

A policy framework is a systematic and structural means by which to examine the congruence of a policy with the mission and goals of the social welfare state. All well-designed policy frameworks share the following eight characteristics:

1. Systematic analysis.
2. Reflecting the knowledge that all available policy options have competing goals and that social policy is context-sensitive.
3. Using the rational approach to research and analysis, and ensuring that the data utilized in policy analyses are drawn from reliable sources and scientific research.
4. The analytical framework and all subsequent policy studies should resemble the same conclusion, and the analytical procedure is explicit.
5. Utilitarian goals are based on the commitment to derive the largest possible social and economic benefits at the least possible social and economic cost.
6. Should make an effort to consider any unexpected consequences of a specific policy or program. Multiple policy models or scenarios could be built to help with this.
7. When analyzing a specific policy, policy analysts should take into account alternative social policies or alternative ways to use current or upcoming resources.
8. Using models to assess how a policy or set of policies might affect other social policies.

They seem highly objectively rational and systematic based on scientific analysis and legitimate sources.

The rational actor paradigm has come under heavy fire since, in practice, decision-makers never have unlimited time, money, or aptitude to look for an objectively genuine optimum alternative. When applied to systems, the rational actor model, which is intended to explain behavior at the individual level, leaves the opportunity for a great deal more factors, such as

power and bias, to affect policy decisions in a less-than-ideal way. The study of behavioral economics and related fields has shown that cognitive biases and thinking mistakes prevent people from fulfilling the requirements for being "rational."

In recent years, however, a growing body of evidence has shown that our political behavior is governed more by emotions and less by rationality. The decision to go out and vote, for a start, is in itself an irrational decision. Political scientists refer to it as the "voting paradox". Voting involves considerable effort, which needs to be offset by a considerable benefit if the decision is to be rational. But each of us separately has virtually zero influence on the election outcome. Throughout the entire history of democracy, there has been no national election anywhere in the world that was determined by a single vote.

Ideology too is mostly about emotions and hardly at all about rationality. The fact that we continue to debate these issues endlessly, and yet never seem to agree, suggests that there is something in ideologies far beyond rationality. This other thing is subjective taste, which, to a large extent, is shaped by our emotional being.

Consequently, a highly rational and systematic policy can be somewhat at odds with the political process by which policies are actually approved.

References

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