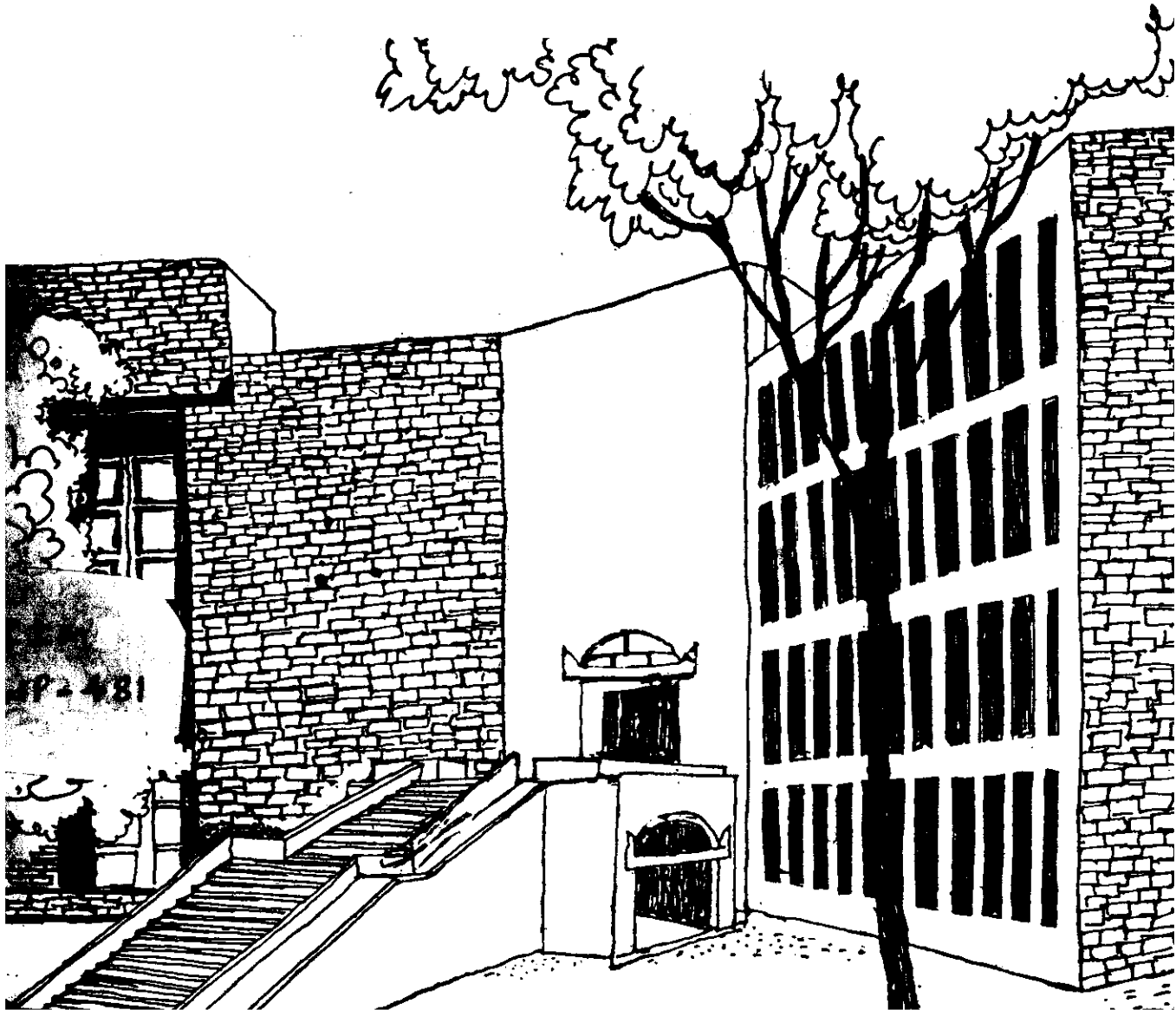




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ON METHODOLOGIES FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

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Abstract

ON METHODOLOGIES FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

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Policy Analysis as a major form of applied social science is a comparatively recent phenomenon in public systems. This paper examines the nature of methodologies in policy analysis and their relationship to social science theory and implementation of public programmes. It argues that methodological choice in policy analysis implies a prior theory and ideology and is linked to the policy analysis outcome. A typology of policy analysis methodologies is developed and through critique and reconstruction the methodology of critical policy analysis is outlined. Examples of policy analysis are analysed in the context of India and U.S. The possibilities and limitations of critical policy analysis that transcends and synthesises conventional policy analytic methodologies are explored.

On Methodologies for Policy Analysis

1. Introduction:

Policy Analysis is a comparatively recent phenomenon in public systems. Its origin was in the sixties in the United States and in India it is just beginning to come into vogue. In this paper, I propose to examine the nature of methodologies for policy analysis and their relationship with social science theory and implementation. Based on a critique of policy analysis, this paper attempts to develop an alternative, critical framework.

2. Background:

The growth of policy analysis has been characterised by the application of various methodologies that are prevalent in social science inquiry and research. This growth is historically parallel to the growth of methodology in natural sciences over the last three hundred years. The positive tradition in social sciences has made enormous efforts to attain the status of natural sciences through rigorous, precise, and analytic methodologies. The domination of the empirical method in social sciences and its application in policy analysis is a clear sign of this effort.

Methodology can be defined in two ways: (a) the epistemological assumptions on which the search for knowledge is based, (b) the set of methods, techniques, and approaches that are used in the acquisition and analysis of data for the solution of a problem. In this paper the term methodology is used in both those meanings. The application of social science knowledge for attaining practical ends is called the instrumental use of knowledge. Policy analysis, in the mainstream, is concerned with such instrumental use of knowledge for the design of interventions for social change. The direct parallel is that of engineering that has enabled mankind to technically control, dominate and exploit nature for human welfare. I shall argue that each methodology not only generates a distinctive set of conclusions but also implies a prior, often implicit, choice of theory and ideology. I also argue that an uncritical choice of methodology will lead to predictable conclusions which support, maintain and reproduce the underlying ideology. The current disputes about differences among methodologies, breakdown of communication among them, their irrelevance to social practice, and their fragmentation and specialisation are recognised as major problems. I would like to add that policy analysis viewed from the perspective of a critique of methodologies, is a relatively new area. Hence a spirit of modesty and provisionality must accompany any efforts in this direction.

3. Approaches to Policy Analysis: A Critique

Drawing from fragmentary and widely dispersed concepts, I have constructed a typology of policy analysis methodologies (Table 1) which explores the characteristics of their dimensions. This typology has been constructed in order to generate insights into the predictable relationship between the methodological choice and policy analysis outcomes in a wide spectrum. The classification of methodologies is intended to portray the major theoretical traditions in policy analysis. The classification is of "pure" types juxtaposing major differences, though in reality there would be some combination of methods. Two caveats however must be emphasised: (a) typologies and classifications reflect a view focussing on appearances; (b) tabular representations tend to suggest that the different approaches are equally important or powerful. This is not so, especially here. The mainstream positivist approach is "hegemonic" and dominates others in the Gramscian sense of ideological control. Logically, however, Table 1 illustrates important and predictable sets of relationships and tendencies (not in an absolute sense) among the theory, and methodology of three influential positions in policy analysis. Table 1 is self explanatory. However, I will analyse some important issues in different approaches and clarify their implications.

Table 1

Models of Policy Analysis Methodologies:

A Profile of their Dimensions

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Model</u>		
	<u>Mainstream</u>	<u>Reformist-Normative</u>	<u>Critical</u>
1. Ideology	Status quo; Control over man and nature	Evolutionary change; Participatory trans- formation; Man-Nature harmony; Benevolent elite.	Radical change; Liberation and social justice
2. Theory	Positivism; modernisation	Social learning; Decentralism	Praxis; Holism
3. Goals	Explanation and prediction	Contextual interpre- tation of meanings; Sustainable, human change.	Critique to expose under- lying assump- tions, values and interests; Structural change; Demo- cratic control.
4. Nature of knowledge	Value-free, objective, causal cumulative	Value-laden, meaningful, problematic, non-cumulative.	Value-laden; social as well as objective, praxiological
5. Social Relation- ships	Objective; neu- tral; reified and commodified; law-like gene- ralisations possible.	Objective but through planned change, new laws can be establi- shed	Contextual and political; historically specific laws can be trans- cended by collective action
6. World- view	Static present; status quo is natural, confined to appearances	Static but present can be modified to another state through coping strategies	Diachronic, existential change; open- ness; concerned with essence behind appearances

Contd.. Table 1

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Mainstream</u>	<u>Reformist-Normative</u>	<u>Critical</u>
7. Problem Orientation	Recurrent pattern; Universal laws; Ahistorical, harmonious process; quantitative change	Contextually unique; localised interpretation; harmonious at macrolevel	Contextual and structural; Structural contradictions; Qualitative change.
8. Argumentation	Causal-functional; decontextualised	Dialogue; advocacy; use of multiple contexts	Critique of methods and the present order; historical, relational and materialistic analysis.
9. Methods	Empiricism; Rational-comprehensive models; Cost-benefit analysis, Causal modelling; Survey research.	Advocacy planning; Participatory management; Appropriate technology; Future research-Technology assessment; Environmentalism.	Dialectics; multiple methods for synthesis and integration
10. Typical proponents	US public policy schools; Think tanks; Bureaucrats; Established interest groups	US planning schools; Futures-research groups; Humanistic social scientists; Club of Rome; Alternative technology movement.	Radical Statistics Group-UK; Union of Radical Political Economics-US; Progressive Planners Network, US; Educational groups following Paulo Freire; School of Critical Theory in Europe, Indian School of Social Sciences; Lokayan.

The mainstream positivist approach to policy analysis subscribes to what Auguste Comte said, in the 19 century, "From Science comes prevision, from prevision comes control". This is an excellent summary of instrumentalism. Since his day, social science has found it useful to consider social reality as a form of objective, "natural" reality. In its search for laws explaining social behaviour, it has claimed both ontological and epistemological primacy for the empirical method. (Camhis, 1979). Reality exists, only in the forms that are accessible to the senses directly or through surrogate, especially quantitative, measures. Thus, energy "exists" if we can measure it by reference to the sale of fuels, classes exist if they can be measured by people's wealth, location, and education. The mainstream policy analysis accepts or rejects claims solely on the basis of whether or not they are consistent with the data. The laws that describe relationships among variables are universal, preferably quantitative and independent of context. The relationships are reified, i.e. the relationships among people appear as relationships among things. There is a clear distinction here between facts and values as well as between ends and means. The quest of the empirical method, whether it is applied in cost-benefit analysis, regression, or optimisation models is the "discovery" of order in an apparently disorderly reality. The policy analyst contributes to the realisation of order through the translation of research into policy. Explanation and prediction are the primary goals of this methodology (hence the integral link to control).

The critique of the empirical methodology has been particularly strong. Its merits including analytic rigour, avoidance of subjective biases and the construction of complex explanations, are well known. Its most important feature, however, is its usefulness in predicting, manipulating, and shaping events. With advances in quantitative methodology and more cumulative research, the assumption was that some day, social science would be as "scientific" as natural sciences and policy analysis would be as effective as engineering.

The mainstream social science and policy analysis have traditionally focussed on explanation and causation and are rarely concerned with understanding, meaning, and intentionality. The Keynesian economic theory, the Kinship theory in anthropology, the Exchange theory in sociology, the theory of Transformational grammar in linguistics, the Modernisation theory in political science, and the Cognitive Dissonance theory in psychology are basically causal theories.

The positivist methodology that was liberating man in an earlier era (freeing him from dogma, superstition, religious repression, and rampant subjectivism) has become progressively dominating in its consequences. It does not recognise the validity of other forms of knowledge or inquiry. Domination and control of nature have been extended unreflectively to the domination of man. Due to the formal constitution of theories as generalisable laws, people are treated as objects, as passive bearers of servo-mechanic

isms. Skinner's theory of operant conditioning is the most famous example of this trend. Society, moreover, is seen as consisting of atomized individuals or events. The survey research method assumes this, denying the holistic, systemic nature of social phenomena. The averaging procedures, like regression analysis, focus on surface phenomena often carelessly grasped and too readily sensed. Correlation is often taken as a substitute for causation in this method. The underlying structures and processes that give rise to the phenomena tend to be ignored and only environmental stimuli and behavioural responses are considered meaningful. Reality is what "is" and not what we make it. People are considered as the carriers and not producers of meaning. They merely exhibit and "emit" behaviour and do not act purposively. The status quo social order is considered "natural". The objective of policy analysis becomes one of preserving and reproducing the status quo.

For example, in energy planning, energy use surveys often form the basis of forecasting energy needs. By focussing on the present patterns of consumptions (aggregated individual family consumptions) which is surface phenomenon, policy analysis ignores the underlying historical processes which generated these patterns and thus reifies patterns which perpetuate enormous inequities. Empiricism, then, has aided the policy analysts in constructing an abstract world, a world stripped of its social relations, social conflicts, social power, and social inequality and yet this is

called "applied social sciences". The distribution and use of energy in the future would simply resemble the past. This is how policy analysis serves as a means of social control. As we would discuss later, only the critique of the present order has the potential to transcend this problem of repressive structures. Such a critique will expose the ideological assumptions and values behind methodology and nourish explicit consciousness about the consequences of every methodological choice.

Our capacity to deal with our societal problems has been declining due to two reasons: (a) Social problems are becoming more complex, more interdependent, and more intractable and (b) Our education/knowledge system is more fragmented and more specialised now, than ever before. In other words, we know more and more about less and less. This alienation of our knowledge system from the social reality (reflected fully in policy analysis) is the major cause of the ineffectiveness and irrelevance of policy analysis, today.

Policy analysis, in our times, has become a major source of legitimation of the status quo interests and social order. It has become a new symbol of control as we mentioned earlier. A very apt analogy is Humpty Dumpty's ^hpity description of the uses of words (the most potent of our symbols) in 'Alice in Wonderland'.

"When I use a word" Humpty Dumpty said, in rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose to mean. Neither more nor less". "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things".

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "who is the master. That is all."

Policy analysis, as we know it now, is dominated by the methods of mainstream, positivist economics and political science as well as management. It collapses processes (history) into results and quality into quantity. It is closely associated with the diffusion model which places research before action and implies that policy analysis must precede implementation. This is the reflection of the positivist mode where explanation leads to prediction which in turn leads to control. The experimental, demonstration and pilot project approaches in policy analysis reflect this philosophy of research before action, theory before practice, and concern with control.

Policy analysis reflects what is happening in advanced industrialised societies, viz., fragmentation and specialisation of activities unrelated to one another. These activities are disjoined from life itself where work and leisure have been separated. Policy analysis has become a professionalised, technical activity. In other words, it has become a commodity. With the growing computerisation of information, it has become the exclusive prerogative of trained people. It basically degrades work as the vast majority of

people will have to implement or suffer the consequences of somebody else's policy, in the making of which they cannot participate. In other words, policy analysis encourages alienation in our society by centralising power and encouraging dependency. In as much as it is oriented towards programme management, its unstated objective is to manipulate and train people to behave in predictable ways. This managerial focus (the word "manage" comes from the Italian word Managgiare which means to handle and train horses) is primarily concerned with means (how), rather than the question of ends (why and what). The ends are seen as given and the task of policy analysis is to identify the means to achieve them. The vast majority of us, in the eyes of the policy analysts, have become and remain as horses. Let us face it: there are obvious limits to what horses can achieve in an environment of domination and control.

The methodologies of policy analysis, in the mainstream tradition, are usually concerned with the choice of techniques. We mentioned earlier about the epistemological concern with basic assumptions about reality and knowledge that are inherent in any question of methodology. Usually, the mainstream policy analysis ignores these questions.

Often, the methodological choice ignores the reality of policy-making and asserts the primacy of method over substance and reality. This is what Alvin Gouldner once called as Methodolatry. Like in many areas of public life, where different professions have

reached the optimal point of their effectiveness, policy analysis too has reached its optimal point. I would like to argue that more policy analysis in the present context may not necessarily mean better policy making. We know that more teachers do not create better student quality; more doctors would not necessarily result in higher life expectancy and certainly more lawyers does not mean that the people's sense of justice will improve.

Three basic arguments have been advanced as to why policy analysis is seen as ineffective: (a) It is a young science and with better training, more research, more rigorous methodologies, and data bases, its efficiency will improve. I tend to strongly disagree with this argument. As it is constituted now, the structural underpinnings of mainstream policy analysis will not make it effective even after one hundred years. (b) Policy analysts have become too powerful. They define the problems, they propose solutions, and they alone can evaluate the effectiveness of the solutions. The citizen as the key stakeholder has become a residual category. Hence, we need to persuade the policy analysts to involve citizens in policy analysis and other policy making processes. I disagree with this proposition as well because such a reformistic measure will simply mean more humane change but within the same structural framework. A number of reformistic methods as outlined in Table 1 attempt to do this. One can expect only marginal changes from such an approach. (c) Policy analysis is the cause of our problems. This

iatrogenic argument implies that policy analysis commodifies and dominates new areas of social life and creates dependency. The professionalism in policy analysis (more training, degree programmes, development of analytic methods, professional associations, journals, conferences, and professional certification) is the cause of the problem. Following this view, the question is not how to do policy analysis better but rather what is it that can be done that is worth doing. Based on a critical awareness that traditional policy analysis is useless, exploitative, and harmful is the world view that our social problems are basically conflictual in nature. In this zero sum situation, policy analysis necessarily would have to take an advocacy role. Such a critical policy analysis is not one to establish optimality among a possible set of alternatives (i.e. policy analysis is not a rational choice problem). Rather it is an effort to create a richer synthesis by critically examining the underlying assumptions, world views, and values. It is a perspective that recognises that conflict of ideas creates greater enlightenment.

4. Multiple Perspectives in Policy Analysis

It is important to recognise that policy analysis can be carried out in many different ways. Social problems are complex, strategic, political, and behavioural. There is usually an interlocking set of problems which defy easy analysis. These problems are, in the words of Ian Mitroff, typically "messy" ones.

(Mitroff and Kilman, 1978).

They can be formulated in many different ways. Depending on the formulation, the solutions will also be quite different. Another characteristic of these social problems is that there is no finality to them. Like a Faustian bargain they require constant search, inquiry, and interpretation. As they are usually unique, the logic of replicability of solutions is inapplicable. To quote an example, the energy crisis can be formulated as (a) supply crisis (b) demand management (c) technology/productivity deficiency and (d) structural imbalance. These four formulations are very different and lead to different solutions.

The basic proposition I would like to argue here is that we need multiple perspectives in public policy research and analysis. Each of these perspectives may imply a different model of policy research and associated theory and methodology. A method has an implicit prior theory behind it, which organises data and facts. To gain meaningful insight into a social problem, we need multiple methodological perspectives, which formulate the problem differently. Graham Allison's pioneering work formulating the Cuban missile crisis (in The Essence of Decision) in three different ways (but within one--the mainstream--perspective) needs to be recalled here. A dialectical analysis of these perspectives will help us to become effective in dealing with a social problem. This approach is very similar to the ancient Jain doctrine of Syadvada. Its axiom is that every proposition is true only up to a point. For a true understanding of reality-creation of "gestalt", --one must generate

multiple propositions. Hence we cannot ascribe ontological or epistemological primacy to any perspective or mode of inquiry.

Table 2 illustrates the nature of such multiple perspectives of 'poverty' and corresponding typical solutions. These approaches will help us to locate ourselves along various dimensions and to learn of the consequences of such location for policy analysis outcomes. For, the outcome of policy analysis is critically dependent on the prior perspective one adopts, as data analysis is organised by that perspective.

Again, policy analysis can take place at different levels of depth. To go back to our example, Table 3 illustrates that poverty can be analysed at four different levels of depth. Formulation of the problem thus, will depend on the choice among these levels.

If the policy researcher chooses to focus at, say, the level of symptoms, the solutions he will come up with will be very different than say, if he chooses to focus at the level of basic causes. In a recent evaluation of poverty research in U.S., it was found that it was focused mainly at the level of symptoms and had come up with different strategies of income redistribution. (Rein, 1976) This evaluation also pointed out that strategies for creation of jobs or restructuring of economic activities were not even considered by this research programme, because of its orientation at the level of symptoms.

Table 2Many Perspectives of Poverty

<u>Professional Background</u>	<u>Diagnosis</u>	<u>Typical Recommendations</u>
1. Health	Nutritional deficiency; Environmental stress	Vaccination; Breast-feeding; Sanitation
2. Agriculture	Low food supply	Food production; Food aid; New agricultural technology
3. Architect / Urban Planner	Poor physical environment; poor living conditions	More housing New settlements
4. Demographer	High density; High growth rate of population	Population Control; Family Planning, migration and resettlement.
5. Environmentalist	Degradation of the environment whose sustainable capacity has been exceeded	Environmental protection; Simpler life styles for everyone; Appropriate Technology
6. Marxist	Capitalism	Revolution of the proletariat
7. Manager/ Planner	Lack of management, coordination, and planning	Development planning councils; Management training; Systems improvement; Master plans.
8. Educationalist	Ignorance, wrong attitudes, and lack of skills	Education; Mass communication
9. Neoclassical Economist	Maldistribution; Lack of supply to meet demand	Fiscal policy; Income generation and employment programmes; Economic growth.

Table 3Poverty: Level of Analysis

<u>Level</u>	<u>Problem Formulation</u>
a) Symptoms	Nutritional deficiency, poor health, no housing, no clothes
b) Immediate cause	Low income, low food intake, illiteracy
c) Underlying causes	Unequal access to and inadequate use of resources (food, education, and health)
d) Basic causes	Contradictions and interactions within the economic structure and between the economic and political - social superstructure. These causes explain how resources are produced and distributed in the society.

5. Policy Analysis in U.S.: A Historical View:

We need to ground policy research in our material (economic and political) reality. While this may seem obvious, experience in U.S. suggests that policy analysis often masks a certain form of political practice. The mainstream policy research in U.S. is usually portrayed as progressive, scientific, objective, and a more effective way of dealing with public policy questions. To critically examine this claim, we need to understand the historical context in which the mainstream policy analysis has developed in U.S. Such a comparative understanding is vital if we want to develop a strategy for policy research in India.

Let us briefly review the historical context of policy research/analysis in U.S. In the early sixties, Robert McNamara introduced PPBS in the government when he became the Defence Secretary to John Kennedy. His tenure represents a historical moment in the development of policy research in U.S. Throughout the '60s, President Johnson's Great Society Programme, the expansion of the welfare (and military) state, and the widespread social protest (civil rights, women's movement, hippie culture, the Vietnam war) created^a historical context for the growth of policy research. The growth of public policy schools since the sixties and the mainstream perspective it represents have to be understood in this historical context. Many researchers argue that the public

policy research in U.S. is the State's response to the crisis the society is facing in legitimating the status quo. Policy research, in other words, has been portrayed as the new scientism, a new form of domination. The mainstream policy research in U.S. concerns itself only with the question of means, efficiency, and accountability, rather than the question of ends. The ends or goals are always taken as given and often are implicit. The general proposition to make in this connection is that policy research, like other forms of knowledge, reflects the historical and material reality in a society and will seek to justify the existing order, stratification, and class structure in a society. In urban planning, for example, the central place theory was developed during this period as a functionalist justification of disproportionate resource allocation for cities (and then later to suburbs) to the detriment of rural areas (Gregory, 1978). The mainstream policy research in U.S. has always tacitly supported a worldview that the market economy is strong, continuous growth is possible, centralised planning is desirable in some areas, and people can be treated as passive recipients of service delivery (McKnight, 1980). Now under the Reagan administration, policy analysis, as all forms of planning, has lost its importance relative to the restoration of the market processes.

6. Transfer and Utilisation of Policy Analysis in India

Public policy implementation in the mainstream perspective has always considered policy research for its instrumental use. The legitimacy of transferring policy research methods and practices from U.S. or Europe needs to be examined with reference to the Indian context. It is my contention that context (both historical and material) is the critical determinant of policy processes. An uncritical transfer of policy analysis practices across contexts can often prove to be unproductive and harmful. There is also the danger that policy research in academic institutions in India might become a strategy for academic channeling of social protest. We should recall how the widespread agrarian unrest gave rise to rural studies/rural development programmes in Indian universities in the last ten years. One of our normative concerns about policy research in India is to make it meaningful and responsive to the needs of the poor. The emergence of the profession of policy research as we conventionally understand it, may indeed be a threat to the needs of the poor. In U.S., several instances of policy analysis have become sources of mystification, domination, and dependency.

Policy research is usually done from the perspective of government agencies. Again this need not be the norm. Considerable work in advocacy planning in U.S. and Europe demonstrates that policy research can be undertaken from the perspective of many

different groups whether they be environmental or women's^{or} consumers or the poor. Advocacy analysis is a relatively new area, with a high potential for effectiveness.

There is a common, often unstated, assumption that policy analysis improves policy making. In recent years this has been challenged in a radical way. The connections between theory and practice, knowledge and action are very tenuous and in the field of policy making they are even more so. There is considerable evidence that policy analysis is a fairly minor determinant of policy making. Other more important determinants are (a) the context (b) the leadership (c) politics of bureaucracy, interest groups, and legislatures (d) public images the media generates about the policy issues. The conventional diffusion model of policy research implies that the research gets translated into practice (instrumental use of knowledge). This diffusion model typically focuses on a single, rational decision maker and represents by and large the middle class interests in preserving status quo social order and in making incremental changes. Work in different contexts indicates that this model is not realistic. In the words of Paul Feyerabend, "there are no data or facts independent of prior theory that organise them". (Feyerabend, 1975). This poses very clearly what I would describe as the theory-fact dilemma, that is to say, choice among competing theories need to be based on empirical data. However, such data itself is dependent on a prior theoretical

framework. The political use of policy research for postponing decisions and to justify decisions already made, are very well known. Again the question of interests looms large in the utilisation of policy analysis. For example, the policy research supported by the tobacco industry "proved" that smoking does not cause cancer while research sponsored by the U.S. Surgeon General "proved" otherwise.

Policy research utilisation theory has been stood on its head, as it were, in the last few years. If consensus building and collective understanding of the policy problem is the most critical factor in utilisation, then we might say that measurement and objectivity in policy analytic methods is a threat to such consensus formation. Recent studies, supporting this conclusion, indicate that social learning rather than the experimentation/diffusion approach, is the appropriate model for policy research. The Japanese experience in adoption of policy innovations as contrasted with the American experience in policy diffusion certainly bears this out. To quote Gunnar Myrdal in his Asian Drama "There are no facts about unemployment that are independent of the policy considerations that inform them. This suggests that we have to begin with the policy and then go on to collect data". This radical view of policy research utilisation tells us that the task of a policy analyst is not to explore how to translate research into policy but (a) to uncover policies behind policy research agenda and (b) to uncover theory behind existing policies. Indian policy research setting is certainly

unique and is therefore, different from U.S. or Europe. The implications of this alternative utilisation model for India need to be explored in some depth.

7. Towards Critical Policy Analysis:

In this section, I shall present a framework which is my reconstruction of policy analysis, drawing from the earlier critique of the mainstream approach. Critique of all methodologies (not excluding itself) is demanded in this framework. Aggressively exposing the ideologies, values, interests, and assumptions behind apparently neutral, disinterested, "scientific" policy analysis approaches, the critique returns them to their unprivileged situation in the world. In this sense, a critical policy analysis approach is not simply an alternative to others but an effort to discover the transformation and synthesis. It does not criticise them, simply in order to abandon them. Such a framework is also explicitly normative in its commitment to social justice and liberation (Habermas 1971). This critical framework adopts multiple perspectives and a dialectical approach to policy analysis. Let me characterise the critical approach briefly.

- a) A commitment to social justice and liberation
- b) Engagement in critique of all methods
- c) Construction of a policy and a plan from the critique, through synthesis and integration, not merely as an intellectual-cognitive activity but as a collective social action

- d) Methodological pluralism to generate multiple insights and dialogue among maximally divergent perspectives.
- e) Development of policy analysis as a tool of intervention to promote equality in society (though we have enough evidence that social interventions including policy analysis in existing unequal social structures will always benefit the powerful).
- f) Recognition that knowledge is both objective and social and hence public participation is essential in itself to generate valid knowledge. It is not merely an instrument to achieve co-operation or commitment from the public.
- g) Power and conflict are addressed directly as relevant issues in the critical policy analysis mode.
- h) Holistic and systematic analysis in a structuralist framework: the search for underlying essence behind appearances of social problems.
- i) Historical approach that involves contextual/material grounding and social specificity.
- j) Generation of catalytic, facilitative, deprofessionalised roles to help people critically reflect on their condition and hence transform the society.
- k) Demystification and repoliticisation of all policy analysis activities.

8. Policy Analysis in India:

Policy analysis in India while relatively uncommon in the form it is known in the United States, has been undertaken in a variety of ways. Our constitution and legislation make policy pronouncements and our five year plans involve a good deal of

analysis about resource allocation and investment decisions. Several committees and government statements in the form of white papers, resolutions, etc., include a good deal of analysis of different policies. Most of the programmes that have been started are based on some kind of policy analysis (Planning Commission, 1969, 1980). The methods that are used are of various kinds: economic modelling, optimisation studies, social cost-benefit analysis, micro economic analysis, survey research and input-output models. As one can see readily, there is a domination of economics in such policy analyses, and the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance are largely dominated in this area by the economists. There are economic advisers in various ministries. Important decisions on investment, pricing, etc., are based primarily on economic analysis of policy choices. There is good deal of regulatory policy that is not based on economic analysis but on a legal one. The courts make policy without any formal analysis to aid them. New areas like environmental impact assessment, technology assessment, and global modelling are being tried out in a few cases to aid policy making.

The overall impact of policy analysis in India is largely marginal. Conflictual analysis or critique of various methods have rarely been attempted. In some instances analysis has sharpened conflict and has not been conducive to resolution. The major policy issues like foreign exchange allocation, subsidies, cow

slaughter, or prohibition have hardly been influenced by policy analysis. In limited areas like identification of direct beneficiary groups for anti-poverty programmes, family planning programmes, and minimum needs programmes, policy analysis as choice among alternatives has been reasonably successful. In the energy sector, considerable policy analysis has been done in the form of studies and committees reports, addressing problems of pricing, inter-fuel substitution, demand management conservation, and new technology development. Yet, this analysis has hardly had any impact in the rational management of our energy resources. Another area where policy analysis has failed is the administration of monopolies and respective trade practices. The concentration of economic power has been increasing after the enactment of this legislation. In other areas like incomes-prices policy, worker participation, and regional development, policy analysis has not been effective. The reason for this ineffectiveness is perhaps due to several political and structural causes which generate the policy problems, and which are not addressed by the policy analysis. Policy analysis through replication of experiments and pilot projects has also not worked very well. The systemic nature of our problems defies conventional policy analysis which usually proposes discrete, direct attack on them. For example, public works programmes can no more alleviate unemployment. The incomes and prices policy is no more effective for combatting inflation.

Our knowledge and public policy reflect and manifest the underlying essence and systemic unity of our social relationships. Hence, it is important to probe behind the surface phenomena which is the concern of mainstream policy analysis. However, we may have no alternative to conventional policy analysis in the medium term. A reformistic approach to policy analysis can work well if we engage in it with a broad structural understanding and critical awareness of our social condition. An awareness of the limitations of such a response may help us to transcend our condition in the long run. Otherwise, the present pattern, which we observe in India, will continue to be managerial solutions (strengthening the policy-instrument nexus, strong administrative or political commitment not to dilute stated policy objectives in implementation, removal of inconsistencies among policies and strengthening the management through training, systems, and monitoring to make policy more effective). It is increasingly being realised that such a managerial or a programmatic approach to policy is very ineffective as it masks the political reality. The linear logic (policy → outcome) is faulty. The intervening structural processes that generate development and underdevelopment, justice and inequality will distort the anticipated causal relationship. The mainstream policy analysis usually ignores such structural, historical contexts.

9. Conclusion:

To recapitulate, critical policy analysis is a unity of critical reflection and collective action-of praxis. It assumes that theory and knowledge are themselves part of the activity of changing the world rather than an "objective" stage prior to its implementation. It cannot be transplanted or transferred but must be reinvented. What is outlined here is a model not of theoretical-methodological priority that must be copied elsewhere but rather one that can be recreated in other contexts. What Paulo Freire was engaged in during his work in Brazil and Guinea-Bissau is the only example I can think of that comes close to the critical policy analysis as outlined here. His work in adult education was not simply in literacy creation. He helped the people to read their own reality (and not merely the words in a book) and to write their own future. Development of their critical consciousness was the key focus. His work focussed on learning from the masses who were to be taught..

The exploration of alternative perspectives in policy analysis here is intended to create critical awareness and sophistication in methodological choice. One finds methodological fetishism and isolationism pervasive in social sciences and in their application in policy analysis. If one is critically conscious, one may be able to overcome the structural limitations of methodologies and use them selectively, critically, and effectively in a normative framework. The policy analytic methods, critically used, have the potential of being socially purposeful and help achieve progressive social goals. This analysis is meant as a **progressive** contribution to this dialectical process.

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