**Policy Paradox**  by Deborah Stone

Notes prepared by: Omero C. Catan III

Introduction: Paradoxes violate the most elementary principle of logic: something cannot be two different things at once. But political life is full of them. Fields of political science, public admin., law, and policy analysis have a common mission of rescuing public policy form the irrationalities and indignities of politics, hoping to make policy instead with rational, analytical, and scientific methods. Debra Stone calls this the “rationality project,” and it has been at the core of American Political Culture since the beginning.

The rationality project began with James Madison’s effort to “cure the mischiefs of faction” with proper constitutional design, thereby assuring that government policy would be protected from the self-interested motives of tyrannous majorities.

Then, 1870’s Christopher Columbus Langdell (Dean of Harvard Law School) reformed legal training. Law was a science to be studied by examining appellate court decisions and distilling their common essence into a system of principles.

Turn of the 20th CENTURY rationality project by PROGRESSIVE REFORMERS, WHO removed policy making authority from elected bodies and gave it to expert regulatory commissions and professional city managers, in an effort to render policy making more scientific and less political.

TURN OF 21CENTURY/RATIONALITY PROJECT/was in full bloom in the discipline of political science, under the banner of “rational choice,” and in law, under the banner of “law and economics.”

Policy Paradox has two aims---1. The Rationality Project misses the point of politics. Instead, Stone argues that the categories of thought that are the basis of rational analysis are really a paradox, defined in political struggle. The analysis is a creature of politics; it is strategically crafted argument, designed to create ambiguities and paradoxes and to resolve them in a particular direction.

2. A political analysis that makes sense of policy paradoxes, stone seek to create a framework in which such phenomena, the ordinary situations of politics, do not have to be explained away as extraordinary, written off as irrational, dismissed as folly, or disparaged as “pure politics.” She starts from the belief that politics is a creative and valuable feature of social existence. The project of making public policy rational rests on 3 pillars: 1. Model of political reasoning. 2. Model of society. 3. Model of policy making. In this overall model of reasoning, decisions are or should be made in a series of well-defined steps: id objectives, id alternative courses of action for achieving objectives, predict possible consequences of each alternative, select alternative which maximizes the attainment of objectives Model of political reasoning: possibilities of changing one’s objectives, of pursuing contradictory objectives simultaneously,turning loss into an appearance of victory, is reasoning by metaphor and analogy. It is trying to convince or persuade others to your side for political policy. Model of society underlying the contemporary rationality project is the MARKET. Society is viewed as a collection of autonomous, rational decision makers who have no community life. Their interactions consist entirely of trading with one another to maximize their individual well-being, is NOT RESTRICTED TO THINGS WE CONSIDER MARKETS,(systemswhere goods and services are bought and sold). Electoral voting, the behavior of legislators, political leadership, the size of the welfare roll, and even marriage have all been explained in terms of maximization of self-interest through rational calculation. Model of policy making: in the rationality project where policy is created in a fairly orderly sequence of stages, almost as if on an assembly line. Many political scientists speak of “assembling the elements” of policy. An issue is placed on the agenda, and a problem is defined. It moves through the legislative and executive branches, alternatives solutions are proposed, analyzed, legitimized, selected, and refined. A solution is implemented by executive, but constantly challenged and revised by interested actors, and perhaps revised. Policy making is a constant struggle over the criteria for classification, the boundaries of categories, and definition of ideals that guide the way people behave.

Part I: Politics Chapter 1: The Market and the Polis

The market model: social system in which individuals pursue their own welfare by exchanging things with others whenever trades are mutually beneficial. People compete for scarce resources; buy at least cost, convert raw materials into valuables that can be sold at the highest price. Individuals try to maximize self-interests. Market does not have community

Market model-individuals with self-interests who compete for scarce goods to sell at highest price and buy at lowest to maximize profits by obtaining complete and fully available information in a quest to maximize their own welfare.

**Alternative model The POLIS:**

1. Community must be starting point of the polis: collective intention. community means the collective will.

A. Community must have a membership, and a way of defining who is a member. MEMBERSHIP is the PRIMARY POLITICAL ISSUE

1. Prop 187 California—prohibiting undocumented aliens from public schools, Medicaid, immigration,

2. Model of the community must distinguish between political and cultural community. Public politics entails a profound dilemma: how to integrate several cultural communities into a single political community without destroying identity or integrity.

B. Membership in a community defines social and economic rights as well as political rights.

1. mutual aid is one bond that holds them together as a community. 2. sharing, caring, and maintaining relationships is at least a strong motivator of human behavior as (competition, separation, and promotion of one’s separate self-interests, like in the Market).

2. Public Interest of the community in the Polis.

Caring about individual needs as well as the needs of others

3: Common Problems: because people often pursue public interest that is different than self-interest, therein lies a problem; how to have both private benefits and collective benefits. Situations where self-interests and public interests work against each other are known as common problems. Two types of common problems: 1. private benefits entail social costs (discharging industrial waste into a lake)2. social benefits necessitate private sacrifices (maintaining a school system requires individual tax payments even with no children in school). 4. Influence. The vast gap between self-interests and public interests is bridged by influence or cooperation or loyalty. 5. Groups: groups are important in the polis in Three ways. A. people belong to institutions and organizations (they are citizens, employees, customers, students, taxpayers, voters, etc.), Their interests are shaped by organizations and they depend on organizations to represent their interests. B. *policy making* is not only about solving public problems, but about how groups are formed, split, and re-formed ***to achieve public purposes***. C, decisions must be made with collective interests in mind by representatives. 6. Information: (in the market system information is perfect) in the polis information is interpretive, incomplete, and strategically withheld. Because politics is driven by how people interpret information, much political activity is an effort to control interpretations of the information “to convince the citizens of their side of the story.” Secrecy and revelation are tools of political strategy.

7. Passion—(In the market-economic resources are governed by the laws of matter. Resources are finite, scarce, and consumed upon use. Whatever is used for making guns cannot be used for making butter). People can only do one thing at a time in the Market. IN the POLIS system-(Stone wanted to use Laws of paradox-instead uses laws of passion because people behave according to their emotions. The more people help each other the more they are committed to each other the more loyal to each other. People can do more things at one time. Human resources can be expanded with use.

In summary: polis: is a community with public interest or common problems, where influence is pervasive, loyalty is the norm, groups and organizations are the building blocks, information is interpretive, incomplete and strategic, and it governed by laws of passion as well as by laws of matter, and change occurs through interaction of mutually defining ideas and alliances all in order to maintain power in policy making to continue a vibrant polis on and on in a never ending way of life dealing with and enjoying life together as a community.

Comparing and Contrasting the Market and the Polis

**Concepts of society** **Market Model** **Polis Model**

Unit of analysis individual community

Motivation self-interest public interest (as well as SI)

Chief Conflict self-interest vs. Self-interest vs. Public interest

Self-interest Common Problems

Source of People’s self-generation influences from outside

Ideas and preferences within the individual

Nature of collective activity competition cooperation&competition

Criteria for individual- maximizing self-interest loyalty, (to people,

-decision making minimizing cost places, organ,products)

Maximize self-interest

Promote public interest

Building Blocks Individuals Groups and organizations

Nature of information accurate, complete ambiguous, interpretive

Fully available incomplete, strategically

Manipulated

How things work Laws of Matter (e.g., laws of passion (e.g.,

Material resources are human resources are

Finite and diminish renewable and expand

With use) with use)

Sources of change material exchange ideas, persuasion,

Alliances

Quest to maximize pursuit of power, pursuit

Own welfare of own welfare, pursuit

Public interest.

Part II GOALS: In this part 5 concepts are organized: equity, efficiency, security, liberty, and community goals. They are often called values. Each goal has a definition. Equity is treating likes alike, Efficiency is getting the most output for a given input, security is the satisfaction of minimum human needs, liberty is the ability to do as you wish as long as you do no harm to others. Theses goals are a a part of our political culture in the polis, but none of the definitions really clarifies its use in the polis. Rather than giving a single answer to a policy problem, the general definition provides a battleground for more particular fights. In a paradoxical way, the concepts unite people at the same time as they divide. There is an enormous range of choice in the interpretation of the criteria of policy analysis. Policy analysis is the process of making these choices in interpretations.

Chapter 2: EQUITY

Chocolate cake syndrome equitable distribution: we agree it should be divided equally---what does that mean?????? Obvious solution—count how many in the class and divide cake into that many equal slices Whammo----Equity—nop 8 challenges.

1.what about absent students who would have come to class had they known about the “scrumptious” cake. Other students would have dropped a class and added this class just to get this slice of cake.(equal slices but unequal invitations)

2. another challenge in a political science course-only members of department and within a hierarchy should get the cake (unequal slices for unequal ranks, but equal slices for equal ranks) undergraduates get crumbs, graduates get mouthful, grad stds working on our research assistant profs get slivers, associate profs get wedges, full profs get wedges with frosting, and chairperson gets wedge with extra frosting and linen napkin (oh boy).

3. Men challenge that they comprise one-third of the class and gender roles combine to make gender the de facto determinant of cake distribution the men insist that as a group they should receive half and women as a group should receive half (Unequal slices but equal blocs).

4. all students in the class attended a luncheon, but no dessert. Some students commandeered two shrimp cocktails, and the rarest slices of roast beef form the platter while others got only one shrimp cocktail and overcooked roast beef. Let’s even up and not let the slobs get cake for dessert they already got all the roast beef they could eat. (unequal slices but equal meals).

5. some students hate chocolate, some are allergic. These students think that I might as well give them very very small pieces and give bigger pieces to those who can fully appreciate it.(they want to be polite and sample the cake) their solution is called unequal slices but equal value to recipients.

6. the economics majors in the class do not want to be part of a complicated solution. Just give everyone a fork and yell go at it. (unequal slices but equal starting resources).

7. One time the professor had only enough to make a cupcake. It couldn’t even be divided up. The math whizzes proposed a solution, everyone’s name in a hat and draw the winner lottery style. (unequal slices but equal statistical chances).

8. Just when I thought I finally had an equitable solution, the student government activists jumped up. In a democracy, they said, the only fair way to decide who gets the cupcake is to give each person a vote and hold an election for the office of cupcake eater. (unequal slices but equal votes).

There are three important dimensions in any distribution: recipient, item, and the process.

Recipient—who gets something—challenges 1,2, and 3.

Item--what get distributed/challenges 4 and 5 redefine the item being distributed

Process—how is distribution to be decided upon and carried out—challenges6,7,8

Concepts of EQUALITY

Simple definition: same size share for everyone

Complications in the polis:

Dimension issue Dilemma

Recipeints 1. Membership Unequal invitations/equal slices (boundaries of community) 2.Rank based distribution equal ranks/equal slices internal subdivisions of society unequal ranks/unequal slices

3.group based distribution equal blocs/unequal slices major internal cleavages of society.

Items 4. Boundaries of the item equal meals/unequal slices 5. Value of the Item equal value/unequal slices

Process 6. Competition equal forks/unequal slices opportunity as starting resources

7. Lottery equal chance/unequal slices opportunity as statistical chance

8. Voting opportunity as equal votes/unequal slices political participation

Chapter 3. Efficiency: Getting the most out of a given input or achieving an objective for the lowest cost simple definitions.

Efficiency is a comparative idea: different ways of doing things; ratio bet/w input and output, effort and results, expenditure and income, or cost and resulting benefit.

The conflicts that arise from the political activity that results from this endeavor of

maintaining efficiency are Who gets the benefits and bears the burden of a policy? How should we measure the values and costs of a policy? And what mode of organizing human activity is likely to yield the most efficient results?

What is Efficiency? Herbert Simon applied the criterion of efficiency to running a public library. Resources were limited---gov’t objectives for the library were to maximize the agreed upon objectives from a meeting with the available resources.

A good library is not one that has all the books, but one that has used the limited funds which are allowed to build up as good a collection as possible under the circumstances.

A administrator from a library system in Oakland, California attempted to utilize the same principal of efficiency from Herbert Simon. So the California team laid off employees and bought books from the savings from salaries. 7 challenges.

1. Is the book collection what matters most? A library system should include lectures, discussion groups, storytelling, etc., that involves people. Which objectives to use to judge the costs of attaining them?
2. Which types of books should be bought? Adult or children books, fiction, etc.? What about patrons who emphasize not print media? (They are questions of constituency: whom does the library serve? And they arise even once we have assumed a fairly narrow definition of objectives: “Buy Books.”).
3. The employees who would be laid off, the communities would lose buying power, now that they have no money to spend, most librarians are women. Inputs are simultaneously output, the arithmetic of the efficiency calculation is confused.
4. Librarians perform many functions that enhance the well-being of society as a whole. Sharing the joy and love of books, telephone reference calls, help school classes community research, and paying for child care while at work.