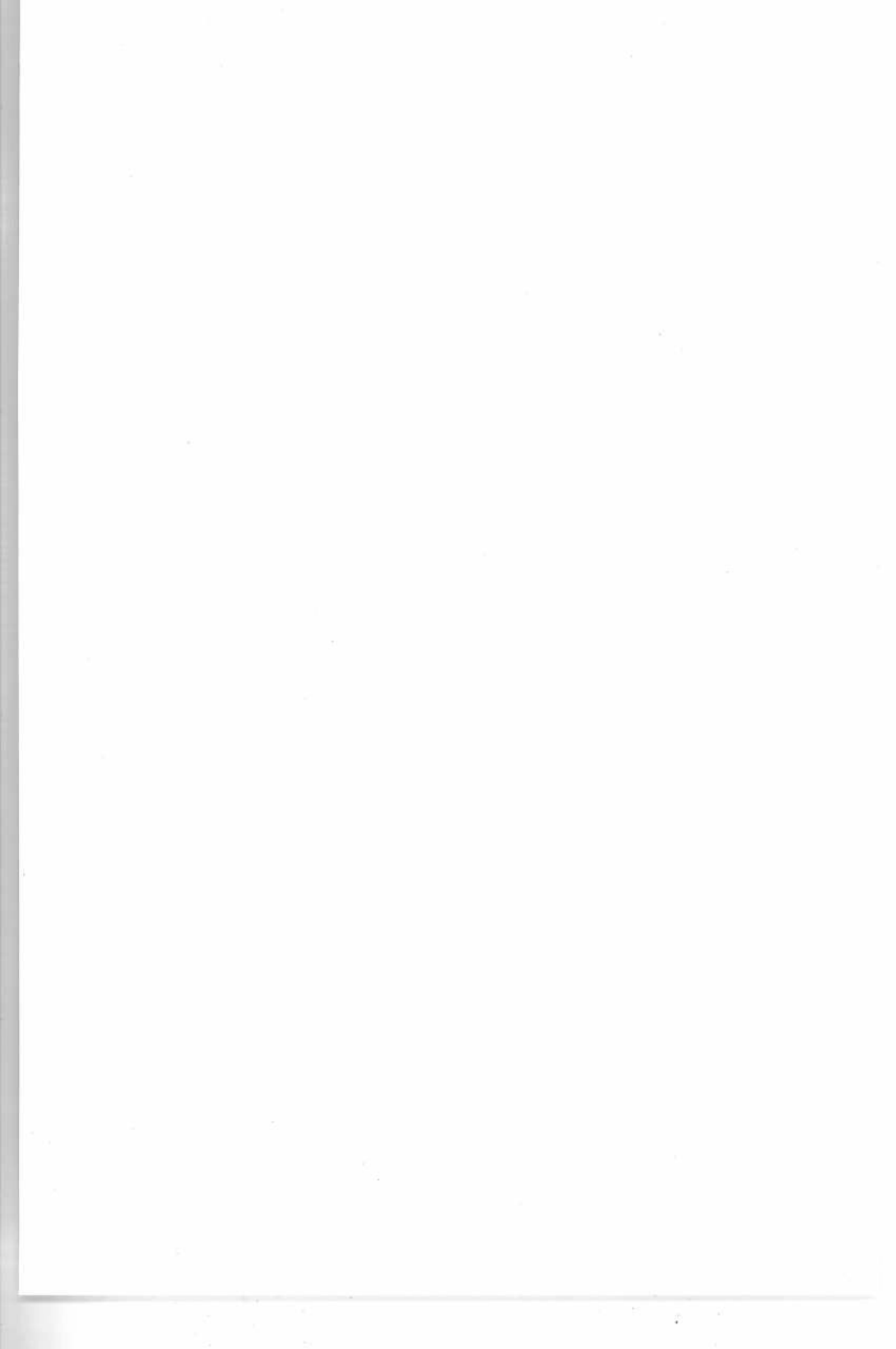


PART II

DEMOCRACY AND PRACTICE



RESPONSIVENESS AND INFORMATION: ON PREFERENCE INVENTORIES

Dag Anckar

INTRODUCTION

In all sciences changes appear from time to time which imply a crossing to new areas of research and new sets of problems. It is also customary for these changes to bring about new scientific issues and disputes. Political science is a case in point. In the 1950s and the early sixties a behavioral approach and an interest in the behavior of political man dominated the discipline. However, since the late sixties the behavioral mood has been replaced by other currents. One area which has been much in the foreground is research on policies, i.e. decisions and actions emanating from the political system, and one way of describing this development is simply to say that an input orientation in political science has been superseded by an output orientation, emphasizing the importance of studying political outputs as well as political outcomes (for terminology, see Easton 1965). This new orientation has also given occasion to new disputes, one of which concerns the causes of policies. How are — so reads the leading question in this dispute — variances in policies to be explained? There are in fact two aspects of the controversy which this question awakes.

One aspect is empirical and thus concerns the description of reality. As far as this aspect is concerned, three schools of thought can be discerned. Firstly, there is one school which stresses environmental determinism and thus advocates the view that policy variations are caused by variations in the socioeconomic structure of society, whereas the appearances of the political machinery and the political processes do not matter. The message of this school is in short that certain socioeconomic structures always produce certain policies, regardless of the looks of politics. Secondly, there is another school which stresses the importance of political factors and maintains that politics

rather than the socioeconomic environment offers the best explanatory basis in determinant research. And thirdly, there are of course those who take a position in-between and plead the thesis that socioeconomic factors and political factors both have an impact on policies and therefore should be regarded as equally powerful sources of explanation. These differences of opinion could give cause to many reflections; for instance, much could be said in favour of the view that the differences are largely to be seen as products of corresponding differences in research methods and research designs (Anckar 1978b). However, this controversy does not in itself form the point of departure for our present paper, and we shall therefore refrain from further comments.

The second aspect is normative and thus concerns the interpretation of reality. Perhaps the best way to illuminate this aspect is to give an example. Let us then apply a commonly accepted normative conception, namely that the will of the people should be realized through politics; let us also for a moment put aside the various conceptual and analytical difficulties connected with such a conception. Let us further assume that we face a research result proclaiming the validity of environmental determinism. Two interpretations of this result can now be given (Anckar & Ståhlberg 1980). On the one hand, there are those who welcome such a result and maintain that it denotes a good state of affairs, the rationale for this being that the policy preferences of the people are shaped by environmental circumstances. Thus, the argument is that socioeconomic factors are valid indicators of policy preferences and that environmental determinism therefore implies that these preferences are transformed into policies: politics does not distort the impact of environmental factors and people are thus given what they want from politics. According to this view environmental determinism is a good thing (e.g. Godwin & Shepard 1976). On the other hand there are however those who find environmental determinism unfortunate, the rationale for this being that preferences are articulated through political participation and political action. Thus, the argument is that variables which describe political behavior and political structures should explain variations in policy variables; if this is the case then policies are affected by preferences and people are given what they want from politics. Since environmental determinism does not describe such a state it is not a good but a bad thing.

This second controversy brings us to the topic of this paper. We namely feel that the question whether the will of the people is realized or not should be approached in a more straightforward manner, involving the notion of *information inventories* for the authorities. Or stated differently: answering the above-mentioned question by referring to explanatory values of socio-

economic versus political factors implies the use of indicators which are crude and thereby allow for conflicting interpretations. More explicit questions pertaining to the relation between preferences and policy should be asked, and the following chain of questions seems appropriate: 1) is there a will of the people; 2) if yes, are the authorities (decision-makers) aware of the content of this will; and 3) if yes, are the authorities prepared to convert this awareness into political decisions. In the following we shall pass over the first and the third question,¹ assuming the existence of structured sets of preferences and a willingness from the part of the authorities to satisfy such preferences. We are interested in the second question, that which concerns the knowledge of the authorities and thus their ability to meet the wishes and demands directed towards the political system.

We shall in this paper deal with two sets of problems related to the adequacy of information inventories. Firstly, we shall discuss types of inventories and hint at some reasons why inventories might appear faulty. Secondly, and now moving to the research level, we shall discuss methodological problems in attempts at establishing to what degree preferences that build up information inventories correspond to policy content.

INFORMATION AND RESPONSIVENESS

In order to handle their tasks aptly the authorities have need of various kinds of information. For instance, they need to know whether measures which they have taken carried the right consequences (cf. Martikainen & Yrjönen 1974), they need to know what measures they ought to take in order to carry out their intentions, they need to know how things are in the society that they govern, etc. In other words the authorities have need of various information inventories, which can be established by various means and can be utilized in various ways. Our angle of incidence calls attention to a certain kind of inventories, namely inventories supplying information on policy preferences. Such information can obviously be obtained in two different ways, corresponding to two different kinds of communication channels and we shall proceed with a discussion of these channels.

On the one hand the authorities can be informed from the part of the citizenry. This is the case when citizens tell the authorities what they want through the mediation of mass media, political parties, interest organizations, and other articulation structures. In this case the citizenry forms the active part, and the authorities construct their inventory by means of observation: they observe and record the amount of incoming information and they thus

play a rather passive role in the process of communication. The information inventory is here based on communication channels operating *from below*, in the direction from the citizenry towards the authorities. On the other hand the authorities can however behave in an active manner, seeking and collecting information on preferences. This is the case when the authorities for instance organize hearings and consultations, when they construct and apply systems of social indicators, when they submit proposed policy measures to public debate, etc. The information inventory which emanates is here based on communication channels operating *from above*, in the direction from the authorities towards the citizenry. The information channels which underly the information inventory are thus either observed or organized from the part of the authorities. This characterization of channels can be combined with other characterizations, for instance such which concern the *way* the channels operate. One useful distinction in this respect is between *open* and *closed* channels, and we shall utilize this distinction in a simplifying manner as we describe channels which allow an unbiased communication as open and channels which either do not permit communication or operate in a biased or otherwise faulty manner as closed.

When crossing channels (from below, from above) and attributes of channels (open, closed) a four-fold table emerges, giving four types of inventories. The table is presented in Figure 1, and a few comments are in order.

In the four-fold table cell 1 denotes an ideal state of affairs. The relation between the citizenry and the authorities is interactive in nature as it is characterized by a two-way communication. The information inventory emanating here must be regarded as highly satisfactory to possibilities of reaching policy responsiveness — the authorities have a full picture of preferences prevailing in society and they have accordingly established a basis for acting in a responsive manner. Cell 4 likewise denotes an extreme case; the situation is however here quite the opposite. There is a lack of communication between authorities and citizenry, and the knowledge of preferences is therefore scanty. The inventory situation can be described as being based on guess-work or on faulty information and is certainly not satisfactory. It does not promote the appearance of policy responsiveness.

		Channels from below	
		Open	Closed
Channels from above	Open	1	3
	Closed	2	4

Figure 1. Some Types of Information Inventories.

The in-between situations pictured in cells 2 and 3 represent more diffuse but also more interesting and empirically valid cases. In the former case we have open channels from below and closed channels from above, a situation which obviously leads to a *participation-based* sort of inventory. The inventory is here namely biased in favour of that part of the citizenry which participates in articulating preferences and demands — their preferences go into the inventory while the eventually conflicting preferences held by the passive and silent part of the citizenry remain outside the inventory. As the investigating activities of the authorities are distorted or insufficient in scope they cannot function as an effective corrective in this respect. Finally, in cell 3 we face the reversed situation, characterized by open channels from above and closed channels from below. The inventory which emanates from this constellation is certainly not participation-based. It is rather *representation-based*, and when making use of this term we refer to the fact that the authorities cannot possibly consult all citizens about their preferences on policy. The authorities are forced to turn to representative structures, such as parties, organizations, associations, etc. As these structures can be supposed to report mainly majority standpoints there is presumably a built-in bias to the disadvantage of minorities in the inventory. The inventory is inadequate in another respect, too. As it has not benefited by participation, it is devoid of the mass of preferences which are shaped through participation. Participatory politics namely implies the forming of ideas and conceptions; as people engage in debates and actions they confront conflicting views which in turn perhaps give cause to new or altered preferences. This ingredient in the societal preference structure is here lacking, thus depriving the inventory of a certain richness in content.

As a result of our brief discussion we thus have four types of information inventories, which are based on either interaction, guesswork, participation, or representation. The typology is in itself no doubt useful as it provides a means of answering the question to what degree the authorities have a knowledge of the peoples will. However, it also entails various sets of problems and questions. One such set brings operationalization to the fore, as one might ask what indicators there are to establish whether a certain channel is open or closed. Another set of problems concerns causal relationships — one might ask why certain types of inventories emerge.

We shall in the following deal briefly with this last-mentioned question. Our comments focus on the category of channels from above, and their empirical point of reference is the case of Finland.

FAILINGS IN INVENTORIES: TWO FINNISH EXAMPLES

Communication channels operating from above can be faulty in two ways, which represent differences in degree rather than specific differences. On the one hand the information received through the channels may be distorted to the favour of some part or parts (some essential information is missing); on the other hand the information may be missing altogether, meaning that the channels do not function at all. These faults then are representative of shortcomings in the theories and operative methods applied by the authorities.

The functioning of the *remiss system* in Finland illustrates the first type of shortcoming. This system forms an important ingredient in the policy-making process as it is customary for committee reports and other similar preparatory documents to be circulated by the authorities for statements (*remiss*) to various bodies representing various quarters of opinion. Consulting the associational network by *remiss* would offer a convenient shortcut for obtaining knowledge of policy preferences — this network comprises a good 70 % of the adult citizens in Finland (Pesonen & Sänkiaho 1979, 130). A survey of the *remiss* consultation shows that associations are indeed frequently consulted; in 1965 altogether 174 associations were amongst the *remiss* consultees and in 1975 the corresponding figure was 303, associations coming second to the state administration as a consultee category (Anckar & Helander 1980). However, the same survey also shows that the consultative participation is by no means evenly distributed amongst associations. The consultation heavily heels over in the direction of the peak-organizations, whereas smaller associations operating foremostly in the social and cultural spheres are at the most occasional elements in consultation. The same pattern repeats itself in other consultative phases too, as the primacy of the peak-organizations is valid for memberships in committees and for the hearings in the various parliamentary committees (Helander & Anckar 1980). We confront a situation where the authorities consult with other authorities and with the representatives of the large economic organizations. The vast majority of associations are refused access as consultees to the decision-making processes.

The second type of shortcoming is illustrated by the *planning and social indicator system* in Finland, which almost entirely neglects that kind of social information which describes preferences and need experiences. In a critical survey of the content of local plans, *Göran Djupsund* (1976) has demonstrated that the information utilized in planning is mainly of a technical and static nature, projecting dominating trends on the future and not observing differences between communes and regions. This means that one confronts a situation which is highly unsatisfactory. On the one hand planning has

become an essential framework for organizing societal decision-making, on the other hand this very framework structures information inventories which are devoid of information describing policy preferences.

When seeking explanations for these shortcomings one has to turn to the political culture and to the ideology of decision-making embedded in this culture. Two interrelated aspects of this ideology are of interest here, and we refer on the one hand to the notion of *consensus*, and on the other hand to the notion of *rationality*.

The notion of rationality really lies at the core of problems as it presupposes a clearly defined goal-means relation. Being rational equals establishing certain societal goals and selecting proper means for accomplishing these goals. However, such goal-means relations simply do not exist in the empirical world, which is composed of varieties of conceptions of goals and means which furthermore change rapidly in a complex pattern (Ståhlberg 1975). There exists in other words a dilemma as theory and practice do not coincide. When facing this dilemma the authorities prefer theory to practice; they do not abandon the theory but try to alter reality. The effort towards consensus is one expression of this ambition. Since commonly accepted policy goals do not exist they have to be created, and this requires the consultation of those in power positions — one needs to know the preferences of the influentials if one wishes to formulate goals which do not meet opposition from those who are in a position to impede goal realization. A vicious circle is thus created, which preserves and strengthens a bias in the information inventory: those who have power count and are consulted, this in turn adds to their power status, and so on. In the effort towards rationality there is a built-in tendency to neglect the view-points of those who might possibly defy the premises for rational action.

The absence of information on policy preferences in planning inventories represents another side of the rationality coin. When planning is conceptualized as a process for finding ways of realizing established goals, a search for preferences that question these goals seems not only needless but irrelevant and even inappropriate. It is perhaps worth noting that this line of thinking really exhibits a paradox. Rationality denies what rationality demands. For instance, in order to act rationally on a societal level, one needs to know how societal sectors interact and how they affect each other. These interactions vary however from time to time and from place to place, and they come out largely as results of changes in need experiences and preferences (Djupsund 1976, 239–242). In consequence, rational planning would be in need of information depicting these factors. But this is precisely such an information which seems incompatible with the rationality axiom.

RELATING PREFERENCES TO POLICY

The remainder of this paper is devoted to a methodological discussion of the problem how to measure policy responsiveness. The problem is thus to determine the extent to which political decision-makers create policies which are congruous with manifest citizen demands and preferences (cf. Schumaker 1975, 494). When talking about preferences, we expressly mean underlying ones. We will not, therefore, discuss the question as to how the reactions resulting from a certain political decision agree with the content of the decision (that is, how the decision that has been arrived at is being received). Our interest in preferences is focused on an earlier stage in the decision-making process, more precisely on the different stages preceding the final decision and our question then concerns the agreement between the claim that a decision shall have a certain content, and the final content that is given to the decision. This difference between preferences »before» and »after» decisions is less sharp than a firsthand impression may reveal. Preferences »before» decisions presumably have been at least partly shaped by the content of previously made decisions and so they are in this sense simultaneously preferences »after» (see Schaefer 1972, 272–274). But the distinction is no doubt necessary to maintain for analytical reasons.

The task we confront is thus that of comparing preferences (PF) with policies (P) along dimensions of content where the aim of the comparison is to establish the degree of agreement existing between PF and P. One way of approaching this task is evidently to resort to content-analytical approaches: PF and P are made the object of a comparative content analysis. Other procedures could include, for instance, finding out about attitudes of policy by means of interview and survey research. The method seems useful and not particularly difficult when studying ongoing processes in which, for example, different kinds of panel procedures may prove fruitful. But it becomes useless if one is ambitious enough to study processes that have already occurred. (And if one wants to ask the very legitimate and relevant question of how such processes have varied in the course of time, it is exactly this kind of ambition that is required.) Asking for preferences when a policy exists is of no value; the preferences may have changed with the creation and implementation of this policy. Other methods must be considered, and the content analysis almost immediately suggests itself.

If, however, we choose to approach our problem by content-analytical methods, one condition is that PF as well as P have operational forms, which makes it possible to treat them content-analytically. PF and P should exist in the form of documents; this term is used in a narrower sense than, for

example, that used by *Veikko Pietilä* when he defines documents as »those products of human activity and behavior that by their nature may be considered representative» (1973, 7). By documents we here mean records, minutes, contents of mass media, and other such written material connected with, and emanating from, policy processes. With regard to PF, this creates no problems — PF exists in the direct and manifest form as a document offering itself to content-analytical treatment. Examples of such documents could be a motion proposed by a group or a member of Parliament, a resolution from a party convention, a motion submitted to the same convention by some member of a party, an editorial or a column in a daily newspaper, an appeal or an address, an election advertisement, and so on. The policy component, on the other hand, is more problematic and offers a more restricted choice of alternatives. It is by no means obvious, in the first place, what should be understood by »policy», but we will refrain from discussing definitions and conducting a conceptual analysis — we confine ourselves to a definition of policies as decisions and actions emanating from political systems (see Kerr 1976). The problem is, however, to find useful operationalizations of such decisions and actions. A quick glance at what one has concretely examined when studying »policies» reveals that these have often been expenditures, planning activity, redistributive ratios, rates of diffusion, and so on — things that from the systemic point of view are rather different and in themselves well illustrate the variety of ways of understanding policy. At the same time, these are not P-forms that lend themselves to content-analytical comparisons with sets of PF, and that is why it is important to find more document-oriented expressions for P.

Evidently, law-making products constitute one such example. Laws have the form of documents, and it can hardly be denied that the making of laws is a relevant problem for political science to penetrate, even if this operationalization of »policy» has been neglected in the literature. There are, however, very different types of laws, and not all of these are useful as objects of study for the context we are interested in here. In simple terms, the problem is that many laws are so »small» (in a technical or corrective sense) that it is difficult to find any set of PFs with which such a P might be contrasted. Examples of such Ps could be a law concerning the amendment of the law related to the right of schools of physical education to use subsidies for a certain purpose, and, more generally, such laws that could for instance be called »micro-complementary» (Anckar 1978a, 18). The operationalization therefore applies to »bigger» laws — laws intended to introduce more radical and controversial societal changes. Examples of such Ps could be a general pension law or a building law, and, more generally, such laws that might be called »innov-

ative» (Karvonen and Anckar 1978, 24–55).

Our argument has thus brought us to a situation where we have as P an innovative law and as PF manifest preferences relating to the content of this law. It is our task to establish, by means of content analysis, the degree of agreement of content between PF and P. Among the problems we encounter we will point out below two instances as a basis for our argument. In different ways the two problems deal with a distinction between the manifest and the latent; by »different ways» we primarily refer to different content-analytical aspects of validity. We have attempted to represent these two framings of the problems in the very simple illustration to be found in Figure 2.

Figure 2. From the Latent to the Manifest: Visualization of Two Problems within the Study of Policy Determinants.



The first problem concerns the knowledge we gain by content-analyzing PF — here, the question can be asked to what extent such an analysis has any validity. It is a question of bearing in mind that manifest preferences are manifestations of articulated demands directed against the decision makers of the political system, and that what is here articulated need not agree with what is desired. It is easy to imagine that the set of preferences under study only covers part of a greater and latent substratum of needs; and the question is then what representativeness the manifest possesses in reference to the latent: When studying the manifest do we also study the latent, and in that case to what extent?

The second problem concerns the relation between PF and P, where it might be argued that the structure of preferences — that is, the set of manifest preferences available for study — simultaneously forms a latent basis of the manifest decision to be made. The decision is thus in a latent way inherent in the structure of preferences and is transferred through flows from the latent to the manifest in its final form. The problem here, then, is to look for the manifest in the latent, to find categories that make a comparison possible and meaningful.

Of these two problems — it would probably be more correct to talk about complex of problems — we are concerned with the latter. This does not

necessarily mean it is the more important one. In fact, the relation between needs and preferences is difficult to study and very worthy of discussion. But such a discussion would have to be more concerned with the problems of the conclusions themselves than with such operational and method-oriented questions as we are here interested in.

Our discussion will focus on two areas. First, we shall pay attention to a *problem of levels*, a result of the fact that between PF and P there may exist considerable differences in completeness of detail, formulation, and level of abstraction — in other words, it is a question of the latent and the manifest belonging to different levels, which makes comparisons difficult. Second, we shall pay attention to a *problem of responsiveness*, constituted by the fact that all preferences do not look alike and that consequently a policy is responsive to different preferences in different degrees, which in its turn raises the question as to which degree of similarity should be stipulated.

A PROBLEM OF LEVELS

We first discuss the problem concerning bad operational agreement. By way of introduction, it may be worthwhile to illustrate the problem more concretely.

Let us arbitrarily choose a law of a somewhat wider scope — the law relating to accommodation allowance in Finland, given in Helsingfors on June 4, 1975 (SBF, No. 408/75). Its text prescribes what is to be understood by a receiver of accommodation allowance, conditions of receiving accommodation allowance, the amount of allowance, administration, redress procedures, and so on. The law thus identifies a problem, indicates ways of solving it, and prescribes certain procedural courses. However, behind this concrete legislation we find a richly varied set of manifest statements on different levels as to what such a policy action should contain. In a party program we may find a demand for the improvement of the housing conditions of less well-to-do citizens; in an election slogan we may find a general demand for creating greater social justice. Are preferences of this type to be related to the policy under consideration? And if that is the case, how is this to be done?

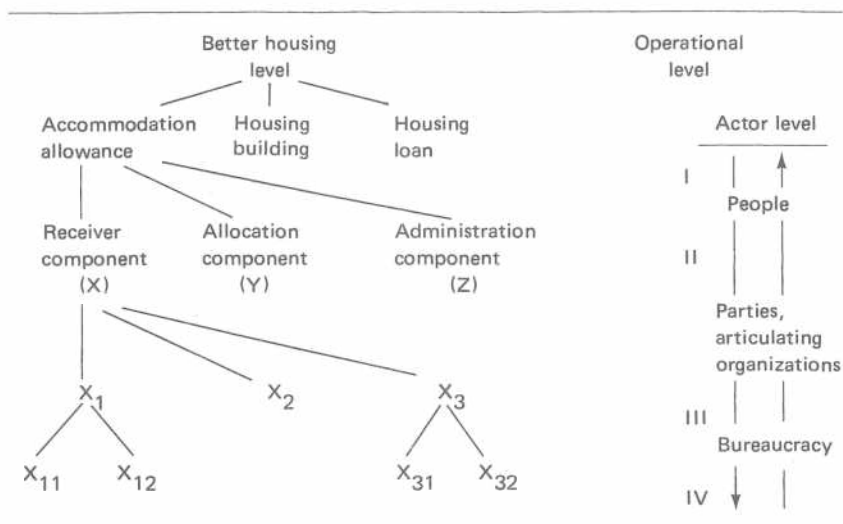
We do not believe it possible to relate preferences to policy in this way without an unacceptable degree of arbitrariness. The way from the latent to the manifest, therefore, is not practicable but must be abandoned. What is left is the opposite way, leading from the manifest to the latent, which involves comparisons on the conditions of the manifest. When looking for preferences

we look for statements that are connected with the level of concretization dictated by the legal text before us. Here a different and more vexing problem emerges, however: from too general and diffuse preferences we encounter the problem of too specific and precise formulations of policy. We shall attempt to explain this more exactly.

Returning to our example of the law relating to accommodation allowance, we find that the law can be split up into what we might call *policy components* (Who may receive allowance? On which conditions? How much?). Let us represent these components by X . The law thus prescribes that allowance may be paid to families living as main tenants in a rented dwelling and to families living in their own dwelling, so long as the family includes at least one child and does not attain a certain threshold of income. This is the essential content of what we might call the *receiver component* of the law. However, the law specifies this component still further: it decrees, for instance, that childless married couples also may receive allowance for not more than two successive calendar years following the contraction of the marriage, so long as none of the persons concerned at the contraction of the marriage are over age 30. Let us represent this partial component of the receiver component by X_1 . The problem is now that the further down we go in such a component hierarchy, the more we have to do with regulations that are so technical (also in the sense purely legally technical) or so exactly defined in relation to some more general wish that the principle mentioned above concerning corresponding levels of concretization becomes difficult to maintain. Preferences with this level of concretization are difficult to find; and if they can be found, false conclusions are easily reached. If, for example, one has the ambition — referred to in the introduction — to say something about agenda-building or the importance of politics as a policy determinant, one is compelled to decide which preferences can be attributed to which categories of actors. The question of whose preferences are to be counted and thus are to be found in the policy text under study has to be asked. It is, however, reasonable to imagine that different categories of actors act on different component-hierarchical levels. Different conclusions concerning the importance of the actors will be reached, then, depending on the level on which one chooses to operate. Figure 3 will illustrate our arguments.

Imagine a society in which sentiments and opinions are being articulated in demands for better housing conditions and a better housing level on the whole. Imagine further that the political system of this society wants to comply with such demands and therefore creates policies involving grants of accommodation allowances, the building of new houses, creation of funds for housing loans, and so on. These actions may thus be regarded as operation-

Figure 3. Policies, Preferences, Actors: Illustrating Problems of the Different Levels.



alizations of the demands mentioned above. Each of these actions can be broken down into policy components involving a further operationalization, and those components can be broken down into partial components involving operationalizations of policy components, and so on. Because we have found it impracticable, while preserving analytical cogency, to compare a statement of preference concerning a better level of housing with, for instance, a statement of policy that accommodation allowance must not be distrained, we have established the claim that the statements of preferences and of policy to be compared have to be on the same level of concretization (in other words, on the same operational level). The next question is, however, which operational level this could be.

As we already emphasized, it is a noteworthy circumstance that different actors appear on different levels. An unambiguous pattern is indeed not to be sketched out. It can probably be justified to say (1) that it is predominantly in the environment of the political system — that is, in the conglomeration of citizens, groups, and organizations we usually call «the people» — one generally finds preferences of a general and indefinite character; (2) that it is predominantly on the fringe of the political system — in fields where parties, large organizations, pressure groups, and other similar articulators of demands are active — one usually finds more elaborate preferences that are to be

regarded as operationalizations of more general and indefinite preferences; (3) that it is predominantly within the political system — in the fields where the political leadership and bureaucracy prepare, arrive at, and implement decisions — one usually finds more elaborate preferences that constitute specifications and elucidations of what we have here called policy components. Examples of typical documents within these fields may be a mass address, a government program, or a PM prepared by a civil servant.

As we said before, this pattern is not clear and unambiguous — it is easy to imagine situations where parties, for example, instead of taking in demands from the environment and cloaking them in operational terms, market and mobilize support «among the people» for initiatives that already have a certain operational form. The reaction of «the people» to such initiatives obviously then takes the form of preferences that are expressed on a more operational level than our argument above indicates. Likewise, bureaucracy in its concrete activity sometimes moves over wider fields than we have attributed to it above. But the pattern must essentially be considered relevant, and the problem created by this cannot be disregarded. The risk is otherwise that in the study of, for example, agenda-building processes, final results are introduced into the very design of the investigation.

The question, then, is which strategy is to be considered optimal when we want to satisfy the demand for comparison according to the same level of concretization. It is favorable to stay near what we, in Figure 3, have called «operational level II»; that is, the level of the policy components. As we see it, this level offers at least two obvious advantages. As far as policy is concerned, it represents a degree of breakdown necessary to make the textual mass clear and manageable. Here it becomes fairly clear what the comparison involves (which manifest content is to be looked for in the latent); at the same time, the text is not broken up to the extent that the manifest altogether disappears in the latent. As far as preference is concerned, it represents the level on which different categories of actors act side by side to the greatest extent possible, and consequently the risk of false conclusions should be least. Here we probably find, more than on other levels, interaction between the masses and the elite by means of intermediary structures.

For reasons of space we cannot consider the question of *how* a legal text (a policy) can suitably be broken up into components. But earlier we pointed to the importance of aspects such as *allocating* (who is the receiver, to what extent, and on what conditions) and *regulating* (which administration, which institutional arrangements). In general, of course, different legal texts are differently structured and treat different things; and the establishment of components, therefore, to a fairly large extent must be the result of individual

decisions guided by discretion and thorough knowledge of the subject matter under study.

A PROBLEM OF RESPONSIVENESS

We shall make some comments on a third problem concerned with the relation between preferences and policies that we have called the problem of responsiveness. The starting point is that we are interested in the agreement of content between policy and preferences. We have treated the question on which operational level such a comparison should take place. The problem we now encounter has to do with the simple fact that the preferences may be and very often are incompatible among themselves. In addition, they are incompatible in different ways and to different degrees, and this entails content-analytical adjustments.

Let us by way of introduction consider the schema in Figure 4, where we have indicated in a fourfold table some theoretically conceivable situations. In the first of them (1) we only find such preferences whose contents coincide; the policy emanating also corresponds to these preferences. The situation can be said to express policy responsiveness. In the second situation (2) we also find only coinciding preferences, but the emanating policy has a different content, and the situation is therefore nonresponsive. The same is true of situation 4, where a policy emanates whose content is different from any of the (mutually incompatible) preferences. On the other hand, it is difficult to judge the third situation (3), where a policy emanates whose content corresponds to one or several preferences, but not to other preferences. It is pre-

Figure 4. Responsiveness of Four Different Constellations Concerned with Content of Preferences and Content of Policy.

		<i>Authorities decide</i>	
		<i>According to preferences</i>	<i>Deviating from preferences</i>
Preferences	Compatible	Responsiveness 1	Non-Responsiveness 2
	Incompatible	Partial Responsiveness 3	Non-Responsiveness 4

sumably reasonable to say that this situation is at the same time empirically also the most usual one.

We will not, however, dwell upon how the analysis of this situation can be further developed (see Anckar 1979, 16–21). Instead, we will concentrate on the problem referred to above, a problem which must, on a more fundamental level, underlie any empirical application of typologies of this sort. What does it mean, concretely, that something »coincides» or is »mutually incompatible»?

Let us illustrate the problem with a concrete and arbitrarily chosen example, the law related to day care for children in Finland, given in Helsingfors on January 19, 1973 (SBF, No. 36/73). When, as we did before, we break down this law into policy components, we find that one component encompasses the application area of the law, that is, the question as to what day care for children really is. We could perhaps talk about the area component of the law. The law says that day care for children is care of children in institutions established for this purpose: so-called day homes, care of children in private homes or in other familylike conditions (family day care), and guidance and supervision of the children's play and occupation — this is the essential content of this policy component. If, however, we consider the manifest preferences that find expression in the course of the creation of the law, we may find (1) preferences which agree with this content; (2) preferences which in no way correspond to this content (for example, demands that the problems of day care for children should not be solved by establishing special institutions and forms of care but by means of entirely different actions of family policy); and (3) preferences that partly correspond to this content (for example, demands that society should organize child care exclusively on the basis of institutions, and that family day care should as a consequence remain outside the law and the system of state subsidies it creates). It is obvious that responsiveness occurs in the first instance and nonresponsiveness in the second, but what do we find in the third? And what happens, for example, in the event of cross-preferences implying that family day care should be the primary form of care, even if opportunities for institutional care should also be offered? Is there »more» or »less» responsiveness than in the third instance? How much — if any — may a content of preference deviate from a content of policy for responsiveness to be considered to be present? Which is the rule of adjustment to be applied?

The third thing we can say here is that a demand for complete agreement between preference and policy is no reasonable point of departure. The demand is not reasonable simply because policies in parliamentary multiparty systems (and we have implicitly based our reasoning on such a conception of polity throughout this discussion) cannot as a rule be supposed to arise as a

complete response to a demand while simultaneously ignoring other demands. That this cannot be the case can be explained in many ways; we shall briefly mention two. On one hand, decision-making is usually regarded as the result of an interaction between different decision makers, as an act of weighing together different standpoints. All actors involved in the compromise must give and take to a certain extent. On the other hand, there exist ideological and strategic considerations making the actors unwilling at least in the early stages of decision processes to include such considerations of compromise in the manifest preferences they give expression to (see Sjöblom 1968, 104–106). To put it simply, one tends to claim more than one expects to receive. We thus have a situation in which the compromised content of policy does not completely correspond to any preference untouched by considerations of compromise; and if we stick to the demand for complete agreement, we experience nonresponsiveness down the line. This cannot be a reasonable interpretation, and so the demand just mentioned must be abandoned. The question is instead how much deviation we can tolerate and still talk about responsiveness.

This question can be reformulated to apply to the degree of *similarity*, and we shall here argue along such a line. The difficulty is that we have to deal with a continuum: the similarity between the content of preference and the content of policy may vary from complete agreement to no agreement at all. However, the demand for analytical manageability makes it necessary to do violence to reality and stipulate some reasonable cut-off point where responsiveness changes to nonresponsiveness. The second difficulty is that what we have here called policy components treat such widely different things that an argument supposed to cover them all must have a general form. The components may concern regulative, distributive, or redistributive activities; they may have different sectorial connections — the pattern is so varied that as a whole it can be encompassed only by extremely general categories.

With regard to this we can only suggest an operational procedure that is not free from elements of subjective judgment. The procedure is based on the idea of contrasting preference and policy with respect to two aspects connected with respective policy component. What aspects are to be chosen are impossible to determine because of the general variety we mentioned above; the decisions must be made from case to case. The aspects chosen must not be partial components, which would lead us in to the difficulty we discussed in the previous paragraph. They must be retained on the operational level of the policy component, and they are then to be seen predominantly as elements in a key formulation of the content of the policy component. This

procedure will offer *one* rule of thumb for the way policy components are to be constructed out of the textual material, even though they should represent clearly typical cases; the demand for clarity cannot be so strict as not to permit a separation of aspects.

For each aspect one makes a qualitative judgment of the degree of similarity along a constructed scale whose points may be, for example, »complete similarity», »strong partial similarity», »weak partial similarity», and »no similarity». The results of these judgments can subsequently be brought together in a matrix (see Table 1 below for an illustration) showing the total picture and the judgments of responsiveness emanating from this.

Table 1. Matrix of Responsiveness Showing Occurrence of Responsiveness (R) or Nonresponsiveness (NR) in Ten Different Situations of Agreement.

<i>The similarity is:</i>	<i>Aspect II</i>			
	<i>Complete</i>	<i>Partial, strong</i>	<i>Partial, weak</i>	<i>None</i>
<i>Aspect I:</i>				
Complete	1. R	2. R	4. R	7. NR
Partial, strong		3. R	5. R	8. NR
Partial, weak			6. NR	9. NR
None				10. NR

Regarding these judgments, it is true that they are also subjective. Situations 1–3 probably must be considered clear: here it is a question of more or less similarity. Likewise, situations 9–10 must be considered clear: here it is directly a question of a lack of similarity. The same thing may be said about situation 6, where we have a discernible, but yet not reasonably sufficient similarity. More problematic considerations appear, then, in situations 4, 5, 7, and 8. We have decided to classify the former two as responsive and the latter as nonresponsive, on the grounds that the latter cases represent a balance where one of the aspects is not provided for.

One could, of course, discuss whether this is a reasonable way of stipulating a cut-off point. Especially the boundary between situations 5 and 8 may seem a matter of taste, and one could further ask whether situation 7, which involves complete similarity concerning one of the aspects, is not too severely judged. As stated before, such questions are by no means unjustified; and the fact that they may be answered in somewhat different but nevertheless equivalent ways provides a good illustration of the difficulties encountered when theoretically derived questions are contrasted in an operational guise with the empirical reality they are to illuminate and elucidate. In the present

case, conclusions about responsiveness are thus at least partly dependent upon the classification decisions being made for the especially troublesome situations referred to above. The extent to which this is the case depends on the empirical frequency of the situations, and it is consequently to be recommended that attention be paid to this frequency. It should also be included in the conclusions eventually reached.

NOTE

- 1 For a discussion of these questions, the reader may consult the first paper in this volume («A Definition of Democracy»), which touches upon various aspects of preference rationality and preference-related governmental behaviour.

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