

## เข็มทิศทางวิชาการ

### Policy Analysis Approach : A Reassessment

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In the incremental decision making model, the framework for policy formation is established as one in which harsh realities associated with human and organizational limitations pre-empted general application of a comprehensive decision process. The resultant perspective is one in which the coordination of policy is left to the implicit interaction of interests in the decision process (Lindblom, 1959; Lindblom, 1965; Wildavsky, 1964; Downs, 1973; Tawat, 1977; Sukit, 1980).

In the alternative model, that of democratically rational decision making, the source for rational policy is shifted from the bureaucratic structure to one in which significant input into the decision process is associated with citizen participation. The notion that bureaucracy should be responsive to clientele interests is the major determinant of policy (Redford, 1969; Altshuler, 1970; Ostrom, 1973).

In a final perspective, the focus is on a policy analysis which seeks to regain some of the formalism which incrementalism banished in a form which is responsive to the decision making environment. Some of the sources of this model are Dror's *Public Policymaking Reexamined*, Wade and Curry's *A Logic of Public Policy*, and a *Public Administration Review* Symposium on "Policy Analysis on Government : Alternatives to Muddling Through." This short paper shall explore the area of improving policy formation through improved organizational design, improved personnel expertise, the application of political economy techniques to the anticipation of program impact, and the decision process as a systems model.

#### I

Dror, in *Policymaking Reexamined*, invests significant time in developing what he refers to as an "optimal policymaking model." Incorporated in this model, the result of a synthesis of empirical evidence and personal intuitions, are prescriptions for producing what he considers a workable instrument. The cornerstone of this workability is the establishment in the decision process of standards which can be stated in practical terms. That is, in lieu of demanding that administrators comprehensively review all aspects of a decision problem, an "optimal" level is sufficient for decision making to occur at minimally acceptable levels. As the minimal acceptable level of decision making, Dror establishes "survival quality" as

descriptive. Unfortunately, he does not specify the exact nature of this or others of his categories of decision quality. Even without empirical reference, he does indicate that policy quality does vary over time, across policy areas and across agencies. As in most systems oriented material, these schemes are hardly interpretable in any meaningful application.

What Dror appears to regard as his contribution to the normative advancement of decision theory is the wedding of rational procedures with what he refers to as "extrarationality." In effect, this rationality is simple intuition. Dror sees this intuition as being based on the decision maker's perceptions of the problem, the available information about the problem, and the status of the organization. The implication is that one will not consider attempting to implement policy when it is felt that it requires resources beyond those of the organization. A significant problem would appear to spring from the problem of rationally controlling an extrarational component, assuming that extrarationality would not control the rational components.

In the traditional systems approach to problem solving, Dror places emphasis on the larger environment of organization. A primary determinant of policy is the feasibility of proposed policy in terms of demands placed on the environment. The demands occur in the form of required resources to implement (i.e. personnel) and of required costs of component. Clearly, this relates to the notion of democratic decision making in its consideration of the impact of the polity on the general population. The concern for particular clientele groups is less explicit in this model.

Another prime concern for Dror is the role of "metapolicymaking." That is, the decision process itself must be the target of examination and appraisal. By forcing the process to become the subject, the level of decision making will be refined so as to approach the optimal model. Exactly how organizations can perform this review is not clearly specified. What is suggested are several dimensions against which decision processes can be evaluated.

An important condition for good policy making is that it should be economically rational. Dror is especially concerned that cost-benefit criteria be applied to balancing the inputs with the outputs of the decision process. For example, one would not invest large amounts of resources in providing an output which was only marginally important. In the case of a marginal output, one should use only marginal inputs.

One should also be concerned with a perception of outputs as a function of the level of inputs. That is, input can be considered not only as raw materials which will be converted to output as a result of the decision process, but also as resources which the metapolicy process converts into consumption items for the micro-policy process.

This consideration leads to the position that outputs should be regarded as qualitative rather than quantitative variables. In Dror's perspective, one should seek a possible combination of available resources and required policy output. Again, this position seems to go beyond the simple position of minimizing costs to raw output.

As the cornerstone of this focus on the input-output status of the decision process, Dror considers feedback as the primary and essential catalyst. As in a traditional systems model, feedback acts as a controlling mechanism which allows the system to adjust to process imbalances.

Also in Dror's optimal model is a concern for inculcating the tradition of risk acceptance. Instead of entertaining only certain procedures, the organization should be willing to be innovative even if some losses occur. In this way, the evaluation of accepted or "best" which guides decision makers will be challenged and establish flexibility. In addition, Dror does suggest some more specific structural considerations. As a principle, he suggests a strategy of suboptimization. That is, one assigns a task to the minimal organizational unit which is capable of performing the task. Once large tasks are broken into smaller tasks, the need arises for a special integrating organization. These organizations are to insure that the activities of the smaller units are aggregated into the larger output objectives.

A second structural arrangement is the segregation of organizational units dedicated to planning, execution and evaluation. This measure to insure a presence of objectivity is complicated by the prescription that planning units work closely enough with executive units that output expectations are attainable in implementation.

The third key organizational prescription is for a large amount of built-in redundancy. That is, in order to have feedback loops operating at efficient levels, there should be many groups performing at least partially overlapping functions. While in appearance this is very wasteful, Dror expects that such an arrangement would result in optimal utilization of resources in the larger metapolicy level. Such an approach might be valid if one considers the duplication as a *de facto* experimental setting in which various combinations of input-output mixtures are found.

## II

As contrasted with Dror, the political economy approach of Wade and Curry seems an effort to incorporate the generality associated with the rational-comprehensive approach. That is, the techniques can be largely applied without reference to specific organizational settings. Dror, on the other hand, is highly specific to the organizational setting.

Wade and Curry, in *A Logic of Public Policy*, see government as performing three broad functions : organizing, ranking, and allocating. In performing its organizing function, the government is seen as an arena in which the individual interests of the citizens can interact. These interactions are seen as the demand component of governmental input. Faced with a demand from the populace, the government acts as a mechanism through which a policy making process can be formalized as a sequence of alternative policy considerations. Once the ranking of these demands is performed, the government then becomes the authoritative allocating vehicle for satisfying the demands. As one can see when the specific forms of input-output items are examined, the magnitude of this governmental process is a direct function of the input demands.

The most apparent input-output task of a government is the provision of public goods. These goods and services represent those items which for several reasons are provided not by the private market but by the collective agency. While there are traditional criteria to define public goods, the exact nature of these goods is subject to variation according to individual preferences. The necessary adjunct to the provision of goods is the allocation of the community resources to the production of these goods. In this area, Wade and Curry consider the impact of the aggregate community resource as determining the relative mix among various public goods.

The second major group of governmental tasks relates to the income and taxing functions. Briefly, the government responds to demands respecting the income distribution in the population. A specific instance of this might be the transfer type payments associated with income maintenance programs. An ancillary function is the allocation and distribution of the tax burden across income groups in the population. Basically, the question is one of selecting the tax principles (i. e. benefit or ability to pay) which are appropriate not only for transferring private resources to the collectivity but also are consistent with non-fiscal objectives of the community. The third broad category consists of the influence of public action on the larger economic system. In this case, one has the role of the government in insuring that economic stability occurs. This appears to relate most directly to the adoption of Keynesian monetary strategy: The second item is the protection of the community from externalities imposed by economic competition. That is, the government has the task of regulating these activities.

While there is a role for the government in the regulation of non-economic activity, the above items constitute the primary policy making functions of government. However, these activities can not be seen as isolated elements but rather as inter-related components of a larger effort. It is this level of integration which seems to be the most difficult problem for the political economy approach. That is, central coordination is a significant challenge to the administrative structure. However, it does directly confront Ostrom's challenge that administrators forget a value-free administration in favor of a normatively more aggressive position.

In addition to prescribing this larger role for administrative activity, Wade and Curry are concerned with establishing mechanisms through which public preferences can be revealed. The single most important instrument for accomplishing this, in a democratic state, is the voting mechanism. While other forms of decision making (such as arbitration) might be more appropriate in an authoritarian state, the variations on majority rule are given greatest value. That is, majority rule is seen as most often reflecting the aggregated preferences of the community.

Generally, it seems that the political economy approach is of limited practical utility. That is, difficulties in determining such fundamental questions as what constitutes public goods and how communities are to be constructed appear to prohibit the implementation of the approach generally. Its primary contribution might be that of allowing a more careful examination of the public problem in a situation where the rational comprehensive method could not be applied. That is, by using key assumptions of the economic model, information costs and possible policy alternatives could be kept to acceptable levels. Also, one might expect that it could be of even greater importance to a restricted set of public policy questions.

### III

Dror and Wade and Curry offer two perspectives through which policy might be examined in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Clearly, there are other approaches which emphasize other aspects of this problem. *The Public Administration Review's* symposium on policy analysis in government offers suggestions. As one might expect, the central theme in this piece focuses on the values associated with the professionalization of the administrative class. Briefly, the quality of analysis is a function of the ability of educational institutions to produce skilled professionals which can be employed in key administrative positions. These analysts, well schooled in the quantitative skills of social science and tempered with the exposure to the practical difficulties of non-academic problem solving, can become valuable additions to the policy making bodies at all levels of government.

In this collection one can see a possible reemergence of the science of administration approach which characterized the Wilsonian administrative theory. That is, there is a tendency to expect that the creation of more quantitative methodologies and the expansion of large management information systems will allow administrators to neutrally influence the process of policy formation. However, the purpose of this involvement is not at all certain. In Ostrom's terms, this collection represents a restatement of the traditional paradigm.

In summary, the policy analysis approach represents a new synthesis of traditional approaches to public policy formation rather than a unique development to replace the the difficulties associated with the incremental and the rational policies.

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