Policy Defined

Policy may be seen as both an action plan and a management tool. As a plan of action policy seeks to solve a particular a problem. The focus is on application. In a sense, practical wisdom is displayed to solve a given problem. In the resolution of the problem, administration or management of people, materials and other resources come into play.

The Role Policy Analysts

Analysts are used to determine the shape policy takes. The analyst wants to know:

➢ What is the condition one wants to bring into being?

➢ What measures do we have that tell us when the key condition exists?

➢ What policy tools does a government possess that might…produce a reasonable alteration in the present condition or progress toward the desired condition (Grover Starling)?

The Role Lobbies

Lobbies are used to influence the policy making process in favor of the clients they serve. Some lobbies have vested interest in politics while others favor business or labor groups. Even non-profit organizations have lobbies to work on their behalf to influence policy.

Structuring Policy Problem

Lawrence C. Howard has related the policy making process to inclusive community building. He has written "Typically the policy process begins with recognition of a problematic or a pattern of societal hurts. We need not look far to find hurts arising from the absence of inclusive community." He goes on to cite examples:

> *Widening income gap between the very rich and the poor, particularly between African American and Hispanic minorities and the majority white population. It is believed that this inequality is the results of these minorities being separated into a disadvantaged position.*

> *In many parts of the country exceptional students, those with disabilities are still forced to attend segregated schools, classes and programs. Families have had to fight costly legal battles to compel schools to accept their children.*

> *With poverty, minorities are besieged with social pathologies: crime, substance abuse, unwanted pregnancies, homelessness. A disproportionate number of African American men are incarcerated.*

In other key indicators of educational achievement, health, and self esteem the concentrations of poor conditions appears to be largely defined by race. The heavier the racial separation the greater the disadvantage.

Structuring the Problem of Dis-Community

➢ First Step
- What is the problem?
- Who has it?
- What could be done about the problem?
- How does the problem of dis-community relate to other problems?

➢ Second Step
- Generating alternative approaches.
- Welfare reform and the overturning of Affirmative Action programs are examples. Each solution was offered to correct pathology in the dis-community.

➢ Third Step
- Offering a number of new policy initiatives that give greater likelihood of building inclusive community.
- Promoting a national intergroup dialogu.
- Providing for intergroup housing
- Stimulating investment in low income communities

The analyst then focuses on the economic and political feasibility of each alternative. This is accompanied by a forecast of the likely performance for each alternative.

Policy Problems in Governance

The Policy analyst, having developed the policy, has to implement it. Historically, the field of policy analysis has focused most of its attention on government, local, state, national or international.

Howard has written, "The nalyst attends to the conditions under which a given policy can be adopted by a governance structure.

> *The policy must be presented in the form that the governance institution can act upon: bill, business plan, and proposal. The proposal must be seen by the governance institution as clearly in its mission. The governors must believe that they can do what is proposed. The governors must believe that they must take action now.*

Governance to the Problem

A second major stage in policy management involves the transformation of a policy choice into programs and projects. Typically, this deals with budgeting, staffing, and program guidelines.

What gets done is the real policy, which often bears little or vague relationship to what was proposed and signed off on.

Monitoring is a key step in the management of policy. Here the focus is on compliance and auditing. Qualitative outcomes are usually not the focus of outcome measures or how successful the policy is. Yet this area where inclusive community can be found.

The Failure of Public Policies to Solve Extant Urban Problems

Applied practical wisdom or public policy has not brought the desired solutions to vexing urban problems of society. Is it not time to consider a higher wisdom?

The writer Paul speaks of wisdom associated with man's intellectual ability (from which practical solutions to urban problems is derived) and that of a higher power. He indicates that the wisdom of the latter is a "mystery," even "hidden" from the wises men and women of society. According to Paul, the "hidden" wisdom comes by revelation from God.

This wisdom is not to be confused with men and women who claim to have it but their fruits prove otherwise. For example, many religious groups believe they have the "hidden" wisdom but their lack of agape love reveals otherwise. A historic case in point can be found in the Puritans religion. This is a good example because the values that under gird the American form of government and the morality of its people are rooted in a puritanical set of beliefs. I have written elsewhere the following.

> *Universities have been like the Puritans of seventeenth-century New England who sought to build community. They were convinced that their view of the world was correct. Moreover, they felt everyone should conform to their views. The difference between the Puritans and White scholars today is that the Puritans felt their building work to be directed by a Supreme Being or God while scholars feel directed by superior intellect. Each is a classic example of narrowly focused community builders going about a work blind to the views of others. Regarding the Puritans, conformity to morals, precepts and traditions based on their religious belief led them to act any way but lovingly toward "sinners". They were very brutal toward those who did not conform to their view of community. The persecution of Quakers and execution of women as witches defined the boundaries of their community.[1]*

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[1] See Kai Erikson, *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance*, New York: Wiley, 1966. Also contrast this community building work with one in California at the turn of the 20th century. According to an eyewitness account, the Azusa Street community building work was much closer to what is called for in the current writing. That work drew people of all colors, denominations, and social statuses together in a fellowship that had not been seen in the United States before. "There was a general spirit of humility manifested in the meeting. They were taken up with God. Evidently the Lord had found the little company at last, outside as always, through whom he could have right of way. **There was not a mission in the country where this could be done**". Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street*, South Plainfield: Bridge Publishing, Inc.1980, p.43. The leader of the mission was a Black man by the name of William J. Seymour. People from all over the U.S. and from froeign countries flocked to Azusa Street to join in the community building work. Sadly to say, it came to an end in no small part due to racial prejudice. The old racial demon caused the people to withdraw from one another and go their separate way based on skin color. What had begun as a budding inclusive community building work ended up as another narrowly focused divisive work masquerading as community.

**The Application of the Hidden Wisdom
To the Solution of an Extant Problem**

What is the "problem"?

School children with reading, writing and computing skills below the national average, which leads to a lack of self-confidence and poor classroom performance.

Who has the "problem"?

Children in inner city schools

What could be done about the "problem"?

Provided students with an alternative approach to education.

How does dis – community relate to other "problem"?

Some of the consequences are: 1) a high level of school dropouts, 2) teen pregnancies, 3) higher crime and 4) the high cost of maintain criminals in prison.

Alternatives to correct "problem".

Increase the amount of money spent on educating inner city children.

Provide inner city children with free lunch as a lack of nutrition effects learning.

Alternative schools with a focus on smaller class size

Privatization

A New Policy Initiative To Solve The "Problem"

Much of what is offered as good public policy is a band-aid approach to problems begging for a simple solution found in the correct disposition of the heart of those who have toward those who need.

Analysts are part of the problem because they lack understanding as to the role community plays in solving extant urban problems. They are not in tune with the corrective or alternative to band-aid medicine. The problem has to do with a lack of community in the hearts of people. For example, the Community Action Programs of the 60's were not bad of themselves. Yet they failed to bring about the desired change. Why? Those who had the goods did not wish to share with those who needed the goods, which evidenced a lack of community in their hearts. The same is true for Affirmative Action. The programs are not bad of themselves, it is again the lack of community in the hearts of the opposing camps.

Good Public policy begins with a true description of the problem not an accurate one. After the description, alternative solutions can be presented, but each must begin with a sense of community in the hearts of the people. Because most people lack community, evidencing a state of division, policy must start here to correct the disposition of the heart. Thus the need to go FROM diversity TO unity TO community.

Outline of Initiative – The Ellison Model

This model is a pilot program to increase the reading, writing, and computing skills of inner city students by focusing on inclusive community building with assistance from institutions of higher learning. The Ellison Model with its focus on inclusive community building via a mentoring approach needed to solve the "problem".

Focus on the Familiar. Improve reading, writing and computing skills by developing materials around familiar things. For example, Opa-locka has a unique history associated with Moslem architectural design. Use unique of city to teach about government, history, English, math, the arts etc. This enrichment program for at risk students servers as laboratory for the local university to learn about and from the marginal populations they seek to serve.

Crime Prevention. Provide students with an alternative to glamorous life of crime via mentoring. Current mentoring program uses an l to 3 ratio in mentoring children. Children meet with their mentors during the month for social, recreational, cultural, educational activities. Once a month, mentors and mentees meet in an enrichment breakfast where the challenge is to hold the attention of both the professional mentors and the young students.

Summer Institute. Students spend part of their summers at local university where they are provided fun filled exercises aimed at improving their reading, writing, and computing skills. They engage in wholesome recreational and inspirational activities. Supervised university students who serve as mentors to the students do this.

A Special Treat. Students who perform well in the classroom and whose conduct is also above reproach get a special treat. The treat could be a field trip to one of the Caribbean Islands, special tennis instructions or such like thing.

Artistic Expressions. Teach students through the arts. Student learn by doing things that a fun. For example, performing plays that require them to read scripts, singing songs that require them to read. They are also taught ethic and morals as they play the characters in plays and learn songs designed for that purpose.

Parental Involvement. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their children's education. For example, in the FIU/OPA-LOCKA Crime Prevention program parents are invited to monthly enrichment breakfasts, serve as chaperons on field trips, and participate in the Summer Institute along with their children.

Community Involvement. Local Rotary Clubs with an emphasis on education appear willing to work with local universities. For example, in Opa-locka, FIU partners with the Rotary Club, the Rotaracts (under 30 years of age) and Interacts (high school students)

Assessment. Inclusive community building external project evaluation aimed at correcting errant practices.