

THE POLITICS OF EXPERTISE

**By Guy Benveniste, Berkeley : The Glendessary Press, 1972,
232 pages, Selected Bibliography.**

The author of **The Politics of Expertise**, Guy Benveniste, has served as an economist for several years with the Stanford Research Institute, has been on the staff of several White House task forces, has served with the Department of State of the United States, the World Bank and UNESCO, and has taught policy formation at the Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley. Equipped with such practical and academic experience Benveniste attempts to examine the role of planning, planners and experts in government and industry in the context of the rapid changes taking place in technological societies. On the back cover of the book it is stated that the book is written for practitioners, for those who aspire to become planners, for those who hire planners and for those who distrust them.

Benveniste notes that in many western countries, in all the socialist countries, and in most developing nations, various forms of national, regional, or organizational planning have been instituted. In fact, many have come to think that the "age of technocracy" has arrived and that systems approach, rationality, optimization and fundamental technical demands, which have begun to dominate public and private administration, would somehow displace old-style politics and the struggle between competing ideologies. However, according to Benveniste, recently a reaction against "faith in rationality" has emerged; a kind of anti-technocracy movement has begun to set in. Surprised by the countermovement, many experts and planners are going through a crisis of their own. The role of the expert needs to be redefined.

In view of these developments and the rapid changes taking place in technological societies Benveniste tries to study the role of experts and planners in policy formation in government and industry. In this context, some of the questions that he raises are : Why and how experts influence public and private policy? Why do some experts succeed and others fail? Whose interests do they serve? What

are the power sources that experts use? What are the limits of technocracy and the danger of excessive reliance on rationalization? In dealing with these questions Benveniste proceeds from the argument that the role of experts and planners contains not only technical but also political dimensions. Expertise is political action that cannot be devoid of value judgments and political commitment.

In the first chapter, titled "The Prince and The Pundit" - - referring to the decision-maker and the expert, respectively - - Benveniste claims that modern princes governing polities, institutions, firms or organizations in modern societies cannot avoid or do without expert advice in formulating policies because of the complexity and uncertainty of the rapidly changing environment. The modern prince must recognize the complexity of his domain, the implications of his actions or inactions, and must be aware of his increasing ignorance. Hence, the demand for and the dependence on experts basically arise from rapid social and technological changes (e.g., expanding economies, new products, new patterns of living, new values.) The complexity of the social system necessitates rational analysis to discover the implications of alternative courses of action.

The use of computers, forecasts and trend analysis, use of social measurements for policy formation and feedback evaluation, programming of sequential action programs, management information and control systems, PERT (program evaluation and review technique), CPM (critical path method), cost-benefit analysis, models and simulation, and statistical decisions are some of the techniques that experts are called upon to employ to deal with policy analysis and research.

The actors in the policy environment are the Prince (a decision-maker who might be a politician, a president, a top manager, a minister), the experts (men of technical knowledge, social engineer), the implementers (men in the administrative machine), and the beneficiaries (whose lives and purposes are affected by expert designs). Benveniste examines the relationship of the expert with other actors and finds that "for many experts the only relevant actor is the Prince, who happens to pay wages, supply office space, provide status, and offer access to the substance of the research" (p. 13). The expert regards the bureaucrats as dull, unimaginative and insensitive, and the beneficiaries as ignorant, uneducated and incapable of perceiving the outcome of their actions. The expert generally thinks that planning has to be imposed from the top. He finds the idea of the participation of the beneficiaries (the subjects), who,

he claims, do not understand the complexities of the problem at hand, as unrealistic and undesirable. Systems experts and planners who presume that they are above politics since they employ rational analysis techniques, fail to realize that rationality also cannot be devoid of political, normative and ideological dimensions and commitments.

In the second chapter Soviet and French planning experiences are presented briefly. According to Benveniste, although the Soviet "imperative planning" and the French "indicative planning" are quite different with respect to the content of the plans, the policies pursued and the administrative arrangements and processes, both "emerge from similar conditions of uncertainty, and these in turn are the source of the experts' power" (p. 29). Benveniste sees early Soviet planning as a response to the needs of a government which, after abolishing one basis (the market mechanism) for making economic decisions, had to resort to planning in order to cope with the resulting uncertainty. French planning, Benveniste argues, grew from conditions of crisis caused by the collapse of the French economy after the Second World War. Though the sources of uncertainty differed, in both cases it was conditions of uncertainty, according to Benveniste, that led to the adoption of planning.

Under conditions of uncertainty risks are higher in selecting policy options; penalties for making wrong decisions are costly; and resources to handle errors may not be available. Hence, uncertainty creates demand for planning and dependency on the services of policy-planning experts. Yet, the use of knowledge and rationalization to reduce excessive uncertainty is not the only function of planning. Chapter three is devoted to discussing the "secondary functions of planning" which according to Benveniste, to some extent, accounts for the adoption of planning in some countries, especially in the Third World countries. What are these secondary functions? Besides reducing uncertainty, planning may be used by the Prince to legitimate decisions that have already been made. In other words, planning and experts sometimes provide the Prince with the rationale or the legitimation for taking or not taking certain decisions. Sometimes planning may be used to acquire new degrees of freedom from the control of the finance ministry. Furthermore, it may be used to secure aid from donor countries and international organizations which generally favor economic aid to countries that have established national planning bodies.

Another secondary function of planning involves the use of experts as the operational staff of the Prince. The Prince who wants

to control the bureaucratic apparatus has to acquire facts about what goes on within the bureaucracy. Facts and information bring power that the Prince needs. The experts and planners can be employed to secure such information. Furthermore the Prince can institute new programs and thereby place his experts to leadership and control positions in the bureaucratic unit in question.

Finally "by relying on experts, the Prince can confer legitimacy on one set of facts rather than another" (p. 54). This allows the Prince to narrow the terrain, time and place of negotiations as he sees fit.

In chapter four the political aspects of the systems approach is examined. According to Benveniste, "apolitical politics" of expertise aims to minimize the threat it might pose to politicians. Experts should always be careful not to step into the domain of the politicians. They should reaffirm that choices still will be made by political actors and that experts will not alter the political process, even if at times this might not be the case. The expert's apolitical stance "downgrades the visible influence the technocrat has on the political system." The expert should be aware of his policy environment which demands not only analytical but also political skills and considerations. The expert who is not equipped with both skills is vulnerable to potential attacks from all quarters.

In chapter five Benveniste studies the nature of planning in the United States. He argues that U.S. planning is decentralized and diffused since constitutional prerogatives of the Congress and the Executive, the layers of federal, state, and local governments, the politico-administrative culture, among other factors, render the adoption of a more centralized planning system unfeasible. Benveniste tries to identify the main features, institutions and processes of U.S. planning which he labels as "laissez-faire system of planning." In this type of planning, policy and planning decisions are made by the organized corporate political forces of the state (i.e., the military, industry, banking, labor), and political parties and legislative processes are by passed or coopted.

Benveniste distinguishes and discusses four types of planning in chapter six. The four ideal-types are trivial, utopian, imperative, and intentional planning. A trivial plan is not intended to, or does not, "affect the course of events beyond legitimating what is happening anyway" (p. 105). It simply provides technocratic legitimacy to existing policies. Program budgets, which reshuffle old line items and give the impression that they are the product of considerable analy-

sis, are given as examples of trivial plans. Utopian plans are also not intended to alter the status quo. They provide "a description of a future set of events that no one inside or outside the administration expects to see happen" (p. 109). Generally no one takes utopian plans seriously; yet they serve to highlight the good intentions of the Prince.

On the other hand, both imperative and intentional planning are intended to shift the course of events. As an ideal type, imperative planning refers to policies and plans that are mandatory. It relies on existing channels of authority and power. Intentional planning "refers to planning or policy situations where the existing means of control available to the Prince are insufficient or unrelated to the implementation of the plan" (pp. 114-115). Since the intentional plan reaches people outside the Prince's authority, and since it depends on negotiations (not mandatory), the way experts combine technical arguments with political support becomes crucial for the plan's acceptance. According to Benveniste "intentional planning is better suited to reduce uncertainty in complex situations involving many organizations pursuing diverse and conflicting goals" (p. 115). In the chapters that follow Benveniste, focusing on intentional planning, explores the sources of experts' power and the tactics they should follow.

Benveniste, in chapter seven, identifies five sources or factors to account for the experts' power: (1) the ready access of experts to power centers (i.e., the Prince and his lieutenants); (2) the political value of experts' knowledge, information, and analysis; (3) the experts' monopolistic position and their professional consensus; (4) the high cost for persons and groups external to expert bodies to intervene and press for demands and/or consultation; and (5) the possibility of coalition formation by experts with groups inside and outside the government.

In chapters eight and nine, Benveniste discusses the tactics which would ease or facilitate the experts' role and task. According to Benveniste, the expert should find out how and to what extent the Prince and his lieutenants trust experts; what kind of expectations he will face inside or outside the bureaucracy; how he can build a coalition of supporters in and out of government; how much lead time he has to insist on before accepting the assignment; what talent is essential for the research team; and what kind of research budget is involved.

The following chapter tries to show the advantages of narrowing the time and system boundaries in policy analysis for the experts. For example, "the longer the time horizon, the more alternatives have to be considered, the more expensive the search for information become, and the less reliable the results" (p. 177). The identification of the relevant actors (beneficiaries, participants, implementers) and the composition of potential coalition of supporters becomes extremely difficult if the time boundary is far off. The experts' strategy should be to avoid confronting too many political unknowns.

In the final chapter Benveniste repeats his arguments against "laissez-faire planning." He suggests that "the solution lies in improving intentional planning, making conscious the choice of boundaries, creating remedies for planning errors, and improving the political basis of planning by making legislatures more effective through something called legislative partisan planning" (pp. 195-196). Legislative partisan planning involves the use of experts by the Congress which, Benveniste thinks, would at least provide a leverage to the legislature not to remain at the mercy of the corporate state.

The Politics of Expertise is indeed worth reading. Yet, the book, as any other, does have certain shortcomings. Throughout the book Benveniste tries to examine the role of planning and experts in technological societies without elaborating on what he means by technological society (apart from mentioning "rapid changes" as a basic feature of such societies.) Though the book claims to study the politics of expertise in government and in industry, most of it focuses on the government side. Furthermore, the differences and/or similarities between the politics of expertise in government and in industry are not discerned. Benveniste argues that "If they (the experts) are inevitably involved in politics, they had better know it, organize themselves, and become both experts and committed political actors" (p. 21). In a book examining the politics of expertise, the inadequate clarification of the term "committed political actors" (committed to what and to whom) does constitute a major shortcoming. Other shortcomings can be found, or the ones I have mentioned may not be shared by other readers of the book. But I do think that most readers, on the whole, will find Benveniste's book commendable.

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ECONOMY WIDE MODELS and DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
By Charles R. Blitzer, Peter B. Clark and Lance Taylor (Eds.)
Oxford University Press, 1975, Pp. 369.

Nobel ödülünü ilk alan iktisatçı Tinbergen'in 1960'larda geliştirmeye giriştiği ve önemli katkılarda bulunduğu planlama teorisi bugün matematiksel iktisadın kendini kabul ettirmiş bir dalı olmuştur. Planlama teorisinde gerçekleştirilen gelişmeler İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra merkezden yönetilen sosyalist ekonomiler yanında özel girişime dayanan ekonomiler ve özellikle az gelişmiş ekonomilerde de devlet müdahalesinin gerekli olduğu görüşünün ağırlık kazanmasına paralel yürümüştür. Teori ile pratik arasındaki diyalektik ilişkiye bakarsak teoride geliştirilen tekniklerin, uygulama biçimlerini, uygulamada ortaya çıkan sorunların da teoriyi etkilediğini söyleyebiliriz. Editörlere göre kitabın amacı teori ile uygulama arasındaki boşluğu kapatmaktır. Ancak uygulama sorununun salt teori ile ilgili olmadığını belirtmemiz gerekir.

Dünya Bankasının araştırma yayınları arasında olan bu kitap planlama teorisinin ana konularına ilişkin, oniki yazarın oniki makalesinden oluşmaktadır. Bu makalelerin büyük bir kısmı, ekonomi çapında orta - vadeli planlama modellerinin bugüne dek ulaştığı düzeyi yansıtmakta ve bu konuda başarılanların özetini vermektedir. Böylece kitaptaki makalelerin çoğu teoriye bir katkı olmaktan çok bir derleme niteliğini taşımaktadır. Yine editörlerin de belirttiği gibi bu eseri, değindikleri konulara göre herbiri dört makaleden oluşan üç bölümde düşünebiliriz. Birinci bölümdeki makaleler, planlamanın genel sorunları, veri derlenmesi ve ekonomi çapında planlama modellerinin kuramsal ilkeleri ile ilgilidir. Bunlardan kitabın en uzun ve en göz alıcı makalesi olan Lance Taylor'un makalesi, Harrod-Domar modelinden başlayarak statik ve dinamik girdi - çıktı modelleri, statik ve dinamik doğrusal programlama ve dinamik optimizasyon modellerinin kuramsal temellerini ayrıntıları ile incelemektedir. İkinci bölümü oluşturan makaleler planlama modellerinin uygulamanın özgül sorunlarını incelemede kullanılmasını ele almaktadır. Örneğin Peter Clark, Leontief modelinde yatırım, tüketim ve gelir dağılımı sorununu, T. N. Srinivasan dış ticaret sektörünün çok sektörlü planlama modellerine ekleniş biçimlerini incelerken Charles R. Blitzer istihdam ve işgücü planlama modellerini incelemektedir. Michael Bruno, çok sevdiği bir konuyu, gölge fiyatlar ve proje değerlendir-

mesini ele almaktadır. Son bölümdeki makaleler bölgesel planlama, ölçek ekonomilerin planlaması, çoklu amaçlar için planlama, ve planlama modellerinde ikame ve doğrusal olmayan ilişkiler sorunlarını teknik, kuram ve yöntem açısından tartışmaktadır.

Bu kısa özetten de anlaşılacağı gibi kitapda yer alan yazılar planlama teorisinde incelenen tüm konuları kapsamaktadır. Aslında kitap bu amaca yönelik değildir. Yazılar orta vadeli makro modeller üzerine yoğunlaşmıştır. Yine de bir mikro modelin kurulması ile planlama görevi tamamlanmış sayılamaz. Günlük işlevlerini yerine getirirken hükümetin maliye, para, bütçe gelirleri ve harcamaları ve döviz kuru gibi çeşitli konularda kararlar alması gerekmektedir. Türkiye örneğine bakarak devletin bu konulardaki politikalarının ekonomiyi beş yıllık ana plandan daha çok etkilediğini ve şekillendirdiğini söyleyebiliriz. Teoride bu konudaki politikaların ana plan yanında alt planlar çerçevesinde belirlenmesi gerektiği söylenir. Ancak ekonominin bir bütün olduğunu ve tüm kesimlerinin birbirlerini etkilediğini düşünürsek bu önerinin kolayca kabul edilemeyeceğini görürüz. İkinci olarak da kitapda tarım ve dış ticaret modellerine yer verilmemiştir. Bu eksiklik özellikle Türk okuyucular için önemli sayılabilir, çünkü; önümüzdeki on yıl içerisinde Türk ekonomisinin karşılaştacağı en önemli sorunlar tarımdan ve dış ticaretten kaynaklanacaktır. Ancak eksiklikler için editörleri suçlayamayız. Bunlara ilişkin sorunlar teoride henüz çözülmemiştir. Örneğin, para ve maliye politikalarının ekonominin reel kesimi ile olan ilişkileri yeterince bilinmemektedir.

Kitaptaki tüm yazıların ortak bir özelliği de titiz bir çalışma ürünü olmaları. Bu açıdan kitap planlama modelleri ile ilgilenenlere ve öğrencilere rahatlıkla salık verilebilir.

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