulated or incomplete, in hopes that people will see the value of engaging in the voluntary exchange that results in securing school taxes.

**Defining Goals: Security**

Security is a goal of the community that has as it basis the concept of need which is often presented as a fundamental political claim. Beyond the consensus that society should meet the needs of individuals and families in dire need, there are varying points of view about what constitutes legitimate need (pp. 86-87). Defining the needs of a school district in order to secure taxes becomes a matter of representing programs and policies so that taxpayers believe the legitimacy of the system of economic redistribution.

Attempts to objectify definable needs are met with complications in the polis. Any representation of a need becomes not only a political claim, but also a political claim with a symbolic dimension. Debates about items in a school budget become arguments
about whether or not the item is needed. Items such as teacher salaries, programs, or new
band or football uniforms become more than the things themselves because the items
have symbolic meanings to different groups of people. Various considerations must be
examined: “What kind of thing is needed? Who needs it? What does it provide? And
what does it represent?”(p. 90) Because answers to these questions will vary according to
the perceptions of individuals about the symbolic meanings of the things needed, need
becomes a relative standard of comparison and is tied to one’s view of distribution.
Should the community provide taxes to hire additional teachers or raise class sizes
keeping the staffing budget under control? The answer to this question will be a political
claim of relative need based on one’s perspective of economic distribution.

Other complications of the concept of need in the polis are the purposes of
resources, time, and the unit of analysis of need. Different coalitions within the polis with
different political aims question the purposes of resources. Should taxpayers provide
short-term security for the basic, essential, and immediate needs of schools? Or should
taxpayers provide resources that allow schools to plan for long-term security, reach
broader goals developing inclusive programs that go beyond the essential basics? Time is
another issue creating complications in the polis with regard to need and security. One
point of view suggests that it is sufficient for society to secure only current needs.
However, short-term planning does not protect against future needs and risks of harm
(pp. 98-99). Finally, the security provided by meeting needs can be perceived in two
distinct units of analyses. Society provides for the specific needs of people as separate
individuals, but people have relational needs, however intangible, that may be secured by
society. “Humans require community, solidarity, a sense of belonging; dignity, respect,
self-esteem, and honor; friendship and love. We need not only to have and receive, but to give and to help” (p. 95). Viewed in this manner, providing for the needs of schools becomes a much more complicated matter than simply allocating a distribution of taxes to support a budget.

**Defining Goals: Liberty**

Despite how essential and important the notion of liberty, or freedom, is to American consciousness, “freedom is no less ambiguous and complex than other goals and values that motivate politics” (p. 110). Freedom in America is generally seen as the right to do as one pleases so long as one doesn’t cause harm. The problem of liberty becomes challenging when one considers the issue of government interference with the behavior and choices of individuals particularly if such actions cause harm to others. This negative view of liberty posits protecting individual liberty against preventing harms to others. But, in a positive view of liberty, the questions arises of when the government should intervene to restrict one group in favor of expanding the liberty of another group, to equalize resources amongst groups, and to compel cooperation within the polis that serves the expansion of human freedom.

Liberty, when seen as freedom to use and dispose of one’s resources as one wishes, is subjected to restriction, or harm, when taxes are raised. Taxpayers may or may not wish to pay schools taxes but are compelled by legal obligation. Arguments about supporting schools for the greater collective good of society or limiting school taxes to benefit those on limited, fixed incomes are political claims about liberty that one side or the other may use to further its case. If one subscribes to the point of view that limits on individual freedom are necessary to increase human freedom, a political claim made to
support schools at any cost is acceptable. However, if one believes that increasing taxes year to year restricts one’s freedom, then the political claim of harm to liberty may be asserted. Perceiving liberty from a positive or negative point of view depends upon to which political claim one subscribes, or to which interest group one belongs.

Stone argues, “harms are political claims asserted by one set of interests against another” (p.112). Since the polis is a community with a public interest for the greater good, benefits derived from restricting the liberty of individuals are justified by the claim that the individual has an obligation to the community. The interests of society compel individuals to pay taxes and to educate children. The collective freedom of the group as opposed to the freedom of individuals is what matters in the polis.

Harms to the community may be envisioned as one moves beyond the individualist view of liberty. Structural harms are the result of the individual action of social actors, or the group effort of corporate actors, such as various community associations, political groups, and unions, against the community. Structural harms come about as a result of restrictions placed on the ability of a community to function as a community (p. 116). Another harm to groups is defined as accumulative harm. A community shares the school, uses it in common with others, and derives certain benefits and gains from the school. Neglect to the school through inadequate funding or poor community involvement has negative, accumulative harmful effect. Further, benign neglect to the school community caused by not voting on the school budget, or not attending a child’s school activity, is harm to the community as a result of the failure of individuals to undertake helpful actions (p.120). The negative view of liberty opposes harms to the individual against harms to the community.
There is a trade-off between liberty and equality that, depending on one’s perspective, either increases or decreases liberty. From the negative point of view of liberty, any interference with individual decisions causes harm, as does any coercion by public policy even if the attempt is to create more equality for others. Some taxpayers may see school taxes as an imposition on their individual freedom to dispose of resources as they wish. From the positive point of view of liberty, government policies that equalize power, wealth, and knowledge and expand liberty for groups, even if at the expense of restricting the liberty of some people, go a long way toward the improvement of society by allowing access to power, wealth, and knowledge. Redistribution of power, wealth, and knowledge contribute to the control individuals have over their lives. Genuine liberty can be sought by equalizing liberty itself. Compelling community efforts to cooperate in the solving of shared problems expands human freedom (pp. 128-130).

**Defining Problems: Symbols, Numbers, Causes, Interests, Decisions**

Problems in the polis are seen in light of goals and values of the community. Since goals aren’t fixed, and they change in relation to the interests of the groups who represent their goals, defining a problem becomes a process of strategic representation. Problem definition is ongoing, carefully and deliberately structured to present an individual or a particular group’s point of view. A definition of a problem is representative of one of many perspectives of the problem competing with each other in the polis. Problems are represented strategically by persons or groups to attract other people to a shared point of view. Since members of the polis have competing goals and values, they seek to define problems to win arguments with opponents.
Stone explores five areas of problems and problem definition confronting anyone asserting values and seeking goals in the polis: symbols, numbers, causes, interests, and decisions. Symbols and numbers are “languages” that are fundamental to understanding other problem definitions. Symbolic representation means that numbers and stories stand for something else in the minds of the members of the polis who engage in symbolic representation of problems. A symbol obtains meaning depending on how it is used strategically. People interpret and respond to symbols according to their own interests, backgrounds, and dispositions. Symbols, including numbers as symbols, tell stories that create interest, promote values, and build coalitions to generate support for positions.

Language as storytelling is used to symbolically represent the causes, the interests, and the decisions in the polis that describe problems for members of the community. Problems may be defined from many points of view and in the process of political discourse there is no one best way to describe a problem. The ability to use various languages to see problems allows political actors to carefully craft an argument for a particular problem definition. The ability to see political problems from multiple perspectives allows political actors to “achieve an understanding of problems that is more comprehensive and more self-conscious and explicit about the values and interests any definition promotes” (p.135). Various versions of stories may symbolically represent many points of view on a political problem.

One political problem may have many ways of being represented and may be constructed verbally in different ways, all symbolic. Problems may be defined according to narratives that support a way of looking at the problem. Narratives relate conflicts, tensions, and resolutions and include characters with whom members of the community
may agree or disagree, sometimes dramatically or vehemently. Stories of decline convey the idea that things were once better but got worse; they may be revisionist. Stories of control blame victims and suggest conspiracy. Those who define political problems or seek to understand the definition of problems will encounter other symbolic device such as synecdoche, metaphor, and uses of ambiguity. Each device has a specific purpose in controlling problem definition. Synecdoche is language used to suggest that a whole is represented by one of its parts. Focusing on a part as if it is the problem clouds judgment but may allow for an emotionally justified, though skewed, problem definition some will embrace. Metaphors are commonly used figures of speech that imply comparison and suggest that if one problem is like another then solutions will be alike which may not be the case. Policy metaphors make political problems seem easier to understand because if we can relate to, if not fully understand the implications of the poetic language of metaphors, then we can solve the problem simply as suggested by the metaphor. Raising the bar on student achievement suggests that by raising standards students will reach higher and achieve more. Such a metaphor suggests a simple solution that may not be so simple when one takes into account many factors that affect student achievement that limit opportunities achievement. Finally, policy makers seeking to define problems and control perceptions may turn to ambiguity as a strategy to create symbols with multiple meanings appealing to groups with diverse interests. Ambiguity can bring together people with different reasons for supporting a policy. Policy makers may try to satisfy both sides of an argument with ambiguous language. Ambiguity allows for compromise and helps individuals justify support for policies for which they may have conflicting feelings.
Language, essentially symbol-making, can be used to define, represent and discuss political problems to move forward the political process, or to control it.

“One common way to define a policy problem is to measure it” (p.163). Simply stated numbers and statistics can be used to make a case for a policy problem. The problem may be perceived as big, too small, or growing. Measurement is attractive because it seems scientific, irrefutable. However, numbers are another form of symbol making; they represent stories. Conflict over viewing a policy problem begins with how to count the problem. Decisions are made to count the problem as something; what to include and what to exclude are considered. Value judgments are in play as soon as numbers are brought bear upon a policy problem.

Numbers used to define policy problems have the allure and illusion of accuracy suggesting that if the problem can be understood arithmetically then it can be solved. Defining a problem with numbers is a call for change. If the problem can be counted then action must be taken to solve the problem. The problem with defining a policy problem with numbers is that numbers conceal hidden stories and, in the debate that forms in the polis, numbers become strategic both in selection and representation. In the complex social sphere of the polis, numbers stories are projections into the future of decline, assertions of frequency, suggestions of definable boundaries. Counting something in politics measures human activity and creates community. Numbers suggest that items, or people, counted have common features and should be treated alike as one group. Measurement of human activity in the polis generates reactive effects in that those being measured subject numbers to conscious and unconscious manipulation. Hidden effects of counting are created when those being counted desire to look good and play a role to
influence the counting. Ignoring the hidden stories and the effects of numbers may be strategically effective in order to make a case for a simple, seemingly accurate solution to the problem defined by measurement. Or ignoring deeper meanings of numbers in policy debates may be allowing those who measure the power to control the debate.

Debates about policy definition are also controlled by representations of causal stories. Rational policy analysis demands that causes of problems be exposed to assign responsibility. Determining a cause in the polis or political community places the burden of responsibility on one group rather than another. Causal stories tell about groups or individuals that oppress and those who suffer as victims. When crafted strategically with symbols and numbers, causal stories are political instruments that shape alliances and influence the distribution of benefits and costs.

Causal stories define problems because political actors seek to make distinctions between actions and consequences. The cause of a problem may be spoken about as the result of an action that has certain costs or certain benefits. Policy problem stories are strategically represented as the intended consequence of purposeful actions. Consequences may be spoken about as intended or unintended. Actions may be purposeful or may lack purpose. Causes in the political community become a way to talk about shifting responsibility from or toward political actors. Victims of problems or their representatives tell causal stories about harms incurred or benefits to which they are entitled as a result of harms. Understanding causes and how they work in policy problem definition allows the political analyst to craft argument. “Political actors create causal stories to describe harms and difficulties, to attribute them to actions of other individuals and organizations, and thereby to invoke government power to stop the harm” (p. 208).
Causal stories are powerful symbolic representations that create new alliances and give authority to those who claim to understand solutions to problems.

In the polis, people often take sides on an issue by defining their interests. How people think about interests determines their viewpoint whether subjective or objective. Subjective interests are those phenomena, social arrangements, and policies that people believe affect them. Objective interests are those effects that actually impact people whether or not they are aware of the actions or policies (p. 211). Of course, people can be mistaken and/or confused about their interests particularly objective interests that are hard to define. This confusion is most prevalent when real interests such as problems and needs of people in the political community become political demands.

Two approaches to interests are having an interest and taking interest. When one has an interest in something by which he or she is affected, one may or may not take an active interest and give attention to strategic political action. Moving the interest from the sphere of subjectivity to the one of objectivity is problematic and may be the cause of mistaken interest, or deliberate manipulation of interests. People have difficulty agreeing upon objective interests. This confusion of subjective interest and objective interests creates fodder for political strategists. Political actors who seek to strategically represent an interest in the polis do so by mobilizing an organized effort to bring about change (p. 217). In this way interests become tied to issues.

James Q. Wilson’s theory of political mobilization relates the effort to organize around an interest to bring about change. The substance of the issue and the effects the policies of an issue will produce become an interest about which individuals and groups care sufficiently to take collective action. Certain issues may seem more likely to bring
about mobilization than others. Depending upon the type of political contest, the strength and effects of the issue will determine its capacity to cause action. “Wilson assumes (quite plausibly) that people are more likely to organize and fight hard about something that affects them intensely than about something that affects them only weakly” (p.221). Wilson defines good and bad effects of interests as “benefits” and “costs.” The strength or intensity of an issue is defined with the terms “concentrated” and “diffused.” The distribution of costs and benefits and whether or not they fall into diffused or concentrated efforts determine the type of political contest (p.221). Small groups that stand to benefit the most will have strong organization even if opposed by larger groups whose members see little benefit or even may lose. The larger group will not have a political strategy and will remain unorganized. The effort to organize around an issue to bring about change will only occur if the group’s benefits or loses are more concentrated than and those of the opposing group on the same issue (p.223). Decisions about interests are political claims based on how issues are defined and acted upon.

Political goals are often reached by making decisions. There are many ways to make decisions and many perceptions as to how decisions are to be made. Policy analysis in today’s market is dominated by rational methods of decision-making. Like most human behavior, decision-making is influenced by matters that are not rational and is often based on emotion, habit, social custom, or impulse. Whether decision-makers engage in voting, bargaining, delegating, or coming to a consensus, any rational process applied to the decision is in itself a strategic representation of what is often influenced by passion. To reach a political goal, one must make the best decision to attain the goal.
Emotion produces irrational thinking influencing definitions of best. Defining the best means to achieve a goal is the heart of decision-making.

Even though people have difficulty agreeing on objective interests, they return to a rational decision-making process involving a sequence of apparently logical steps to arrive at a decision. In the rational decision-making process, the policy problem is seen as a choice facing a political actor. A logical sequence of mental operations is followed to arrive at a decision. These steps involve defining goals, considering alternative means for arriving at goals and considering consequences of each possible action. Finally, the political actor, whether an individual or a group, must choose the best alternative usually the one seen as most likely to attain the goal defined (p. 233).

Rational decision-making models assume that everything about the decision can be understood by looking at the various alternative means to arriving at the goals of the decision. If the means of arriving at a policy goal maximizes total welfare, then it may be seen as the best choice. The decision to take action happens only if the perceived benefits outweigh the perceived costs. Cost-benefit analysis ignores intangibles the value of which cannot be measured. What people actually care about in the environment or in their neighborhoods are intangibles often left out of the process of rational cost-benefit decision-making. Risk-benefit analysis is a variation of decision-making that also relies on future effects. Once various negative effects are looked at, policy makers choose the least likely effect seen as the less bad result. Thus, a catastrophic effect that is unlikely to occur counts for next to nothing. If the possibility of occurrence in risk-benefit analysis is seen as unlikely, the risk is worth it in policy decision-making (pp.235-237). Rational
decision-makers assert the authority of reason and logical thinking as the impetus behind responsible decision making.

Decision-making in the polis is subjected to claims that assert various other types of authority based often on sharing, negotiating, and contesting positions of power or interest. Thus, rational decision-making in the polis becomes yet another way of defining problems and establishing boundaries. Rational decision-makers have a stake in the issue or problem and want to use their view of a decision as a way to control perception and persuade. Each step of the rational decision process is part of strategic representation of a problem in the form of a decision that must be controlled with strategy.

In the polis, decision-makers set goals but often do so vaguely in order to allow for wiggle room when appealing to different constituencies. “If goals are forever changing as different people read meanings into them, they cannot serve as a stable reference point for evaluating alternative actions (p. 245). Alternative means of arriving at a goal considered in the decision-making process are often controlled in the polis to meet the requirements of political strategy. By limiting possible alternative actions, political actors may strategically represent the direction in which decision should go. Political actors may often go so far as to represent the decision as having only one possible preferred outcome, known as Hobson’s choice. Of course, the choice is controlled by the political actor and is the one most advantageous to the decision the political actor wishes to occur.

Decision analysis involves words and images created strategically by policy makers to portray costs and benefits. Of course, defining cost, benefits, and risks is problematic and dependent upon the decision for which one wishes generate support.
Decisions presented as either/or choices need to be reconsidered through imagining other alternatives and careful consideration of consequences. Market-driven decisions suffer from a lack of imagination when presented as Hobson’s choice. The market refuses to consider other possibilities in the course of human relationships as well relying on self-interest or survival of the strongest as models for human interaction. In the polis, solutions are found in decisions influenced by subtler and more ambiguous forms of human exchange.

**Finding Solutions: Inducements, Rules, Facts, Rights, Powers**

A way to deal with a policy problem often leads to a policy instrument that intends to solve the policy problem. Policy instruments may appear to be fixed solutions. Policy solutions themselves are not really solutions that will permanently fix the problem despite the best intentions of policy makers. Solutions are always ongoing strategies that attempt to organize people around the purposes of the policy strategist (p. 259).

Policies are commonly believed to be ineffectual in solving anything. Attempts to choose and execute policy are always continuous and political. The goal behind any so-called policy solution is to use strategy to exert power and get people to support the policy action. Stone (1997) presents four generic strategies the concern of which is “forms of authority government explicitly uses to change behavior and policy” (p. 259). These forms of authority are: inducements, rules, facts, rights, and powers.

Each of the forms of authority that may be used to influence attitudes and behaviors in regard to a policy issue is described by Stone by both definition and explanation of the theory behind the strategy. Inducements are the rewards and punishments or incentives and sanctions that are held out to change human behavior.
Commands to act or not act in a particular way are defined as rules. Rules speak to determining permissions and entitlements by deeming acceptability for only certain classes of people and in certain situations. Different rules are applied for different people. Rules are backed up sanctions by inducements like rewards or punishments are suggested by rules those who seek to follow the rules and, just as possible those who may break the rules of society. Rules as a policy solution are a strategy to influence and control human behavior. Facts are often presented to support a particular viewpoint about rules. Facts serve as persuasive argument especially when constructed convincingly to appeal to a person’s mind and perceived capacity to reason. Facts seem clean, logical, and reasonable. Providing facts and information in specific form or organization will persuade people, policy strategists hope, to their point of view about a solution. Facts such as numbers are used as an authority that tells a story to persuade people to an apparent logical conclusion. The basic assumption that rests behind using facts and information as persuasive strategy in policy actions is that given information people can make up their own minds.

Inducements, rules, and facts are general ideas about the ways policy solutions may be conceived. Rights and powers work as strategies when policy makers call upon the power of the government to act for individuals or groups, or when the power of decision-making is shifted to different people or groups. Though these strategies are discussed as ideal, theoretical types, they exist in the polis as human creations often working in combination with one another. Strategists present rational arguments as to why one policy solution is better or more logical than another, but these arguments
remain strategic representations crafted to win over the hearts and minds of those who might support a particular policy solution (p. 262).