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## ***THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS A Conceptual Framework***

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Political scientists have turned their attention to the study of public policy with increasing frequency. The topics with which they deal and the methodologies they employ reflect the diversity of their interests. The disparate character of the public policy literature complicates the task of defining the scope of policy analysis and bringing order to the concerns of policy analysts. Some order can be achieved by utilizing a model of the policy delivery system, which facilitates an organization of the policy literature (see Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it identifies relationships among the diverse concerns of policy analysts, directs attention to the determinants of—and the consequences of—public policy, and gives emphasis to the

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often imperfect correspondence between policies adopted and services actually delivered.

The components of this model are: (1) an environment that both stimulates government officials and receives the products of their work; (2) demands and resources that carry stimuli from the environment to policy makers; (3) a conversions process, including the formal structures and procedures of government, that transforms (converts) demands and resources into public policies; (4) the policies that represent the formal goals, intentions, or statements of government officials; (5) the performance of the policy as it is actually delivered to clients; and (6) the feedback of policies and performances to the environment, which is transmitted back to the conversions process as demands and resources of a later point in time. In most respects this framework differs little from other adaptations of political systems models first introduced by Easton.<sup>2</sup> Its distinguishing feature is that it considers "policy" and "performance" as two distinct categories.

Some features of the policy delivery system clearly have been explored more fully than others. During the past quarter century, a disproportionate effort has been made to analyze the character of economic and social problems, the

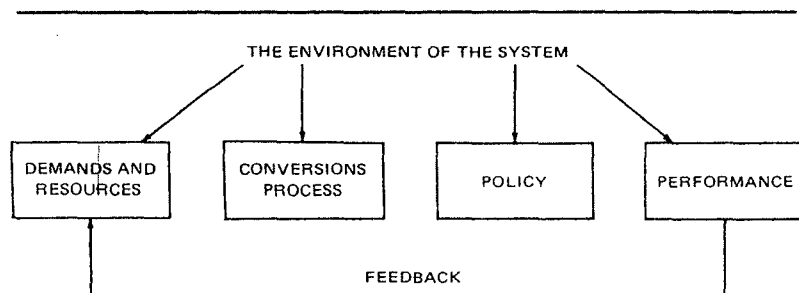
claims made for government action, and the processes by which policy decisions are made. More recently, policy analysts have turned their attention to the impacts or effects which policies may have on the people and problems at which they had been directed.

These foci on the determinants and consequences of public policy have added much to our understanding of the policy process. Yet neither tells us a great deal about how policy decisions are transformed into public services: they tell us little about the application or implementation of public policy. In short, they have not given sufficient attention to the linkage between policy and performance. It is one thing to examine the determinants of policy decisions and to identify their impacts or consequences—it is another to provide explanations for these observed consequences.

Our purpose in this paper is to explore the process of policy implementation. To this end we define the concept of implementation and survey the current literature in an effort to ascertain whether what is presently known will inform a conceptualization of this process. We present a model that can be used to analyze policy implementation, both where it involves actors within a single organization and across organizational boundaries.

#### DEFINING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Several often-conflicting uses of the concept of implementation are found in the existing literature.<sup>3</sup> Our definition is quite explicit: policy implementation encompasses those actions by public and private individuals (or groups) that are directed at the achievement of objectives set forth in prior policy decisions. This includes both one-time efforts to transform decisions into operational terms, as well as continuing efforts to achieve the large and small changes mandated by policy decisions. Williams (1971: 144) states it most succinctly:



NOTE: Adapted from Sharkansky and Van Meter, 1975.

Figure 1. THE POLICY DELIVERY SYSTEM

In its most general form, an inquiry about implementation... seeks to determine whether an organization can bring together men and material in a cohesive organizational unit and motivate them in such a way as to carry out the organization's stated objectives.

We should emphasize that the implementation phase does not commence until goals and objectives have been established (or identified) by prior policy decisions; it takes place only after legislation has been passed and funds committed (or after a judicial ruling and accompanying decree). As Pressman and Wildavsky (1973: xiv) argue: "After all, the world is full of policy proposals that are aborted. You can't finish what you haven't started. Lack of implementation should not refer to failure to get going but to inability to follow through." Therefore, the study of implementation examines those factors that contribute to the realization or nonrealization of policy objectives.

A clear distinction is made between policy implementation, performance, and what generally has been referred to as policy impact. These are distinct though not unrelated concepts. The study of impact searches for the consequences of a policy decision. Do school prayer practices change as a result of a Supreme Court decision? Do disadvantaged children improve their reading or math skills as a consequence of an innovative education program? By focusing on those activities that affect the rendering of public services (i.e., performance), the study of policy implementation highlights one of the forces that determines policy impact. Hence, as Dolbeare (1974) observes, impact studies typically ask "What happened?" whereas implementation studies ask "Why did it happen this way?"

We should point out that we are not maintaining that the study of policy implementation will resolve the issues revolving around the question of "real" impact (e.g., does compensatory education have salutary effects). Our model and the research that flows from it are not designed to

measure and explain the ultimate outcomes of governmental policy, but rather to measure and explain what we prefer to call program performance (i.e., the degree to which anticipated services are actually delivered). We recognize that some services could actually be delivered without having any substantial impact on the problem to which the policy is supposed to be related. A policy may be implemented effectively, but fail to have a substantial impact because it was ill-conceived—or because of other circumstances. Hence, successful program performance may be a necessary—but not sufficient—condition for the attainment of positive ultimate outcomes.

### THE STUDY OF IMPLEMENTATION

At present we know relatively little about the process of policy implementation. This is an unfortunate deficiency in our understanding of the policy process and may lead to ill-advised conclusions on the part of policy makers. When faced with an unsuccessful program, many observers will attribute its failure to insufficient planning or the inadequacy of the program itself. This attribution of blame is often unjustified. Viewing the Great Society's social policies generally, Levine (1968: 86) has concluded that most of the trouble with the War on Poverty resulted "not so much from the nature of the programs as from difficulties of administration." Pointing to the possible gap between the intentions and statements of public officials (policy) on the one hand and the delivery of public services (performance) on the other, Dolbeare and Hammond (1971: 149) have argued that

very little may really be decided by the words of a decision or a statute: the enunciation of such national policy may be just the beginning of the decisive process of determining what will happen to whom, and understanding this further stage is essential to a full understanding of politics.

Hence, the study of implementation adds a new dimension to policy analysis. It gives the student of politics and the policy maker a new understanding of how the system succeeds or fails in translating general policy objectives into concrete and meaningful public services.

Why do we know so little about the problems of policy implementation? If this process is so important, why has not a greater effort been made to identify its basic features? This neglect is due in part to the naive assumption, implicit in many studies, that "once a policy has been 'made' by a government, the policy will be implemented and the desired results of the policy will be near those expected by the policy-makers" (Smith, 1973: 197-198). The implementation process is assumed to be a series of mundane decisions and interactions unworthy of the attention of scholars seeking the heady stuff of politics. Implementation is deceptively simple; it does not appear to involve any great issues. Most of the crucial policy issues are often seen to have been resolved in the prior decisions of executives, legislators, and judges.

Second, the growth of Planning Programming Budgeting Systems (PPB)—the leading analytic technique of the 1960s—may have encouraged policy analysts to ignore the problems of policy implementation. PPB concentrated policy makers' attention on the choices between competing methods of achieving selected goals and objectives, focusing attention primarily on decisions made by policy makers in Washington to the exclusion of the lower echelons of agencies responsible for implementation. PPB's concern with improving the basis for policy-making did not address the problems of delivering public services. As Williams (1971: 139) points out, PPB emphasized program objectives and alternative means of reaching those objectives. Such a focus, however, did not require that serious attention be given to the implementation or operation of public programs.

Third, the difficulty of the task has discouraged detailed study of the process of policy implementation. The problems

of implementation are overwhelmingly complex and scholars have frequently been deterred by methodological considerations. Relative to the study of policy formulation, the analysis of the implementation process raises serious boundary problems. It is often difficult to define the relevant actors. Furthermore, many of the variables needed to complete an implementation study are difficult—if not impossible—to measure. Unlike legislative and judicial arenas where votes are often recorded, decisions in an administrative setting are frequently difficult to isolate. Finally, a comprehensive analysis of implementation requires that attention be given to multiple actions over an extended period of time, thus involving an enormous outlay of time and resources.

This is not meant to suggest that the implementation process has been ignored by policy makers and policy analysts, nor that these obstacles are insurmountable. Policy makers have turned their attention to the problems of implementation, perhaps as a consequence of the disappointing results of the Great Society's social programs. Among the most important published studies of policy implementation are Kaufman's (1960) study of the U.S. Forest Service, Bailey and Mosher's (1968) examination of the administration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Derthick's (1970) analysis of federal grant-in-aid programs, Gross and associates' (1971) examination of planned organizational innovation, Berke and Kirst's (1972) study of federal aid to education programs, Derthick's (1972) analysis of the Johnson Administration's effort to create new communities on federally owned land in metropolitan areas, and Pressman and Wildavsky's (1973) study of Oakland's community development program. These and other studies have helped identify factors that contribute to an understanding of the process of policy implementation.

While these studies have been highly informative, their contributions have been limited by the absence of a theoretical perspective. To date, no one has advanced a theoretical framework within which policy implementation

can be examined. Without such a framework, it is difficult to further our understanding of this process in disparate policy areas and jurisdictional settings. The few efforts (Smith, 1973; Bunker, 1972) to provide such a perspective are less than adequate. For example, Smith asserts that implementation is a problem in Third World nations, where private interests seek to prevent a beleaguered bureaucracy from implementing public policies. Smith (1973: 199) argues that this situation is found only infrequently in Western societies. As we have already observed, this position is difficult to defend. The problems of implementation are profound in Western and non-Western nations alike: they are generic to complex organizations.

#### THE FOUNDATIONS OF A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

In their study of the Economic Development Administration's Oakland Project, Pressman and Wildavsky (1973: 166) write:

There is (or there must be) a large literature about implementation in the social sciences—or so we have been told by numerous people. . . . It must be there; it should be there; but in fact it is not. There is a kind of semantic illusion at work here because virtually everything ever done in public administration must, in the nature of things, have some bearing on implementation. . . . Nevertheless, except for the few pieces mentioned in the body of this book, we have been unable to find any significant analytic work dealing with implementation.

While we share Pressman and Wildavsky's concern that far too little attention has been paid to the question of policy implementation, their criticism of the literature is unnecessarily harsh and short-sighted. Our argument is put simply: there is a rich heritage from the social sciences that is often overlooked by those purporting to discuss the policy imple-

mentation process. This literature includes theoretical and empirical work in several disciplines, including sociology, public administration, social psychology, and political science. While most of these studies do not examine specifically the policy implementation process, close inspection reveals that it takes little imagination to comprehend their relevance.

In developing our theoretical framework we have been guided by three bodies of literature: (1) organization theory—and more specifically, the work in the general area of organizational change (innovation) and control; (2) the impact of public policy, particularly judicial decisions; and (3) selected studies of intergovernmental relations. Our task in this section is to delineate the contributions of these fields of study. Primary attention will be given to the literature on organizational change and control since we believe that it has the greatest theoretical contribution to make, and since it has been ignored generally by others studying the policy implementation process.

Students of organizational theory and practice have dealt extensively with the topic of change (Bennis, 1966; Downs, 1967; Gross et al., 1971; Katz and Kahn, 1966). In one of the most insightful analyses of organizational change, Kaufman (1971) explores a variety of impediments to innovation in organizational structure and action. He examines a number of factors (e.g., resource limitations, sunk costs, the collective benefits of stability, psychic costs, and the accumulation of official and unofficial constraints on behavior) that “tend to keep organizations doing the things they have been doing in the recent past, and doing them in just the way they have been doing them” (Kaufman, 1971: 39). Kaufman recognizes the many advantages of stability and makes a serious effort to identify those forces conducive to organizational change—those that occur both involuntarily and by design. Yet he concludes that most organizations “are imprisoned in the present and often cannot change, even when the future

threatens them unless they do" (Kaufman, 1971: 40).

Organizational control has also been a frequent research topic. The relevance of this subject for our focus on implementation may be seen in various definitions found in the literature. For example, Wilensky (1967: 3) defines control as "the problem of getting work done and securing compliance with organizational rules." Anthony (1965: 17) defines "managerial control" as "the process by which managers assure that resources are obtained and used effectively and efficiently in the accomplishment of the organization's objectives." Finally, Etzioni (1964: 68) defines organizational control as a process intended to "ensure that rules are obeyed and orders followed."

Numerous headings have been used to explore this aspect of organizational life. Control has been discussed in terms of leadership authority, coordination, hierarchy, human relations, democracy, incentives, and compliance. For our purposes the final concept is most useful. Compliance may be seen as a special case in the study of implementation—usually related to the specific obedience or lack thereof to a law or directive. Yet studies of the process by which compliance is obtained or avoided give us insight into the problem of the implementation of complex policies in a fragmented political system.

In *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations* (1961), Etzioni utilizes the concept of compliance as a basis for comparing organizations. It permits one to compare many features of complex organizations: the goals they pursue, their structures, their motivational characteristics, the power and interaction of their elites, the level and kinds of consensus attained, and their systems of communication and socialization. Central to Etzioni's thesis is the notion that different types of organizations will require different kinds of compliance systems. For example, where participants in an organization are alienated and have an intense negative orientation toward the organization, *coercive* power—the

application, or the threat of application, of punitive sanctions—may be required to achieve adherence to the organization's rules and objectives. Where most participants have intense positive orientations and are highly committed to the organization's goals and objectives, compliance can be achieved usually through the use of *normative* power—the allocation and manipulation of symbolic rewards and deprivations. Finally, where participants do not have intense orientations toward the organization and their involvement is a function of perceived costs and benefits, *remunerative* power—the allocation of material resources such as salaries, commissions, fringe benefits, and services—is likely to be the most effective means of achieving compliance.

Integral to Etzioni's thinking and to all discussions of control is the relationship between superiors and subordinates in complex organizations. The classic Weberian interpretation of this relationship holds that the ideal role of subordinates is one of implementing faithfully the decisions made by their superiors. Policies are made at the highest levels; they are then carried out by lower participants whose discretion is acutely limited. (The classic "ideal type" is described by Max Weber, 1946: chap. 8.) While this interpretation is widely accepted, most organizations deviate considerably from it. Numerous studies have shown that such "lower participant" groups as attendants in mental hospitals (Scheff, 1961), maintenance workers in factories (Crozier, 1964), and prison inmates (Sykes, 1961) can exercise power and, therefore, affect the performance of complex organizations.

Not infrequently these instances are dismissed as exceptions to the rule. Mechanic (1962) suggests, however, that they are manifestations of a general pattern. By acquiring control over persons, information, and instrumentalities, lower participants can wield considerable power that is not normally associated with their formally defined positions within the organization. Hence, he (1962: 351) argues that

"organizations, in a sense, are continuously at the mercy of their lower participants." Recognizing that hierarchical control is never perfect and that policy implementors may possess great power, Baum (1974) has constructed a theory of judicial impact that reverses the traditional interpretation of hierarchy in organizations. Baum proposes that "instead of viewing any power possessed by lower participants as aberrant, we may begin with the assumption that they alone will determine the content of the policies they execute." He recognizes that this assumption cannot be defended empirically, but he asserts that its use "requires that we discover the forces which counteract autonomy rather than taking them for granted" (Baum, 1974: 6).

The power of lower participants in organizations is enhanced by superiors who frequently have little idea what their subordinates are doing. The monitoring of subordinate behavior, hence, becomes an important question in the study of complex organizations. There are several means by which superiors keep themselves informed about activities in the field, including reports required of subordinates, personal inspections and contacts, and formal investigations. However, as Kaufman's (1973) study reveals, administrative feedback systems are often inadequate, and superiors often do not want knowledge about activities in the field. Increased compliance on the part of subordinates will come only after superiors have been given new incentives to use what information may become available to them. (For a more comprehensive discussion of this topic, see Kaufman, 1960; Downs, 1967: chap. 12; Wilensky, 1967.)

The literature on the impact of judicial decisions also has much to contribute to the design of a theory of policy implementation. To date, most students of judicial impact have emphasized empirical investigation rather than conscious theory development. A few, however, have advanced inventories of variables to explain their observations; and some writers have constructed partial theories of judicial

impact.<sup>4</sup> Relying on "utility theory," Krislov (1965) emphasizes the relationship between superiors (the Supreme Court and appellate courts) and subordinates (lower trial courts and administrative agencies). He posits that subordinates accept and comply with the directives of superiors if the incentives to do so are greater than are those not to comply. Krislov identifies three areas of possible motivations for compliance—personal utilities, organizational utilities, and psychological utilities—and argues that

compliance is at its greatest when personal advantages are highest, organizational sanctions against opposition are certain and severe, and the legitimacy of the issuing authority is acknowledged. Conversely, it will be at its minimum when the individual utilities all point in the direction of opposition, organizational sanctions are lenient and—most important—erratic in application, and the legitimacy of the higher authority is doubtful [Krislov, 1965: 136].<sup>5</sup>

Another study relevant for our purposes is Dolbeare and Hammond's (1971) analysis of the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court's school prayer decisions. They identify four categories of factors which shape the response to court rulings: the substance of the decision; institutional mechanism and procedures; the politico-cultural context; and the interests, priorities, preferences, and behavior of political actors. In doing so, they (1971: 134) suggest that "similar or analogous categories apply to other types of policies generated by other institutions of the national government."

Finally, there are several studies of intergovernmental relations that deal directly with the problem of implementation and that serve to highlight the problems of intra- and interorganizational relations. Among the most important ones are Bailey and Mosher (1968), Sundquist (1969), Derthick (1970, 1972), and Pressman and Wildavsky (1973). The literature provides numerous insights into the conflicts between national, state, and local officials; it points to the



interdependence of public officials at all levels of government. More important, it identifies factors that confound the implementation process in organizations that are neither well integrated nor self-contained. Hence, it gives emphasis to the autonomy of subordinates—both in intra- and interorganizational affairs.

### A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The natural starting point in the elaboration of our theoretical framework is with the policy itself, where goals and objectives are established. It is here that the implementation process begins. Following Lowi (1964) and Froman (1968), we submit that the implementation process will vary depending on the nature of the policy to be carried out. Different types of decisions will display characteristic processes, structures, and relationships among factors that influence the execution of public policy.

We will classify policies according to two distinguishing characteristics: the amount of change involved, and the extent to which there is goal consensus among the participants in the implementation process. The element of change is important in at least two respects. First, implementation will be affected by the extent to which the policy deviates from previous policies. As a number of scholars (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963; Lindblom, 1965; Wildavsky, 1974) suggest, incremental changes are more likely to engender a positive response than will drastic ones. In similar fashion, Derthick (1970: 63) has written that the response of state governments to federal initiatives "depends in part on whether the grant is for an activity in which it is already engaged."

Second, the implementation process will be influenced by the amount of organizational change that is required. Kaufman's (1971) analysis suggests that effective implemen-

tation is most likely when the implementing agency is not required to undergo drastic reorganization. This view is reinforced by Levine's (1968) argument that many of the failings of the Great Society's social programs resulted from the increased demands being made of existing administrative structures and procedures. Policies which mandate changes in the relationships among participants involved in the implementation process will be more difficult to carry out than will policies which require only marginal change in established relationships.

The other critical feature of the policy is the degree of conflict or consensus over its goals and objectives. To what extent do implementing officials agree on the goals of the program? Dolbeare and Hammond (1971: 137-138) point to the significance that goal conflict may have for a program when they suggest that the "value-based actions of officials and leaders... may be most determinative of ultimate policy."

In reviewing the literature on planned organizational change, Gross and associates (1971: 24-29) identify several factors that affect goal consensus—and thus implementation. One of these factors is the extent to which subordinates (or implementors) have participated in the making of the policy decision. Their literature review finds support for the following arguments: "(1) participation leads to higher staff morale, and high staff morale is necessary for successful implementation; (2) participation leads to greater commitment, and a high degree of commitment is required for effecting change; (3) participation leads to greater clarity about an innovation, and clarity is necessary for implementation; (4) beginning with the postulate of basic resistance to change, the argument is that participation will reduce initial resistance and thereby facilitate successful implementation; and (5) subordinates will tend to resist any innovation that they are expected to implement if it is initiated solely by their superordinates." It cannot be argued, however, that

subordinate participation in decision-making will necessarily result in goal consensus; nor can it be concluded that the problems of implementation will be removed once goal consensus has been achieved.

The combination of these two features produces a typology of public policies, as depicted in Figure 2.<sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly, the preponderance of policies are found in the "major change/low consensus" and "minor change/high consensus" categories. Programs that require major change frequently lead to goal conflict on the part of relevant actors, while goal consensus is usually highest where little change is involved. Major change/low consensus policies evolve from protracted controversies, as in the case of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965), the Economic Opportunity Act (1964), the Medicare legislation of 1965, major tax reforms, a radical reorganization of bureaucratic structures, and busing to achieve school desegregation. In contrast, the struggles which minor change/high consensus policies cause are less severe. Such policies are reflected in the nature of

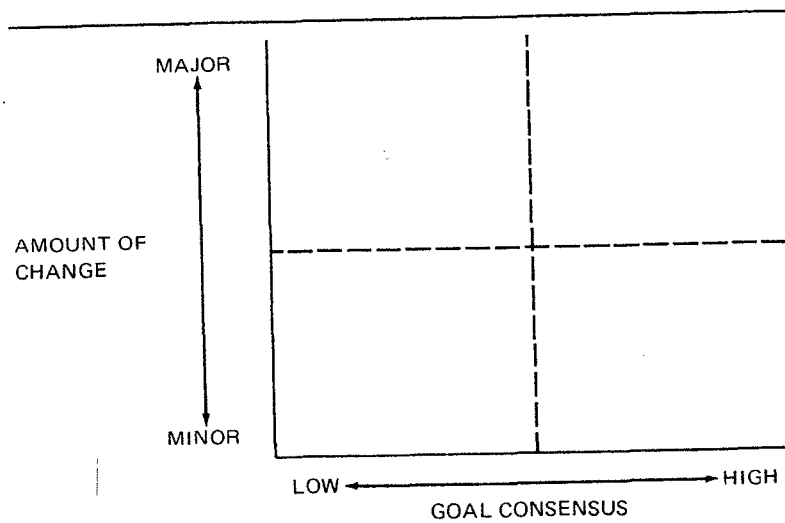


Figure 2. DIMENSIONS OF POLICY AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION

incrementalism, a political routine that stipulates that current policy decisions are largely a function of previous decisions. By definition, incremental policies discourage controversy by deviating only marginally from previous accommodations and practices (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963; Wildavsky, 1974).

These first two policy types are the most common ones found in the American political system. However, exceptions to this pattern are not unknown. While policies adopted following the attack at Pearl Harbor in 1941 mandated major change—factories were converted for the manufacture of armaments, and the rationing of scarce goods and basic raw materials was introduced—there was also a wide consensus that such actions were both desirable and necessary. The space program and Peace Corps are additional examples of major change/high consensus policies. Finally, while consensus accompanies most policies which involve minor change, it is not uncommon to find minor change/low consensus policies. This occurs frequently when controversial programs, such as federal aid to education, Medicare, and public welfare, are given reauthorization with only marginal modifications made in appropriations levels or the formulas used to distribute funds. Hence, while the policy adopted may depart only slightly from the past, it may nevertheless spark enduring controversy.

In developing this typology of public policies, we are suggesting that the probability of effective implementation will depend—in part—on the type of policy being considered, and that the specific factors contributing to the realization or nonrealization of program objectives will vary from one policy type to another. More specifically, we are hypothesizing that implementation will be most successful where only marginal change is required and goal consensus is high. Conversely, where major change is mandated and goal consensus is low, the prospects for effective implementation will be most doubtful. Furthermore, we anticipate that major

change/high consensus policies will be implemented more effectively than policies involving minor change and low consensus. Hence, it is our expectation that goal consensus will have a greater effect on the policy implementation process than will the element of change. With these suggestions (or hypotheses) in mind, it is essential that we turn our attention to an examination of those factors (or independent variables) that are involved in the implementation process.

### A MODEL OF THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Our basic model—as depicted in Figure 3—posits six variables which shape the linkage between policy and performance. This model not only specifies the relationships between the independent variables and the ultimate dependent variable of interest, but also makes explicit the relationships among the independent variables. The linkages included implicitly represent hypotheses which could be tested empirically, assuming that satisfactory indicators could be constructed and appropriate data collected. By approaching the problem in this manner, there is greater promise for elucidating the processes whereby policy decisions are carried out than simply by correlating independent and dependent variables in a relatively unthinking fashion (Van Meter and Asher, 1973). The model has been constructed on the basis of the three bodies of literature cited above, as well as the authors' own research and intuitions about the implementation process.

#### POLICY STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES

Given our primary interest in the factors that determine the performance of policy, the identification of performance indicators is a crucial stage in the analysis. Essentially, the

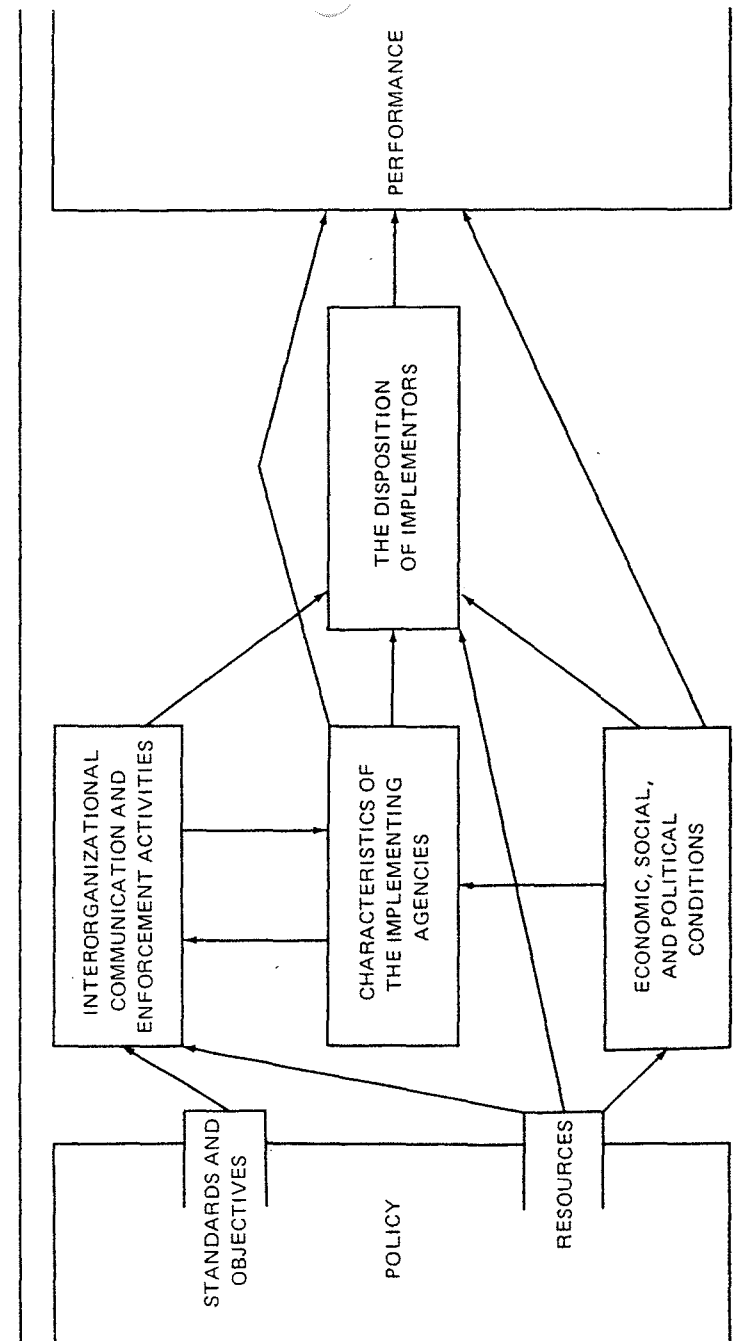


Figure 3. A MODEL OF THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

performance indicators assess the extent to which the policy's standards and objectives are realized. Standards and objectives elaborate on the overall goals of the policy decision. They move beyond the generalities of the legislative document to provide concrete and more specific standards for assessing program performance. These standards and objectives are self-evident and easily measurable in some cases. For instance, the Economic Development Administration's Oakland Project sought to create jobs for the unemployed through several public works projects (e.g., the construction of an airport hangar, marine terminal, port industrial park, and an access road to the city's newly built coliseum) [Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973]. To ascertain whether implementation has been successful, one must determine the number of jobs that have been created, the identity of those who have been hired, and the progress on the related public works projects.

In most cases it is much more difficult to identify and measure performance. This may be due to the program's breadth or the complex and far-reaching nature of its goals. It may also be a consequence of ambiguities and contradictions in the statement of standards and objectives. It should be recognized that ambiguity in standards and objectives may be fostered deliberately by policy makers in order to ensure a positive response on the part of those responsible for implementation at other levels of the organization or the policy delivery system. Yet the study of implementation requires that goals and objectives be identified and measured since "implementation cannot succeed or fail without a goal against which to judge it" (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973: xiv). In determining standards and objectives one could use the statements of policy makers, as reflected in numerous documents such as program regulations and guidelines which spell out the criteria for an evaluation of policy performance. In some cases, however, the policy's standards and objectives will have to be deduced by the individual researcher. And one

may even wish to use the criteria for evaluation of policy performance provided by clientele groups. Ultimately, the choice of performance measures depends on the purposes for which the research is conducted (Rivlin, 1971; Rossi and Williams, 1972).

#### POLICY RESOURCES

Policies furnish more than the standards and objectives against which to judge implementation: they also make available resources which facilitate their administration. These resources may include funds or other incentives in the program that might encourage or facilitate effective implementation. (For a more detailed discussion of the utility of incentives, see Levine, 1972, and Schultze, 1969.) It is obvious that funds are usually not adequate. In fact, Derthick's (1972: 87) "new-towns" study suggests that the limited supply of federal incentives was a major contributor to the failure of that program: "To induce local governments to accept the burden of developing new towns in-town, the federal government had to give them something of value. The President assumed that low-cost surplus land would be available for this purpose, but this assumption turned out to be wrong."

Four additional factors are included in our model: interorganizational communication and enforcement activities; the characteristics of the implementing agencies; the economic, social, and political environment affecting the jurisdiction or organization within which implementation takes place; and the disposition of implementors. Each of these factors consists of several variables, some of which will be identified here.

#### Interorganizational Communication and Enforcement Activities

Effective implementation requires that a program's standards and objectives be understood by those individuals

responsible for their achievement. Hence, it is vital that we concern ourselves with the clarity of standards and objectives, the accuracy of their communication to implementors, and the consistency (or uniformity) with which they are communicated by various sources of information. Standards and objectives cannot be carried out unless they are stated with sufficient clarity so that implementors can know what is expected of them. Communication within and between organizations is a complex and difficult process. In transmitting messages downward in an organization, or from one organization to another, communicators inevitably distort them—both intentionally and unintentionally (Downs, 1967: 133-136). Furthermore, if different sources of communication provide inconsistent interpretations of standards and objectives or if the same source provides conflicting interpretations over time, implementors will find it even more difficult to carry out the intentions of policy. Therefore, the prospects of effective implementation will be enhanced by the clarity with which standards and objectives are stated and by the accuracy and consistency with which they are communicated.

Successful implementation often requires institutional mechanisms and procedures whereby higher authorities (superiors) may increase the likelihood that implementors (subordinates) will act in a manner consistent with a policy's standards and objectives. As Neustadt (1960: 18) has observed with respect to presidential directives, orders are not self-executing: they require the presence of an action-forcing mechanism.

Within the context of a single organization superiors have access to a wide range of such mechanisms. They have the standard personnel powers: recruitment and selection, assignment and relocation, advancement and promotion, and ultimately, dismissal. Moreover, they have control over the budgetary allocations of bureaus and field offices which they may inflate or reduce in response to satisfactory or unsatis-

factory performance. While they cannot command obedience, superiors have substantial capacity to influence their subordinates' behavior.

In contrast, when we examine the relationships among members of different organization<sup>2</sup> or among federal, state, and local officials—many of these mechanisms are absent. Schultze (1969: 202) has summarized this condition:

actions cannot be commanded. There is no hierarchy of officials in a single line of command who can be directed toward a set of predetermined objectives. In such cases the careful specification of plans and objectives by a public agency will not suffice to guarantee effective programs.

In the context of interorganizational (or intergovernmental) relations, two types of enforcement or follow-up activities are most important. First, technical advice and assistance can be provided. Higher level officials can often do much to facilitate implementation by aiding subordinates in interpreting federal regulations and guidelines, structuring responses to policy initiatives, and obtaining the physical and technical resources required to carry out a policy.

Second, superiors (or federal officials) can rely on a wide variety of sanctions—both positive and negative. We can explore this aspect of enforcement by referring back to Etzioni's (1961: 5-8) distinction between normative, remunerative, and coercive power. Even though the federal government is not a "superior" in its relations with states and localities, by extending the analogy we can use this notion as an ordering device for thinking about interorganizational relations and the role of enforcement.

The use of normative and remunerative powers is most common. For example, the federal government seeks to influence state and local activity through the allocation and manipulation of symbolic and material rewards. One of the

most important techniques of federal influence is the socialization, persuasion, and cooptation of state and local actors. By attempting to build a professional alliance around the organization and its mission, federal officials will try to cultivate allies at the state and local level who will implement their policies willfully. The fragmentation of the federal system adds significance to this technique, since it makes monitoring effective and oversight virtually impossible (see, for example, Kaufman, 1960; Derthick, 1970; Bailey and Mosher, 1968; and Etzioni, 1965).

Another way to achieve influence is to get states and localities to participate in a program. The prospect of receiving federal dollars is often sufficient to secure their participation and at least implicit acceptance of the objectives of federal policy. This is a significant beginning point. Research has shown that the amount of federal influence over aspects of a program increases as the percentage of the federal contribution rises (Porter, 1973: 85; Derthick, 1970: 69-70).

Finally, federal officials may induce state and local participation and cooperation by rendering valuable services. For example, many grants do this by offering a healthy percentage of program funds for administration at the state and local level; and such crucial support services—technical advice, staff loans, and research—may be offered to participating organizations.

Federal officials also have more compelling devices at their disposal, which range from gentle to explicit forms of coercive power. A common practice is to require states and localities to draw up elaborate plans for the administration of a federal program. Once these assurances are made, the federal government will allocate funds on the assumption that they can be withdrawn if the conditions specified in the plan are not fulfilled. Through this device, federal officials seek "compliance in advance" (Derthick, 1970: 209).

A similar strategy is to specify conditions and procedural requirements, such as thorough reporting and accounting systems, in the regulations that accompany the acceptance of federal funds. In this manner the federal government hopes to achieve the substantive ends of federal objectives. As Derthick (1970: 200) points out, however, there are dangers in this procedure:

Specificity entails risks. . . . The more specific the language of the federal requirements, the lower the federal capacity to adapt to state peculiarities and the greater the danger that the limitations of federal capacity to compel conformance may be revealed.

Moreover, stringent regulations and guidelines may induce a sort of goal displacement, wherein state and local officials strive to meet federal requirements in order to obtain funds and avoid sanctions, while ignoring the basic mission of the program.

Recognizing these problems, federal officials tend to employ more reliable forms of surveillance. Such activities include on-site visitations, program evaluations, administrative and management reviews, audits, and other feedback mechanisms—including reports by nongovernmental advisory committees set up to oversee state and local governmental units (see, for example, Downs, 1967: 145-153; Blau and Scott, 1962: 170-172; and Kaufman, 1973). Wilensky (1967: 60-61) adds an important caveat, however, on the limitations of oversight:

Where field or branch products and local operating conditions vary, surveillance machinery proliferates. Such machinery is often ineffectual—especially where the local people must submit to inspection either by those outside their profession or specialty or by those of different ideological persuasions. . . . Where the . . . doctrinal distance between the inspectors is great, the resulting information blockage may imperil top leaders' awareness

of and accommodation to local problems as well as their ability to communicate new goals to local units.

Perhaps the most threatening form of federal influence is the power to withdraw or withhold funds from states and localities. This is the ultimate weapon in the federal government's arsenal of influence. However, this weapon is rarely used. It may cause embarrassment for all concerned and damage the only ally which the federal government has in the area—the state or local implementing agency. Generally, the federal government negotiates with state and local officials in an effort to attain the greatest possible compliance without withholding funds. Thus, federal officials usually refrain from overt threats which could undermine cooperative relations with implementors and generate congressional hostility—at the expense of program goals (Derthick, 1970: 207-214). A more common practice is the audit exception where certain amounts of money are required to be returned to the federal treasury (see The National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children, 1972, for an example of Office of Education action). Finally, the mere knowledge of the ability of the federal government to withhold funds and the awareness of a regularized process of audit discovery can act as powerful deterrents to errant behavior (errant, that is, from the superior's perspective).

#### **The Characteristics of the Implementing Agencies**

Numerous factors are included in this component of the model. Students of bureaucratic politics have identified many characteristics of administrative agencies that affect their policy performance. Ripley et al. (1973: 10), for example, speak of bureaucratic structure as those "characteristics, norms, and recurring patterns of relations inside the executive agencies that have either potential or actual relation to what they do in the way of policy."

Like Ripley, we view this component as consisting of both the formal structural features of organizations and the informal attributes of their personnel. We are also interested in the implementing agency's ties to other participants in the policy delivery system. Without trying to provide an exhaustive listing of these elements, we offer the following suggestions of characteristics that may impinge on an organization's capacity to implement policy:

- (a) the competence and size of an agency's staff;
- (b) the degree of hierarchical control of subunit decisions and processes within the implementing agencies;
- (c) an agency's political resources (e.g., support among legislators and executives);
- (d) the vitality of an organization;
- (e) the degree of "open" communications (i.e., networks of communication with free horizontal and vertical communication, and a relatively high degree of freedom in communications with persons outside the organization) within an organization;
- (f) the agency's formal and informal linkages with the "policy-making" or "policy-enforcing" body.

#### **Economic, Social, and Political Conditions**

The impact of economic, social, and political conditions on public policy has been the focus of much attention during the past decade. Students of comparative state politics and public policy have been particularly interested in identifying the influence of these environmental variables on policy outputs (see, for example, Sharkansky, 1967, 1971; Sharkansky and Hofferbert, 1969; Cnudde and McCrone, 1969; Dye, 1966; Hofferbert, 1964). Although the impact of these factors on the implementation of policy decisions has received little attention, they may have a profound effect on the performance of implementing agencies.

For illustrative purposes, we propose that consideration be given to the following questions regarding the economic, social, and political environment affecting the jurisdiction or the organization within which implementation takes place:

- (a) Are the economic resources available within the implementing jurisdiction (or organization) sufficient to support successful implementation?
- (b) To what extent (and how) will prevailing economic and social conditions be affected by the implementation of the policy in question?
- (c) What is the nature of public opinion; how salient is the related policy issue?
- (d) Do elites favor or oppose implementation of the policy?
- (e) What is the partisan character of the implementing jurisdiction (or organization); is there partisan opposition or support for the policy?
- (f) To what extent are private interest groups mobilized in support or opposition to the policy?

#### The Disposition of Implementors

Each of the components of the model discussed above must be filtered through the perceptions of the implementor within the jurisdiction where the policy is delivered. Three elements of the implementors' response may affect their ability and willingness to carry out the policy: their cognition (comprehension, understanding) of the policy, the direction of their response toward it (acceptance, neutrality, rejection), and the intensity of that response.

The implementors' understanding of the general intent, as well as the specific standards and objectives of the policy, is important. Moreover, successful implementation may be frustrated when officials are not aware that they are not in full compliance with the policy. We have already dealt with some aspects of this phenomenon. Yet we want to emphasize

that implementors may screen out a clear message when the decision seems to contradict deeply cherished beliefs. Under circumstances of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), the individual may attempt to bring the displeasing message into balance with his perception of what the decision ought to have been (see, for example, Wasby, 1970: 98).

The direction of implementors' dispositions toward the standards and objectives is crucial also. Implementors may fail to execute policies faithfully because they reject the goals contained in them (see, for example, Peltason, 1961; Dolbeare and Hammond, 1971; Etzioni, 1961; Wasby, 1970; and Derthick, 1970). Conversely, widespread acceptance of the policy's standards and objectives, on the part of those responsible for administering it, will enhance greatly the potential for successful execution (Kaufman, 1960). At minimum, it would seem that shared attitudes will make implementation easier. The goals of a policy may be rejected for a variety of reasons: they may offend implementors' personal value systems, extraorganizational loyalties, sense of self-interest, or existing and preferred relationships. Summarizing this phenomenon, Petrick (1968: 7) has written that it "arises from the fact that human groups find it difficult to carry out effectively acts for which they have no underlying beliefs."

Finally, the intensity of implementors' dispositions may affect the performance of the policy. Those holding intense negative preferences may be led to outright and open defiance of the program's objectives. When this occurs the implementation question may become moot—subordinates (e.g., states and localities) may refuse to participate in the program altogether (see Bailey and Mosher, 1968). Less intense attitudes may cause implementors to attempt surreptitious diversion and evasion, a more common pattern (see, for example, Lazin, 1973). In these circumstances one may have to look to the role of oversight and enforcement to explain variations in the effectiveness of implementation.



What all this suggests is that the researcher must gather multiple indicators of various elements of the dispositions of policy implementors.

#### Hypothesized Linkages Between Components of the Model

Although our discussion will be presented in static terms, it is important that the dynamic character of the implementation process be recognized. Factors that may affect the execution of a policy in its initial stages may be of little consequence at a later point in time. Hence, it is vital that the study of implementation be conducted longitudinally; relationships identified at one point in time must not be extended casually to other time periods. With this in mind, let us describe and justify briefly some hypothesized relationships (see Figure 3).

The standards and objectives of policies have an indirect effect on performance; what influence this component has on the dependent variable is mediated by other independent variables. Obviously, the delivery of public services will be influenced by the manner in which standards and objectives are communicated to implementors and the extent to which standards and objectives facilitate oversight and enforcement. Standards and objectives have their indirect impact on the disposition of implementors through interorganizational communication activities. Clearly, implementors' responses to the policy will be based, in part, on their perceptions and interpretations of its objectives. This is not to suggest that good communication necessarily contributes to a positive disposition on the part of implementors. However, variations in implementors' support for federal policies ultimately may be explained partially in terms of their understanding and interpretation of these standards and objectives, as well as the manner by which they are communicated.

Standards and objectives also have an indirect impact on the disposition of implementors through enforcement activities. They provide the foundation on which superiors can rely in their relations with policy implementors in other organizations. For example, standards and objectives may establish limits on the sanctions that can be employed legitimately by superiors; and they help define the amount of discretion afforded implementing agencies. Where the power to withhold funds is authorized, various forms of coercive power are also possible. Where withholding is not permitted, however, superiors may be forced to rely exclusively on normative and remunerative powers. Enforcement and follow-up activities may alter the dispositions of implementors, causing them to see the advantages of participation, and quite possibly the disadvantages of resisting effective implementation. Alternatively, by employing coercion, enforcing officials can sometimes secure the compliance of implementing officials without affecting their dispositions about the program. For example, the use of audit exceptions can deter implementors from using funds in a manner inconsistent with a program's standards and objectives, even though implementing officials may continue to question their desirability.

We posit linkages between policy resources and three other components of the model. The type and extent of resources made available by a policy decision will affect communications and enforcement activities. Technical assistance and other services can only be offered if provided by the policy decision. Furthermore, vigorous enforcement can be achieved only if the available resources are sufficient to support such activity. Similarly, the disposition of implementors can be influenced directly by the availability of resources. When vast sums of money or other resources are perceived to be available, implementors may view the program with added favor, and compliance may be encouraged by the prospect of receiving a share of these resources. Conversely, support for a

program will not be encouraged if implementors perceive that few benefits will be realized by active participation.

The linkage between resources and the economic, social, and political environment of the implementing jurisdiction (or organization) suggests that the availability of fiscal and other resources may create a demand—by private citizens and organized interest groups—for participation in and successful implementation of the program. Again, the prospect of benefiting from the program may cause otherwise quiescent groups to press for maximum participation. However, where limited resources are made available, individual citizens and organized interests may choose to oppose the policy on the grounds that the benefits of participation are few compared to the potential costs (e.g., a loss of state or local autonomy, or a restructuring of established relationships).

It is also hypothesized that the economic, social, and political environment of the implementing jurisdiction (or organization) will affect the character of the implementing agencies, the dispositions of implementors, and performance itself. Environmental conditions can have a significant effect on the willingness and capacity of a jurisdiction (or organization) to support well-developed bureaucratic structures, the vitality and expertise found in administrative agencies, as well as the level of political support enjoyed by an agency. Environmental conditions will also affect the dispositions of implementors. Where the problems to be remedied by a program are severe and private citizens and interest groups are mobilized in support of a program, it is more likely that implementors may accept the policy's goals, standards, and objectives. Conversely, where problems are not severe and organized interests are lined up against a program, implementors may be encouraged to look with disfavor on the program requiring implementation. Environmental conditions may cause implementors to execute a policy without altering their personal preferences about that policy. Implementors' desire to minimize public hostility or their ideologically

based inclination to be responsive to public wishes may influence their behavior, even though it may be inconsistent with their own preferences. Finally, these environmental variables are seen as having a direct effect on the delivery of public services. Despite the dispositions of implementors and other forces in the model, these environmental conditions may enhance or place limits on performance.

Several characteristics of implementing agencies can affect the dispositions of their personnel. The nature of the communications network, the degree of hierarchical control, and the style of leadership can influence the individual's identification with the organization's goals and objectives, either facilitating or hindering effective implementation depending on the orientation of the implementing agency. Dispositions can also be influenced by the agency's formal and informal ties to the "policy-making" or "policy-enforcing" body (e.g., do they operate at the same level of government? has an effective alliance been built between higher authorities and implementing officials?).

We suggest the possibility of an interactive effect between interorganizational communication and enforcement activities and the characteristics of implementing agencies. Enforcement and follow-up activities can provide the implementing agencies with added vitality and expertise—improving their capacity to execute programs. They can also be a source of political support which can facilitate effective implementation. The nature of enforcement and follow-up activities, including the provision of technical assistance, will be influenced by the characteristics of the implementing agencies. Since many of the enforcement mechanisms available to superiors operating within a single organization cannot be utilized when implementation requires interorganizational or intergovernmental cooperation, the type of power used by superiors (e.g., normative, remunerative, or coercive) will be affected by the formal and informal relationships between the policy-making and implementing

organizations. Also, in choosing among alternative methods of enforcement and follow-up actions, superiors can be expected to be sensitive to characteristics of the implementing agencies. Agencies possessing competent staffs and leadership will require different types of assistance than those that are poorly staffed and led. Similarly, implementing agencies with limited political resources may be more vulnerable to coercive power than agencies that enjoy extensive support among private citizens and public officials.

### SOME SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

The model advanced here has several noteworthy features. It delineates several factors that shape the linkage between policy and performance and specifies the relationships among these independent variables. Furthermore, it aids in the description of the policy implementation process and serves as a guide in research by generating suggestive hypotheses. This model is relatively complex; however, it is our contention that an examination of its several linkages will lead to more systematic explanations of policy performance. While it is not our purpose to elaborate each of the linkages included in the model, we can illustrate its utility. By employing the three general explanations for unsuccessful implementation first proposed by Kaufman (1973: 2), we can emphasize their relevance to a summary of our model.

### THE COMMUNICATIONS PROCESS

Effective implementation requires that subordinates (or implementors) know what they are supposed to do. As messages pass through any communications network distortions are likely to occur—producing contradictory directives, ambiguities, inconsistencies in instructions, and incompatible requirements. Even where directives and requirements are

clear, problems may arise as subordinates (implementors) fail to comprehend fully what is expected of them.

Four components of our model address this problem: policy standards and objectives; interorganizational communication and enforcement activities; the characteristics of the implementing agency; and the dispositions of implementors. Our focus here is essentially on the degree to which policy standards and objectives are transmitted to implementors clearly, accurately, consistently, and in a timely manner. Several policy studies address the impact of the communications process on policy performance. Judicial impact studies (Milner, 1971; Canon and Kolson, 1971; Wasby, 1973; Dolbeare and Hammond, 1971) have frequently reported that the failure of lower court judges to show substantial compliance with higher court decisions can be attributed partly to their ignorance of higher court rulings or their failure to comprehend fully the nature of the rulings.

The problems inherent in the communications process are also reflected in the case of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).<sup>7</sup> State and local education officials had anticipated the passage of a "general aid" bill in 1965. Many state and local officials were led to believe that the enacted program provided general aid—an impression that was reinforced by a widely distributed and erroneous document listing programs which were "permissible under the law." However, it left out many important requirements, including those that dealt with the "targeting" of aid for disadvantaged children.

While the Title I formula for the allocation of federal funds to the disadvantaged was precise, the types of programs which would qualify were not outlined in the original statute or the early regulations developed by the U.S. Office of Education: wide discretion was delegated to state and local education agencies to determine their own approaches for aiding disadvantaged children. According to one federal program officer, at least one state defined a "disadvantaged"

student as one lacking art, music, and physical education skills. The state tested students in its school systems and found nearly all to be "disadvantaged," using these criteria of "needs assessment." Subsequently, the state allocated Title I funds for the support of programs in these three areas and thus—whatever the merit of this action—provided general aid in contravention of the legislative purposes of the program.

This early ambiguity and confusion was in large part a consequence of statutory provisions written primarily to ensure fiscal accountability; they addressed casually the matter of program standards and objectives. In successive authorizations, Congress was able to provide greater specification and clarification of its intent. Eventually, the Office of Education rewrote its regulations specifying that programs would have to be developed that contributed to the improvement of basic cognitive skills (e.g., reading and math). In response, this state adopted new criteria of "needs assessment" which brought it into line with federal guidelines.

#### THE CAPABILITY PROBLEM

Successful implementation is also a function of the implementing organization's capacity to do what it is expected to do. The ability to implement policies may be hindered by such factors as overworked and poorly trained staffs, insufficient information and financial resources, or impossible time constraints. Commenting on the subordinate's inability to comply with his superiors' instructions, Kaufman (1973: 3) writes: "Confronted by demands he cannot satisfy, he will fashion his own policies to handle the situation. His own policies often do not coincide with the policies of his leaders."

Capability problems are highlighted by four components of our model: policy resources (their character and quantity);

interorganizational communication and enforcement activities (the provision of political support, technical advice and assistance); characteristics of the implementing agencies (staff competency, leadership, vitality, formal and informal ties to policy makers); and the economic, social, and political environment (public opinion, organized interest groups, economic conditions of the jurisdiction).

Derthick's (1972) analysis of the Johnson Administration's new towns in-town program provides evidence of how capability problems can inhibit implementation. She reports that federal officials faced insurmountable legal barriers when they tried to sell surplus land at a low price. Furthermore, the federal government was not able to use effectively what resources and incentives it possessed. "Because it depended on local officials to be the agents of its purpose, whatever flaws there were in the local officials' ability to act effectively—to gather public support, to overcome opposition, to assemble an administrative organization—were liabilities for the federal government as well" (Derthick, 1972: 88).

The failure of government regulatory activities also is explained often in terms of this capability problem. In its report (1971) on the federal government's independent regulatory agencies, President Nixon's Advisory Council on Executive Organization (chaired by Roy Ash) concluded that the failings of such agencies flow from organizational and structural deficiencies. Furthermore, the oil industry's virtual monopoly of information concerning existing fuel reserves and future supplies makes it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for government officials to monitor industry policies and practices. It can be argued also that private interests may be unable to comply fully with the standards and objectives of government policy. Faced with the demands of the Environmental Protection Agency and other governmental bodies, public utility companies have claimed that compliance is neither economically nor technologically feasible.

### DISPOSITIONAL CONFLICTS

Implementation may fail because implementors refuse to do what they are supposed to do. Dispositional conflicts occur because subordinates (implementors) reject the goals of their superiors. Goals and objectives may be rejected for numerous reasons: they offend implementors' personal values or extraorganizational loyalties; they violate implementors' sense of self-interest; or they alter features of the organization and its procedures that implementors desire to maintain (Kaufman, 1971).

While our primary concern is with the dispositions of implementors, we are also interested in the four other components of the model which directly influence this factor: policy resources; interorganizational communication and enforcement activities; characteristics of the implementing agency; and the economic, social, and political environment of the implementing organization (jurisdiction). Widespread attention to the impact of dispositional conflicts on policy performance is evident in the literature. Allison (1971: 127-132) suggests that a conflict between President Kennedy and the navy over the location of the Cuban blockade during the 1962 missile crisis resulted in the unsuccessful implementation of the President's policy. "The Navy's resistance to the President's order that the blockade be drawn in closer to Cuba forced the President to allow one or several Soviet ships to pass through the blockade after it was officially operative" (Allison, 1971: 130). Lazin's (1972) study of the enforcement of civil rights regulations in public housing also demonstrates that the attitudes of local (implementing) agencies and administrators are among the principal factors determining compliance.

In contrast to the Ash council's view that the failings of regulation can be remedied by reforming the organizational structure of regulation, Noll (1971: 15) suggests that "the performance of regulatory agencies is unsatisfactory because

regulators have chosen to pursue objectives that are contrary to the public interest." In making this argument, Noll is implying that structural changes designed to improve the capacity of government agencies to regulate private activity may be of little consequence. Stated simply, the problem may not be one of capacity; rather, it involves the willingness of implementors to achieve the objectives of policy.

### CONCLUSION

While far too little attention has been paid to how policy decisions are transformed into public services, we have succeeded in identifying a number of studies that look explicitly at the problems of policy implementation. Most of these studies have relied primarily on one of the three general explanations for unsuccessful implementation discussed above. Few researchers have sought to integrate each of these explanations into their analysis.

The conceptual framework presented in this paper utilizes these various partial and insufficient explanations in an effort to provide the basis for a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation process. Specifically, this model directs attention to six clusters of variables that affect the delivery of public services: it points to the relevance of policy standards and objectives, policy resources, interorganizational communication and enforcement activities, the characteristics of the implementing agencies, the economic, social, and political environment affecting the implementing jurisdiction or organization, and the disposition of implementors for the carrying out of policy decisions.

It is our contention that this model offers a blueprint for the description and analysis of the policy implementation process and that it proposes explanations for program achievements and failures. We maintain that implementation

studies, when approached in this manner, have much to offer policy analysts and policy makers alike. For the policy analyst, implementation studies move the focus beyond the measurement of the impacts of public policy toward explanations for these observed outcomes. Implementation studies alert policy makers to variables that can be manipulated to improve the delivery of public services.

### NOTES

1. The model of the policy delivery system was originally offered by Sharkansky (1972) and is employed as an analytical framework in Sharkansky and Van Meter (1975).

2. The theoretical work which is most frequently cited in connection with the systems approach in political science is Easton (1965).

3. See, for example, the differing interpretations implied by Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), Smith (1973), Lazin (1973), Bunker (1972), Derthick (1972), Gross et al. (1971), and Dolbeare and Hammond (1971). See also the following studies in which a variety of concepts are employed to explore the implementation process: Jones (1970), Gergen (1968), Gross (1966), and Dror (1968).

4. For examples of this literature, see Wasby (1970), Johnson (1967), Petrick (1968), Dolbeare and Hammond (1971), Grossman (1970), and Brown and Stover (1974).

5. Krislov's work is based on Barnard (1938), March and Simon (1958), and Blau and Scott (1962). For a recent development of these notions, see Baum (1974).

6. While our discussion suggests dichotomous variables, change and goal consensus are best viewed as continua on which policies may be ordered. While we have chosen to talk in terms of "ideal types," we recognize that policy decisions would be ordered at various points on the two dimensions.

7. Information about the implementation of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) is drawn from the authors' project on the implementation of federal education policy.

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