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Public Policy and Decision-Making as an
Approach to Analyze Public Administration

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present and assess a theoretical approach to the study of public administration, which is called "public policy and decision-making".

As there might be no easy agreement on what this formula designates, I shall start with a reference to policy sciences, which, in my view, provide the paradigm for public policy and decision-making (2).

Following the dual character of policy sciences as a descriptive and a prescriptive approach, I shall go on to elaborate the descriptive vocabulary of this approach covering basically features of decision making systems (3.1), the decision-making process (3.2), and the policy output (3.3).

The prescriptive tools offered by the policy sciences and applied in practice shall be summarized in section 4.

Finally I shall try to assess the applicability of this approach to devising an encyclopaedia of public administration (5).

2. Characteristics of the Approach

Obviously, what is called here "public policy and decision-making" is closely akin to the so-called policy sciences. There is, however, not yet a commonly accepted paradigm of policy sciences; in order to specify what in my view policy sciences means and what, therefore, its bearing upon public administration in general and public policy and decision-making in particular might be, I shall attempt to briefly elaborate its main features.

Policy Sciences is generally regarded as a relatively new approach in political science as well as in the study of public administration (Rhodes 1979), although in practice it was carried out a long time (Heclo 1972), before Harold Lasswell (1951) coined this expression. He already stated the twofold character of policy sciences as an attempt to a) analyze the decision-making process and b) improve the level of information available to the decision-maker by providing him with analyses and studies of substantive policy problems.

On the one hand, this dual goal mirrors the distinction the English speaking world makes between politics and policy, between process and contents; on the other hand, it might account for some of the confusions and problems later on confronting those regarding themselves as policy scientists:

- the varying degree to which process or contents are to be investigated;
- denomination of the branch in singular (policy science) or in plural (policy sciences);
- its descriptive as well as its prescriptive character.

2.1 Policy Sciences, Policy Analysis, Policy Studies, and Meta-Policy-Making

Although the study of politics should have been expected as the core of political science, this has, for a relatively long period of time, only been partly the case; apart from political philosophy the branch, guided by the model of democracy, rather focused, on the input-dimension, i.e. elections and interest group influence, political elites etc., of the political process than to investigate the conversion process or the outputs of the politico-administrative system. In the USA the shift of attention toward the conversion process and outputs took place only in the 1960s roughly indicated by the works of Braybrooke/Lindblom (1965) and Wildavsky (1964) on the one and Dye (1966) or Sharkansky (1970) on the other hand.

The output-research, although undoubtedly concerned with the contents of public decision-making, does not meet the particularity of Lasswell's second aspect, as it is not prescriptive and related to practical policy problems. Unfortunately, Dye (1976) and others (e.g. Schaefer 1972, Heclo 1972) have labelled research focussing on outputs "policy analysis" and, thereby, somewhat blurred the difference to primarily applied studies of policy issues, which so far were regarded as policy analysis in contrast to the more behavioral, descriptive studies of politics as a decision-making process and outputs as its result.

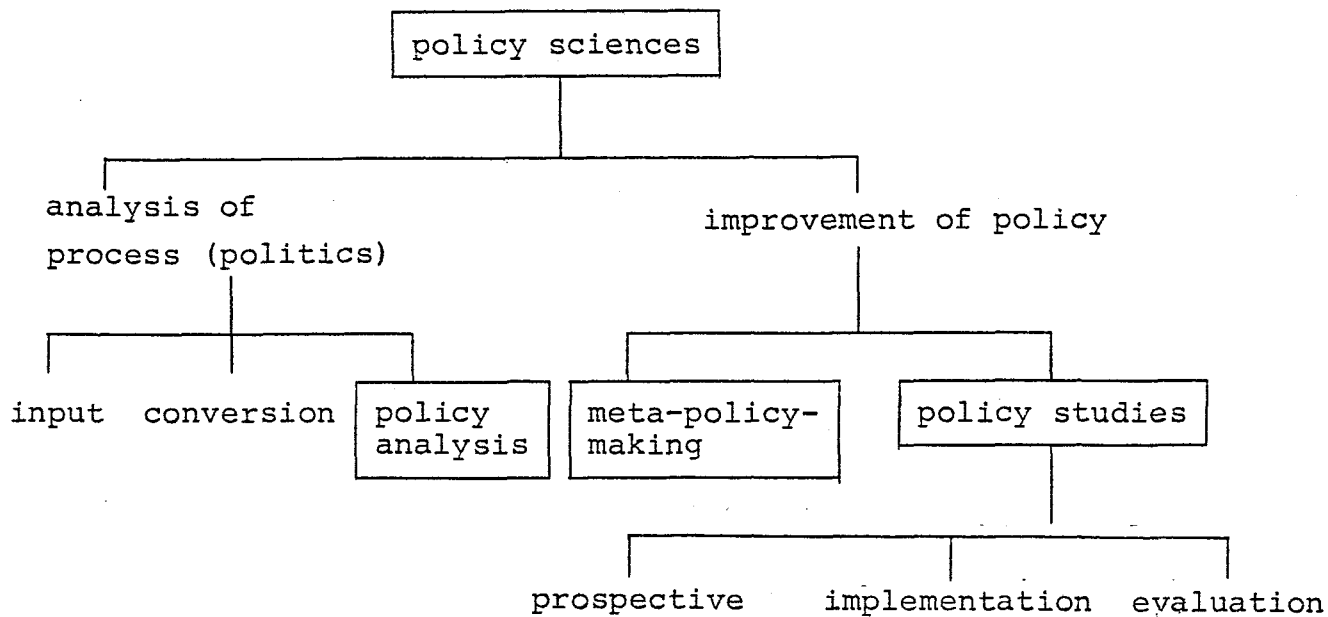
For clarity's sake I shall further on call the applied research "policy studies", although from a historical point of view it owns the label "policy analysis".

Although Lasswell's 1951 programmatic statement had to be repeated at the beginning of the 1970s (Lasswell 1971, Dror 1971) to promote prescriptive, applied policy studies, these have been carried out in the 1950s in particular by the RAND Corporation with reference to defense problems and in the 1960s in connection with the "war-against-poverty"

programmes drawing increasingly stronger on social science than on economic analysis, which, however, remained an essential tool in the 1965 institutionalization of PPBS (Ukeles 1977). Prospective studies employing cost-benefit-analysis and other tools were increasingly accompanied at the end of the 1960s by evaluation studies, and later on, by implementation studies, a mark-stone being set by the Pressman/Wildavsky (1973) study. This trend toward evaluation and implementation studies, following an initial emphasis on planning can also be observed in the Federal Republic of Germany (Derlien 1976; Mayntz 1980). It goes without saying that the increased emphasis on substantive policy questions and the concern for practical policy studies has lead to the establishment of several special journals: Policy Sciences, Evaluation Quarterly, Policy Studies Journal, to mention just a few, and several Annual Reviews of the field.

Finally, it should be recollected that Dror (1968) strongly advocated what he called meta-policymaking as a device to improve the decision-making system, i.e. structure and process. He, thus, added a prescriptive aspect to the so far descriptive process-centered aspect of policy sciences stressing the practical need of planning and decision-making techniques. I shall interpret the practical application of these tools as an attempt to rationalize the decision-making process.

To sum up what has been tried to elaborate so far, the various branches of policy science could be sketched as follows:



2.2 Policy Science or Policy Sciences?

There has been some controversy not only about the various aspects of policy sciences, but also about the adequate denomination of the entire approach. This somehow artificial debate is only to be mentioned here, in order to highlight an important trait of the approach under consideration: its interdisciplinary character. The interdisciplinarity was emphasized by Lasswell (1951) as well as by Dror in his article in the first volume of the journal Policy Sciences, when Dror suggested as a compromise to use the plural, but grammatically the singular to indicate the unity of the interdisciplinary approach (Dror 1970, p.137, FN 7). The interdisciplinarity emphasized by using the plural while maintaining the unity and uniqueness of the approach can be traced in empirical process analyses as well as in prescriptive content studies. The former generally draw at least on

organization theory (organizational sociology, administrative science, and business administration), the latter on a variety of disciplines traditionally concerned with specific policies, especially economics and sociology including their research methods and statistical tools.

2.3 Descriptive vs. Prescriptive Character

As mentioned before policy sciences in Lasswell's broad approach has a dual goal, an analytical and a prescriptive one (Dror 1975). Of course, the distinction underlying the picture on p. 5 between analysis and improvement, empirical and normative, descriptive and prescriptive, process and contents, politics and policy is artificial and basically analytical. The decision-making process might affect the contents and output (Nagel 1980) and should therefore, for instance, be taken into account when, in an attempt of meta-policy-making, a new planning system is designed. On the other hand, decision-making techniques aiming at a rationalization of the process should be scrutinized with respect to the validity of their empirical premises (Tribe 1972, Wildavsky 1969, Schick 1977, Derlien 1978) and their behavioral consequences. The distinction is mentioned here less for methodological reasons (Raynolds 1975) than to indicate the specific role understanding and increasingly professional attitude of those regarding themselves as policy scientists (Lazarsfeld 1975) engaged with meta-policy-making and policy studies. After Dror's (1967) call there has, undoubtedly, been a development towards professionalization indicated not merely by the mushrooming of new journals and books, but, more important, by the establishment of special university training programmes (Engelbert 1977, König 1981) and - in this country - annual conferences of sociologists (Ferber 1977) and political scientists (Ellwein 1980) concerned with substantive policy questions as well as, last not least, the foundation of a professional association

(Derlien 1981). Similar developments were observed in other countries, too (Dror 1974; Public Administration Review Symposium 1977).

This brief outline of the policy sciences approach containing both, public policy and decision-making as its objects, should have made clear that this approach has a principal bearing on the task of conceptualizing an encyclopaedia:

- the approach can be assumed to have some descriptive power, on which administrative science can draw,
- it, secondly, provides practice with a variety of instruments, which should be covered by an encyclopaedia
- thirdly, the target group of an encyclopaedia to a certain degree might be public administration itself and therefore policy analysts in and around governments, which should find their specific intellectual roots in an encyclopaedia.

However, in order to properly evaluate the merits of this approach it is necessary to display the basic descriptive categories (3.) and important tools proposed by decision-making and policy studies (4.).

3. Descriptive Categories for the Analysis of Decision-Making Systems

In this attempt to give an overview of the contribution the policy sciences approach could possibly make to an effort to map administrative reality I shall restrict myself to elaborating the main points and shall not go into subtleties like, for instance, micro-aspects of individual decision behavior (perception, cognitive dissonance, or risky shift). A further reservation should be made: the categorial system presented here has developed out of research and university teaching and is occasionally a synthesis of various, not only the policy sciences' intellectual influence; this holds in particular for section 3.1.

In order to describe the functioning of administrative macrosystems or individual agencies one should, in my view, distinguish the following aspects:

- properties of the system under scrutiny, the borders of which have to be defined according to the research question; I should like to call this aspect the setting and the structure of the respective decision-making-system (3.1);
- secondly, a phase model of decision-making-processes within that setting and its structure (3.2);
- thirdly, the categorization of outputs of the decision-making-system (3.3).

3.1 The Setting and the Structure of Decision-Making-Systems

A crucial problem is to define the borderline of systems in an abstract way, i.e. without regard to a special problem or question, as defining a decision-system is a matter of theoretical relevance.

In so far, it is much easier to elaborate the institutional approach to public administration and neatly separate local from state government, ministries from agencies a.s.o.; what can be done, however, is to start with

- 3.1.1 the decision issue, which can be described in terms of a public task or a policy area, and then go on to
- 3.1.2 the actors inside and outside the institutional system, who are interested, involved in, or affected by the process and its outcome. These actors can be described in terms of their group affiliation or their official position and institutional membership. This leads us to
- 3.1.3 interests and goals, individual and institutional ones as well as
- 3.1.4 conflicts, actual and potential, between the actors, and their

- 3.1.5 power relationships, which can best be analyzed in terms of the power bases (French/Raven 1960) available: expert power (information), reward power (material sanctions, for instance financial resources), referential power (leadership, charisma), legitimate power (authority), last but not least physical power (force) as the ultima ratio in conflict resolution. The power structure within the system is relatively easily analyzable, for instance within a ministry the relationship between minister and section head in terms of expert power and authority; between federal and state or state and local governments in terms of reward power. This also enables us to judge reversely subsystem autonomy. A curcial point in the power structure is the destribution of legitimate power,
- 3.1.6 of authority or jurisdiction as it is fixed constitutionally or in another normative way. This not only affects the balance between the various bases of power, but also the distribution of reward power, e.g. by the jurisdiction on organizational, financial, or personell matters. Most important, however, is the distribution of formal authority in programmatic matters. It should be obvious that this is a point where a lot of juridical knowledge has to be fed into the analysis. From a theoretical point, however, these data enable us to assess
- 3.1.7 centralization, hierarchy, colleagual or monocratic, federal or unitary systems, or participation rights.
- 3.1.8 Formal roles as defined by institutional membership of the actors (3.1.2) and their jurisdiction (3.1.6) as well as their position within a formal system (3.1.7) could then be regarded almost as theoretical constructs.
- 3.1.9 Another important category are the existing decision-making-programmes, which more or less conditionally or elastically guide the decision behavior or constitute

restrictions to the advancement of subsystem goals. A typology of programmes can be developed either with respect to policy areas, to output (3.3 below), or to resources (organizational regulations, personnel, budgetary, or programmatic; 3.1.6).

In any case, the survey of relevant programmes enables us to judge the

- 3.1.10 degree of formalization and regulation within the respective system.
- 3.1.11 It can also be helpful to classify programmes according to their hierarchical status as constitutional, federal, state, local and to distinguish between internal administrative programmes, frame legislation, and executive programmes.
- 3.1.12 Once we have arrived at some measure of centrality/decentrality (3.1.7) or autonomy (3.1.6) we can broaden the frame of reference and analyze interorganizational decision making, networks of relatively autonomous actors, e.g. investigate state-local-relationships or the interrelations between different government branches in the process of implementing a programme. These macrosystems are normally described in the same terminology as individual agencies are; in so far interorganizational analysis is not a new theory, but rather a new question. It might be useful, however, to introduce new descriptions from other disciplines the broader the system under investigation, for instance, measure the degree of politicization and political support, the costs of system maintenance, learning capacity, governability, complexity a.s.o.
- 3.1.13 In order to set the system into motion and to describe the processes going on in more detail, one should distinguish a few aspects of the decision-making process, a model of which will be outlined in 3.2. As these aspects: control, coordination, conflict resolution, and information processing (Mayntz/Scharpf 1972, 1975) overlap the individual phases of the process model and

often characterize several of the phases, they should be described here. Furthermore, the activities related to these aspects are often assigned to particular institutions as their functions, for instance to coordinating committees or agencies preoccupied with research (information generation). To a certain extent, they are contained in the traditional POSDCORB scheme.

- 3.1.14 This holds true in particular for control processes involved most universally in hierarchical relations in and between institutions. Two aspects should be separated, which are implied in the English term "control": Directing (Steuerung) and monitoring (Kontrolle) and which can be regarded as connected in cybernetic systems. With respect to directing one could distinguish various means of steering: procedural and substantive programmes vs. ad hoc orders as forms of the exercise of legitimate power (authority, 3.1.7); furthermore means of indirect steering employing other resources (or bases of power, 3.1.6). In any case, the decision premises of other actors are more or less influenced.
- 3.1.15 Monitoring processes feeding back information about the actual operation of other actors and allowing for analyses of deviations from previously set goals a.s.o. (3.1.14) can be typified, for instance, according to degree of institutionalization, internal vs. external location, criteria (result, legality, economic, individual performance), intervals, and objects (programme, budget, organization, personnel) (Derlien 1980).
- 3.1.16 Both aspects of control have been subjected to attempts of rationalization by devising management systems, which could be classified in this context.
- 3.1.17 Coordination as a process of combining the special activities of actors with respect to time, location, and substantive fit should also be described in terms of institutionalization vs. self-coordination, programmed

or latent a.s.o. Of special importance are coordination problems due to "selective perception and departmental identification (Dearborne/Simon 1958) resulting in suboptimal solutions (Scharpf 1972).

3.1.18 The phenomenon of conflict can be accounted for by referring to type (goal vs. means conflict), mechanisms of resolution (objective analysis, hierarchical (authoritative), persuasion, bargaining, and other "quasi-solutions"); furthermore institutionalization and roles adopted could be distinguished.

3.1.19 Information generation, transformation, and processing most closely of the above mentioned aspects refers to the "genuine" decision-making process (3.2); in addition, most decision-making tools (4.) can be subsumed here as rationalization devices.

Information processing is closely linked to organization structure, as the latter determines the communication system and the problems associated with it (for instance filters; lack of feedback).

The categories I have just mentioned are more or less applied in most studies of the policy process; they reveal most obviously the interdisciplinary character of policy sciences, in particular its heritage from organization theory.

3.2 The Policy Process

Easton's (1965) system theoretical approach and Lindblom's (1968) paradigm seem to provide the basis for most phase models of the policy process. Within the Eastonian input-conversion-output model the conversion process has been subdivided into a varying number of phases by those authors who analyse the decision-making process in and around government institutions. This process model much more pronouncedly constitutes a genuine contribution of the policy sciences approach than the vocabulary mentioned in the previous section.

3.2.1 Inputs

Inputs in Easton's terminology are demands for and supports of a policy, originating in a state of the environment perceived as unsatisfactory or problematic compared with the goals (level of aspiration) of an actor. Policy analysis has paid attention particularly to economic variables to explain the final output of the system. It is, however, questionable if the environment of a decision-making system in general and a politico-administrative system in particular can be described in a problem typology, as these problems do not exist per se, but are generated dynamically and perceived in the light of individual or collective references themselves being subjected to change. A corresponding problem has to be coped with in the related rationalization attempts: the development of social indicators or the specification of impacts in evaluation studies. Operationalizations here ultimately involve value judgements and result in normative problems known from the theory of public choice and public tasks (Staatsaufgaben).

The approach has been more successful in theoretically incorporating input-structures (institutions, norms and attitudes, elections), through which problems are perceived and articulated in order to become a political issue. Insofar, the systems approach in policy sciences, too, proves to be at least a useful heuristic tool.

3.2.2 Conversion Process

The conversion process and its conceptualization is of particular relevance to administrative science, as public administration usually plays an important role in both of the basic stages of this process, in policy formation and in the implementation of a policy. The individual phases distinguished in either of these stages vary from research project to research project,

as they depend on the research problem and on the availability of empirical data.

3.2.2.1 Policy Formation

Most studies distinguish between problem articulation (through input structures), problem perception and definition by those engaged in policy formation, problem analysis, generation of alternatives, assessment of alternatives, and final selection of an alternative to solve the problem.

This phase model of decision-making is strongly influenced by the normative, "closed" model of decision-making; most researchers agree that there are feedback-processes between individual phases, the distinction of which often is blurred in practice. As a heuristic model, however, it helps to organize facts and, in particular, to cope with the time dimension of the process. As such, however, it is a relatively empty shell, unless filled with some of the categories describing the setting and the structure of the system (3.1).

3.2.2.2 Policy Implementation

The implementation process has attracted the interest of policy sciences only relatively late. It has grown out of evaluation studies which have demonstrated the importance of the way in which programmes are executed. Difficulties arise in defining the starting point of the implementation process: implementation problems are regularly anticipated in policy formation or programmes are adapted or specified by successive regulations after they have been authorized. After all, it is only recently that implementation research follows theoretical interests and raises these questions (Mayntz 1980): applied, commissioned implementation studies normally take a given point in time as the beginning.

Theoretically implementation studies heavily rely on organizational theory - apparent from their concern with processes of goal displacement and organizational efficiency in general. Occasionally it is argued that implementation research, which regularly analyses a greater number of organizations and their interplay, constitute a new frame of reference in organization theory, as it replaces the traditional focal organization by a network of organizations. Seldomly, however, are these networks analyzed as entities of their own and particular properties elaborated, which would explain implementation problems. In my view, it is rather the focal programme that constitutes the point of reference for analysis thereby running the risk of overlooking the multifunctionality of most agencies involved in the implementation of several programmes.

3.3 Output

The most significant theoretical contribution of the "public policy and decision-making" approach of the descriptive branch of policy sciences, is its attempt to classify policy outputs. Aiming at generalization these attempts, starting with the famous Lowi (1964) typology, had to abstract from every-day-classifications ("housing", "environmental" etc. policies), but are, of course, dependent on the theoretical interests of the researcher. I shall briefly mention some classificatory systems, most of which have been used in one or the other form.

3.3.1 Sectoral Classification

Most common in practice is a system which I should like to call sectoral and which distinguishes in a rather traditional way policy areas, policies, and programmes according to the agency system (Ressort-system), for instance separating labour market policy from urban or foreign or social policy. This system has a close kinship to the system of institutionalized public tasks, and monetary outputs can in most cases be inferred from budget statistics or are even

aggregated (in the FRG in the so-called functional plan of the budget). The problem with this sectoral, as I prefer to call it, classification is that it might vary from country to country and that it is rough and changing over time, therefore allowing for comparative research only very limitedly.

3.3.2 Functional Classification

Another typology, employed basically in organization theory, pays attention to those outputs and decisions referring to the administrative system itself rather than to policies delivered to the public (Luhmann 1970). The latter are contained in the broad category of programme decisions, which, of course, can easily be differentiated according to one of the other typologies. Apart from programme decisions one can separately treat budget, personnel, and organizational decisions, i.e. decisions about resources (3.1.6), which, for instance, might affect the policy process in its formative as well as in its implementation stage and which from a normative point of view should be related to each other (but seldomly are in practice) in the form of a programme budget. (4.1.4).

3.3.3 Logical Classification

An alternative way to classify outputs or rather programmes (as means to achieve outputs) is their analysis from a logical or methodological point of view: according to their design as operational or ambiguous in their goal formulation, single or multigoal programme with conflicting or transitive goals a.s.o. Programmes also vary in design between general and experimental; or one could possibly distinguish between law and regulation as alternative juridical forms of programmes.

3.3.4 Welfare Classification

Being at a loss how to label the Lowi typologies and related ones (Jann 1981) I take this expression in order to mention the distinction between

- distributive and redistributive,
- regulative and self-regulative,
- and constituent policies.

Although not mutually exclusive, these categories can easily be theoretically related to the policy process, especially to the level of conflict.

3.3.5 Degree of Intervention

Another typology inspired by the above mentioned welfare classification but basically developed in implementation research takes as its criterion the degree of intervention of the instruments adopted by a programme into the environment of the system by constituting more or less binding decision premises for the individual (Mayntz 1980a):

- imperatives (traffic regulations),
- incentives (tax reductions to induce investment),
- transfer payments (subsidies),
- physical treatment (e.g. in hospitals),
- infrastructural facilities,
- information (weather forecast) and paedagogical programmes, indicative planning,
- civil law bargaining.

These instruments and their possible mix obviously explain some of the variations in goal achievement of a programme by allowing for behavioral explanations of reactions in the target population.

3.3.6 Efficiency criteria

Occasionally policy output was classified by postulating certain properties derived in an ultimately normative way from some efficiency notion of public policy (for instance Mayntz/Scharpf 1975). Policies are then classified according to legality and legi-

timacy, selectivity of interest representation, comprehensiveness, innovativeness, incrementalism, effectiveness (goal achievement). The validity of this kind of typology is apparently highly questionable, as the criteria are either derived from system goals or personal preferences of the researcher (Derlien 1974, 1980).

Anyway, despite problems of operationalization, these typologies can in principle be combined in order to describe output multidimensionally and, thus, more adequately.

3.4 Feedback

The last phase in the policy cycle, completing formation and implementation, are feedbacks of the results of previous decisions. Since cybernetical models have shaped our thinking, we are more accustomed now to look for this phase. Theoretically, there is a close connection with monitoring processes (3.1.15). Cybernetics, used as a heuristic tool, lead us to investigate, if there are natural or rationally constructed feedbacks, what their criteria are, and how they operate. Rationally constructed feedbacks may stem from management science or could have the form of policy studies (evaluation and implementation research). The question is to which extent the system makes use of the information provided, revises former decisions, and moves goal orientedly. From the point of view of organization theory feedbacks are linked to the problems of organizational learning and programmatic as well as structural change.

4. Instruments for Rationalizing Public Policy and Decision-Making

What makes policy sciences a distinctive approach is its engagement in shaping practical policy by devising metapolitics and carrying through policy studies. This professional role understanding is built upon a variety of tools to be applied in the policy-making process, which are interpreted here from a sociological point of view as instruments aiming at rationalization of the decision-making process.

Whereas the descriptive categories and propositions provide us with tools to analyze the process, the prescriptive instruments have been put into practice and, therefore, constitute administrative reality in many countries, a number of policy areas, and some of the phases of the policy cycle. This should be reason enough to pay attention to these techniques in an encyclopaedia.

For the purpose of this paper, however, it may suffice to give a broad overview of the classes of decision-making techniques. These instruments can be grouped roughly along the phases of the policy-process model summarized in 3.2.

4.1 Planning

Rationalization of the policy formation stage is at the core of planning, although in a very limited sense; the emphasis is on generation and transformation of information, while the political aspects of public planning are more or less neglected. Whereas the analytically oriented part of the policy scientists are interested in the very politics aspect of the planning process (Braybrooke/Lindblom 1965; Scharpf 1971), the tendency not to take politics into account in the logic of planning tools and on the part of government advisors has in my view two ultimate reasons: the theory of

public decision-making processes has not yet developed far enough and, even if it had, many factors might not be foreseeable on principle grounds; secondly, the professionals more or less follow in their role understanding the classical politics-administration or line-staff dichotomies.

Without intending to be exclusive the techniques available, then, can be classified according to the sub-phases of the policy formation stage:

4.1.1 Instrument of forecasting, as for instance trend extrapolations, scenarios, Delphi-technique, or simulation of future developments, social indicators.

4.1.2 Production of alternatives: brainstorming.

4.1.3 Assessment of alternatives: systems analysis, cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis, simulation of the implementation process (Böhret 1980) and of impacts.

4.1.4 Integrating programming and resources

We have to name, of course, the various instruments or systems which try to integrate programming and budgeting: PPBS, RCB, ZBB. It should be mentioned, however, that there seems to be a lack of instruments which try to relate programming to the other resources: personnel and organization structure. Personnel capacity required for policy implementation is occasionally taken into account, but special organizational arrangements are hardly considered, at least in practice.

4.1.5 Political feasibility

As an exception to the rule analysts seem to be asked for studies of political feasibility on certain occasions; I do, however, not know if there are any tools or patterns of reasoning recommended which go beyond common sense and scientific guesswork.

4.2 Implementation Studies

As I have pointed out above, there is a growing tendency to have the implementation process investigated. In my view, these studies do not require or employ specific techniques going beyond the inventory of organizational analysis and studies in decision-making, although there is a slight shift in perspective: the focal organization is replaced by the focal programme as the point of reference.

The findings of these studies gradually lead to the development of a policy typology (3.3.5) which allows to anticipate the suitability of the mix of instruments in the planning process or to stress for de-regulation.

4.3 Evaluation Studies

In principle, implementation studies are just a special brand of evaluation studies. Evaluation studies, however, are predominantly concerned with the impact of policies in the environment and only seldomly take the implementation process into account when trying to explain a lack of goal achievement. I do not want to go into methodological subtleties and the variety of different designs; it should only be recollected that evaluators are increasingly disappointed about the reception of their results in the policy process.

4.4 Meta-Policymaking

What Dror (1968) called meta-policymaking is the proposal to develop a) techniques as the afore mentioned, b) arrange them in systems implying, c) organizational, d) budgetary, and e) personnel factors, in order to ultimately make the politico-administrative system more "intelligent" and self-reflexive. Meta-policymaking is, therefore, an ongoing process the results of which are indicated in the previous sections. Practically important is the existence of organizational units occupied with this job. As a scientific category meta-policymaking yet enables us to hint at two more

problems policy scientists are interested in: (techniques of) direct citizen participation as, for instance, advocacy planning to overcome weaknesses of input-structures; and problems of the relationship between administrative practice and scientific advice.

These tools policy analysts have developed or work with should be contained in an encyclopaedia. Besides their logical construction, though, it should also be conveyed which behavioral consequences their application engenders and what the practical experiences are in general.

5. Assessment of the Approach

In his letter of invitation Klaus König has pointed out several of the criteria which should be met by an approach applied to an encyclopaedia:

- it should descriptively cover as many aspects of public administration as possible,
- it should be general enough to allow for comparisons of the highly differentiated administrative reality,
- it should be interdisciplinary and thereby achieve integration of the various administrative sciences,
- it should be suited to reflect administrative theory and practice.

Like the other approaches to be discussed in this workshop, "public policy and decision-making" surely does not meet all of these standards, but has besides some advantages also a number of shortcomings some of which I shall hint at.

5.1 Bridging the Politics-Administration Dichotomy

Originating in political science the approach clearly helps to bridge the classical gap between politics and administration in the science of public administration. In the same way it can be maintained that, from the point of view of

organization theory, it shares the open system perspective by relating the organization to its environment.

However, the conceptualization of the administrative relationships with the political context is accomplished rather from the angle of the political than the administrative system; political scientists have discovered public administration after having been predominantly concerned with inputs.

5.2 One-Dimensionality

Consequently, public administration defined as the conversion system in the policy cycle is analyzed only insofar as it is politically relevant. Other factors and problems, particularly the "technical" aspects of most of the POSDCORB functions are not taken into account or at best interpreted as restricting factors to the decision-making process in programmatic matters.

5.3 Neglect of Resource Dimension

Its roots in political science lead to a relative neglect of the "factors of production", of questions about organization, personnel, and budget. Although the analysis of budgetary processes has been of main interest to policy scientists, only the behavioral aspects or planning systems were investigated or designed, respectively; comparative institutional analyses are lacking, however, and basic budgetary techniques as well as budgetary law are not treated.

Similarly, personnel administration is not covered by the approach, nor are behavioral processes in the personnel sector (recruitment, attitudes of civil servants) researched. This critique can be extended to organizational problems, too. In so far, the policy sciences approach really has to be either interdisciplinary or leaves these questions entirely to other disciplines.

5.4 Capacity as a Meta-Language

The approach is relatively abstract and commonly not used in administrative practice. It, therefore, could provide the encyclopaedia with a general terminological frame covering a variety of areas of public administration in different countries and cultures. It is rather a meta-language than a theory; a meta-language which enables us to describe similar phenomena under one abstract category, which are probably termed differently in practice (Rose 1976). In my view, the most yielding theoretical contribution could be the conceptualization of process and output.

5.5 Possibility of Functional Interpretation of Structures

The terminology sketched in sections 3.2 and 3.3 can also be taken as a reference point for a functional analysis of administrative structures. Either similar structures, for instance local governments or mechanism of citizen participation, are described in terms of their functions in the policy process; or specific phases or aspects of the decision process (3.1.13) are taken as point of reference in order to find out in which structures these phenomena/functions take place, are located, or assigned to.

5.6 Lack of Institutional Description

On the other hand, it may have become pretty obvious so far that the policy sciences approach suffers - at least for the purpose of compiling an encyclopaedia - from a lack of empirical, institutional, and juridical data.

Its capacity as a meta-language and its value for structural-functional analysis are paid for by difficulties to describe or define these data in the every day terminology used in practice. In other words: comparative analysis is eased, but description of singular phenomena in singular contexts is impaired. This deficiency became most obvious in 3.1, when I tried to elaborate categories for the analysis of the setting and structure of decision-making processes.

5.7 Value of Instrumental Techniques

On the other hand, the policy sciences have developed or work with a series of instrumental techniques and decision-making tools in the functional area of programmatic decision-processes, which constitute reality and, therefore, should be contained in an encyclopaedia. These attempts to rationalize processes should, however, be evaluated in the light of practical experience.

5.8 Need for a Truly Interdisciplinary Approach

Nobody considering an approach for the purpose at stake would assume or maintain its exclusiveness. The presumed lack of fit to institutional factors should induce us to deliberate ways of incorporating different approaches into the public policy and decision-making perspective. In particular, organizational theory and organizational law should be candidates for a combination as well as instrumental information about budgeting and personnel administration (Wamsley/Zald 1976).

The criticisms put forward against a specific scientific approach to the analysis of public administration to a certain extent reveal a basic problem of administrative science(s): that we don't have a coherent, interdisciplinary theory yet, which is well corroborated and generally accepted. Building an encyclopaedia on a theory, then, would mean, that we first of all had to develop such a general theory.

An alternative, in my view more promising, procedure would be to base the work not exclusively on a theory or an approach, but on structures and problems of public administration. Of course, at least problems cannot be identified without reference to theory; but it would be easier to achieve consensus about problems, which in most cases can be described in terms of alternative theoretical approaches, than to reach an agreement about the value of divergent theories. Their capacity would be revealed when theory is applied to the analysis of structures and problems.

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