

Book Reviews

James O'Toole and the University of Southern California Center for Futures Research, *Energy and Social Change*. (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1976), 185 pp.

This book is intended to be an antidote to pessimism about the limits of the American system. If it has a contribution to make, according to the authors,

... it is to suggest a modest redirection of the attention of policy makers to some overlooked but realistic energy options and opportunities that might be realized within the limits of the existing system (p. xi).

The future is not as bad as it may seem, if the right choices are made.

The principal opportunity appears to be the creation of a post-1990 Quality Economy and something called ultimate abundance. Such an economy would reduce pollution and inefficiency, create full employment in meaningful jobs, and produce goods and services that enhance the quality of life, not just the GNP. And presumably there would be plenty of energy.

The principal options for public policy are higher energy prices; incentives to make the domestic energy market more competitive (e.g., deregulation of natural gas prices); and incentives for oil and gas exploration and conservation. In addition, something would have to be done to help the poorest families get by with higher energy prices.

The implications for corporate planners are reassuring. Corporate planning will be more complex, but the basic ground rules for US industry will not change. An increase in energy research and capital investment will create opportunities "to capture these resources." Future plant and equipment should be not only energy-efficient, but adaptable to a variety of fuels. Energy dislocations will be concentrated on large mass production industries, necessitating diversification from middle-range technologies toward high and low technologies. Finally, the relative scarcity of capital and energy will require management to attend more to the development and proper utilization of human resources.

The link between these current options and long-run opportunities is faith in the market. If energy prices rise enough and a little competitive imagination is applied, the right technologies will be chosen (including electrification, superbatteries, and

methanol fuel), various substitutions will be made, and almost everything else will fall into place. However, politics have gotten in the way of raising the price of energy to market-clearing levels. The integration of energy needs, social values and economic aspirations

. . . is a challenge not likely to be met in the near future because the values, goals, and economic priorities of powerful groups in America are competing and conflicting—and there is no sign of willingness to coalesce around a common agenda (p. 33).

In addition, businessmen faced with free market opportunities do not always live up to theoretical expectations, and private decision makers appear to be unaware of the full range of options and the implications of change.

We shall probably not succeed in creating a future with abundant energy and high quality of life unless we free ourselves from the constraints of corporate groupthink and governmental central planning and controls (p. 132).

Powerful groups, businessmen, and private decision makers need to be enlightened, but these are problems left for the reader.

Statements about the future in this book are grounded primarily in a Delphi study conducted in three rounds between November, 1974, and March, 1975. The study was disaggregated into technology, economic, and social panels, each comprised of the relevant specialists. Whatever was put in by individual specialists, what comes out is an aggregation of preferences, hunches, and theory that appear to be an affirmation of faith. One wonders whether the Delphi method is anything more than institutionalized groupthink at a distance. In any case, the results should not be dismissed because the preconceptions of policy analysts sometimes turn out to be the main determinants of policy.

The questions put to the Delphi panels are reproduced as the last chapter, along with results, and provide interesting reading. For example, the economics panel was asked about the redistribution of power and status among elites that would result from energy scarcity and from energy abundance. There turned out to be a consensus that the power and status of national economic planners, technologists, coal- and nuclear-based utilities, and bureaucrats in control of allocations would be strongly enhanced under conditions of scarcity. Scientists, political activists, and economists would also make some gains. The power and status of environmental specialists would be enhanced under energy abundance, but black marketeers, bureaucrats in control of allocations, and coal- and nuclear-based utilities would all suffer losses in some degree. No consensus was reached on the implications of future scarcity or abundance for big business.

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Reviewed by RONALD D. BRUNNER, University of Michigan.

H. George Frederickson and Charles H. Wise, *Public Administration and Public Policy*. (Lexington Books, D. C. Heath, 1977), 228 pp. (Policy Studies Organization Series, 13) \$14.00.

The title of this book suggests an introductory treatment of a broad range of topics in public administration. Until this point in time, textbooks generally have focused either on public administration *or* public policy; those concentrating on policy have not pretended to deal with the varied subject matter of public administration.

Is the Frederickson/Wise book, then, a new comprehensive and unifying introduction to fields which previously have been treated separately? The answer is no. It certainly is not an introduction, and it lacks a unifying theme necessary to a comprehensive survey. The editors say it is their major objective to "examine continually evolving relationships between public administration and public policy." The focus, however, is on matters falling in the interstices between public administration and public policy. The contributors look at the formulation and reformulation of public policy that occur as public organizations administer the programs for which they are responsible.

Each contributor's mission is to survey relevant theory-building and research findings on a topic familiar to students of public administration, e.g., personnel administration, administrative behavior, leadership, budgeting, etc. All contributions are then supposed to identify and assess for the reader the policy implications of the research cited. Not all chapters actually do so. A stringent space limitation must have been imposed on each author because amplification, interpretation and explanation are limited or, in some cases, lacking altogether. In a couple of chapters even clear identification of the principal policy issues is absent.

There always is the opportunity for individual authors, in commissioned essays, to mount their favorite hobby horses. Fortunately, most, but not all, of the material in this book is representative of the mainstream of what the editors refer to as the "developing theory, research and practice in the field."

For example, the first chapter of the book links problems of program administration with their roots in the policy-making process. Appropriately titled "Implementation," it contains a plea for more active participation by political scientists in policy analysis because the implementation of federal programs must be understood as a "rich political, bureaucratic process" which seems "far too unsystematic, immeasurable and theoretical to many economists."

Policy analysis in federal departments has been dominated by economists who are "peculiarly deficient in their understanding of the problems of institutional implementation of programs." Political scientists would pay more attention than economists to the "black box" of delivery systems. After a discussion of how several federal programs might have benefited from advance estimates of the political and bureaucratic problems of implementation, the chapter cites several research-based maxims for social scientists who might be asked to advise on implementation strategies.

This discussion of implementation strategies is supported by useful chapters on

the design of public organizations and on administrative behavior. The chapter titled "Managing Subordinates" has a helpful how-to approach. The chapter on budgeting covers a great deal of ground in brief, readable fashion, and deals succinctly and sensibly with zero-based budgeting. A chapter on productivity is very helpful in identifying policy questions implicit in developing the application of this concept to governmental operations. The chapter on citizen participation places the fundamental dilemma of the administrator's role and responsibility in sharp focus.

The compactness of the writing is illustrated by the fact that 12 of the 16 chapters contained fewer than 12 pages of text; six chapters had fewer than 10 pages; two were 8 pages long and two contained only 6 pages. While brevity is to be commended, there is a penalty in this book. The density of writing makes for hard slogging. For example, can justice be done to the rich literature on the subject of leadership in 6 pages? A more extended treatment of fewer topics would have given the book more cohesion and the reader would have received a better perspective of interrelationships.

It would have been helpful for many readers if the editors had included an integrative headnote for each of the four sections into which the book is divided. At the very least, the headnotes could have explained the relevance of each of the chapters to the general topic of the section and to the overall theme of the book. For example, it was disconcerting to find a chapter on intergovernmental fiscal relations in Part II, entitled "The Actors in Administering Public Policy," rather than in tandem with a chapter on budgeting in Part III, which has the heading, "Administering Public Policy Decision Processes." In short, a contribution of what we all know to be the editors' knowledge and expertise in the field would have enhanced the book's value. Their contribution would have been particularly important in providing perspective and injecting unity into a wide-ranging set of topics.

It is difficult to determine the audience for which this book was written. There is no reference in the preface to the editors' intentions. It clearly is not for beginning public administration students. Neither would many practitioners find time spent on this book rewarding. Advanced graduate students and those who teach in the field would find the essays useful (some far more than others) and the bibliographies would prove helpful.

Given the disorganized state of our literature, it is incumbent on authors and editors to provide background and state objectives for a work such as this. The preface, however, is only half a page long. Surely the remaining half page could have been used to explain the editors' purpose more fully. Is it not the function of a preface to explain why a book has been written?

Having mentioned hobby horses, I should point out that one of mine is arguing that high readability is perfectly compatible with rigor and sophistication in this as in all fields. Fifteen introductory texts in public administration have been analyzed for their readability and have been found wanting.¹ Their average score was closer to

¹ James S. Bowman (1977). "The readability of introductory textbooks in public administration," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 22: 373-76.

“very difficult” than “difficult.” Using the same widely-accepted tool² for analyzing the Frederickson/Wise book, I found that its readability, alas, ranks as “very difficult.” If there are readable books on nuclear physics, as there are, why not in public administration and public policy?

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Eugene Bardach, *The Implementation Game: What Happens After a Bill Becomes a Law* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1977), xi, 323 pp.

One of the conceits of American political science has been that politics focuses on legislation; here it is that the indifferent American voter cared little for issues, candidates, even who is President. As the cataclysms of the 1960s—Viet-Nam, drugs, environmental decay, and urban rioting—gave way to the long marches of the 1970s—inflation, energy, affirmative action, and school busing—the apathetic voter has given way to the single-issue fanatic.

And policy analysis has discovered, once again, implementation. To the current surge of studies of “implementation” (what it is remains uncomfortably unclear) Eugene Bardach of Berkeley’s Graduate School of Public Policy has contributed a good, if flawed, book. *The Implementation Game* is a substantial improvement on Pressman and Wildavsky’s *Implementation*, the book that heralded the fad.

Bardach will be especially useful for students inexperienced in the ways of public organizations. But reflecting the uncertain vision of “implemenation” that we all suffer from, Bardach’s book tends to be perishably specific, yet conceptually murky. The specificity derives from Bardach’s study of the implementation of the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, which decentralized mental health services in California in the early 1970s. Chapter I, an account of LPS’s early years, is interminable and perplexing; a dubious strategy even if that may be part of the point. At the same time, Bardach’s use of an informal game theoretic language does not provide enough conceptual power to go much beyond a survey of some of the more frequently found “games” played in pursuit—and evasion—of legislative mandates. Finally, the imposing price tag of \$17.95 for a book modest in concept and execution poses a barrier worth noting, even in these days of high-priced publishing.

The renewed interest in implementation is welcome, but hardly novel: Carl Friedrich observed in 1940 that “Public policy, to put it flatly, is a continuous process, the formation of which is inseparable from its execution. . . . Politics and administration play a continuous role in both formation and execution, though there is probably more politics in the formation of policy, more administration in the execution of it. Insofar as particular individuals or groups are gaining or losing

² The readability formula found in Rudolf Flesch (1949), *The Art of Readable Writing*, New York: Collier.

power or control in a given area, there is politics; insofar as officials act or propose action in the name of the public interest, there is administration.” Thus, the complaint of the Berkeley Know-Nothing School that there is a paucity of “significant analytical work dealing with implementation” raises expectations about what is meant by “analytical.” In fact, nothing in the slender implementation literature of the 1970s so far improves noticeably upon the vast—if largely disappointing—output of students of public administration dating back six decades.

The novelty of implementation as a scholarly problem seems to reflect a broader social perception: that government programs often have identifiable starting points, but rarely have perceptible—and hardly ever satisfying—points of conclusion. So implementation has become a subject around which neoconservative complaints have crystallized. Bardach’s Chapter X lays heavy emphasis, unsurprisingly, on market-like strategies for avoiding policy administration in the first place—a major means for short-circuiting implementation difficulties. This taste for “postliberal heresies” bypasses Theodore Lowi’s complaint of a decade ago: that the trouble with our public policy is that the law is too vague—that legislators delegate too extensively to the executive branch. At least with LPS, that was presumably not the case, since, as Bardach recounts, its senior legislative author proved to be a nonpareil of legislative oversight.

Yet the point that Lowi makes underlies much of the conservative complaint, reflecting as it does the extraordinary mismatch between the prescriptive capabilities of legislators and the complexity and changeability of the world they would rule. “Implementation,” put forth as a single analytical construct, promises too much. The world in which laws and public policies flourish, obsolesce, and die is far too variable to be subsumed by a single process, however protean. It is no surprise, then, that the five models of implementation discussed by Bardach in Chapter II all prove to be inadequate to the task. Their common denominator, like the informal game theory which he suggests as a substitute, is a concern with the defensive politicking undertaken by bureaucrats, clientele, and professionals in response to new legislative mandates. Making use of the drawn-out sequential processes which normally accompany regulatory policies, and political authorities’ zone of acceptance of delay and intransigence, a policy opposed by—or simply not particularly salient to—major audiences in the “real world” can be delayed, deflected, defeated.

Bardach’s notion of “games” is closer to psychologist Eric Berne’s *Games People Play* than to the game theory of von Neumann and Morgenstern. As in popular psychology, Bardach’s games have catchy names—Odd Man Out, Up For Grabs, and Massive Resistance are three of the more memorable. And in contrast to Schelling’s masterful analysis of interdependent bargaining, there is little systematic that is said about the environments which structure incentives for the behaviors Bardach names.

Without clear hypotheses, Bardach is reduced to an ethological inventory. This strategy causes him to bypass much that is useful in administrative and organization theory, as in the discussion of administrative difficulties in Chapter V. Yet there are also benefits to this approach; some phenomena are sufficiently messy, at our

present level of understanding, to benefit from an informal, descriptive approach. The analysis, also in Chapter V, of social entropy, and the ineluctabilities of ineptness, human variability, and elusive coordination says much that is obvious to organizational veterans, yet difficult to include in organizational management textbooks. Bardach's greatest success comes in Chapter IX, an analysis of negotiation and its difficulties, which puts the game idea to work with excellent effect. The behavioral model of distrust put forth on pages 229–30 is quite interesting, although Bardach unfortunately does not provide sharply focused hypotheses and real-world tests.

A consistent concern of *The Implementation Game* is how the excesses of the game may be remedied. Bardach argues early on that “the character and degree of many implementation problems are inherently unpredictable” (p. 5). Thus, many of the structural reforms he suggest tend to be limited in their effect, or worse, beside the point (as with the ones advanced in Chapter V). The surest remedy, apparently, is continuing oversight and demonstrations of concern by political leaders with the power to secure results—or at least responses. The good news is that problems with continuing social bases of support will get this kind of attention in an electorally based system. The bad news is that the span of control possible is sharply limited in any government, however autocratic. Like the phenomenon under scrutiny, implementation studies threaten to broaden out into an ever-widening delta of petty corruptions and nonfeasance. Of all the limits on social action, perhaps the most poignant is the one arising from our inability to understand how we act, and therefore why.

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