

Creativity and Policy Studies

Stuart Nagel

Policy Studies Organization

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to discuss some aspects of the relations between public policy and creativity. There are basically two kinds of relations in this context. One set deals with how public policy can help stimulate creativity. The other set of relations deals with how creativity can be helpful in improving public policy.

Concerning public policy as a stimulant to creativity, this article briefly discusses policies that relate to politics, economics, socialization, and psychology. On creativity in improving public policy, this article briefly discusses pushing, facilitating, and pulling factors. It also discusses sources of policy goals and policy alternatives, concluding that more sources should be used and that they should be used in combination. This paper further discusses concepts that are useful in arriving at win-win public policies.

Win-win policies are alternatives that can enable conservatives, liberals, and other major viewpoints to all come out ahead of their best initial expectations simultaneously. Win-win is also called super-optimizing or doing better than the previous best of all major groups.

There are basically five steps to win-win policy analysis:

1. What are the major goals of conservatives, liberals, or other major groups who are disputing what policy should be adopted for a give policy problem?
2. What are the major alternatives of those groups for dealing with the policy problem?
3. What are the relations between each major alternative and each major goal? In their simplest form, these relations can be expressed in terms of a minus sign (relatively adverse relation) and plus sign (relatively conducive relation), and a zero (neither adverse nor conducive relation).
4. What new alternative is there that might be capable of:
 - 1) achieving the conservative goals even better than the conservative alternative, and;
 - 2) simultaneously capable of achieving the liberal goals even more than the liberal alternative?Whatever new alternative meets these two criteria is a win-win alternative or a super-optimum solution.

*Is the proposed win-win alternative capable of getting over various hurdles that frequently exist? These hurdles may be political, administrative, technological, legal, psychological, and economic in random order. Win-win solutions should also consider how to upgrade workers and firms that may be displaced by downsizing due to increased productivity, free trade, defence conversion, immigration, merit treatment, labour utilization, creativity, and related factors.

Part One: Public Policy in Stimulating Creativity

The following political, economic, sociological, and psychological institutions or ways of doing things in a society are conducive to innovative and effective public policy-making. They include public policies that can enable conservatives, liberals, and other major viewpoints to all come out ahead of their best initial expectations simultaneously, i.e. super-optimum or win-win solutions (SOS).

I. Political Methods

A. Competitive Political Parties.

This is a key facilitator since the out-party is constantly trying to develop policies (including possibly SOS policies) in order to become the in-party. The in-party is also busy developing new policies in order to stay the in-party. New policies are developed largely as a result of changing domestic and international conditions, not just for the sake of newness. Without the stimulus of an out-party, the in-party would have substantially less incentive to be innovative. More important, without the possibility of becoming the in-party, the out-party would lose its incentive to be innovative. More innovation generally comes from the out-party than the in-party (all other factors held constant), including the possibility of SOS innovations

B. Better Policy Analysis Methods and Institutions.

SOS solutions are likely to be facilitated by policy analysis methods that deal with multiple goals, multiple alternatives, missing information, spreadsheet-based decision-aiding software, and a concern for successful adoption and implementation. Better policy analysis institutions refer to training, research, funding, publishing, and networking associations. These institutions can be part of the activities of universities, government agencies, and independent institutes in the private sector. The extent to which these policy institutions deal with super-optimizing analysis will make them even more relevant to facilitating SOS solutions.

II. Economic Policies

A. Competitive Business Firms.

Just as competition among political parties may be essential for facilitating SOS public policy, competition among business firms may be essential for facilitating a prosperous economy and a prosperous world through international business competition. Nations such as the former Soviet Union have failed to advance and collapsed due largely to a one-party system. Likewise, numerous business firms such as in the American steel industry have failed to advance and virtually collapsed due largely to lack of substantial competition. The American automobile industry has not collapsed, but it did fail to develop small cars, cars that resist style changes, safer cars, less expensive cars, and more durable cars in comparison to the international competition that was not taken seriously until almost too late.

B. Well-Targeted Subsidies and Tax Breaks.

In the context of super-optimum solutions, this tends to mean subsidies and tax breaks that increase national productivity and international competitiveness. Such subsidies and tax breaks are the opposite of handouts that provide a disincentive to increased productivity on the part of either welfare recipients or big business. Good targeting in this regard especially refers to upgrading skills and stimulating technological innovation and diffusion. A dollar invested in those kinds of subsidies is likely to pay off many times over without necessarily having to wait very long for the results.

C. Increased National Productivity.

All these facilitators are important. Economists might rightfully consider increased national productivity to be especially important. It leads to competitiveness and an increased gross national product or national income, which means an increased tax base to which the tax rate is applied. If increased productivity increases the tax base, then tax rates can be lowered and still produce more tax money for well-targeted subsidies that produce further increases in national productivity. These increases, however, are not an end in themselves. The increased national income can facilitate finding and implementing SOS solutions that relate to employment, inflation, agriculture, labor, business, poverty, discrimination, education, families, the environment, housing, transportation, energy, health, technological innovation, government structures, government processes, world peace, international trade, and every other public policy field. In other words, with more money and resources available, SOS solutions are facilitated, but SOS solutions often draw upon creativity that is associated with doing much better on relevant goals with constant or decreasing resources.

III. Sociology: Childhood Socialization

Risk-takers get generated from about age 0 to 5 in little children depending on whether they are allowed to take chances or treated in such a way that they never come in contact with anything that might hurt them. There is certainly a need for encouraging more experimentation on the part of children within reason. More rebelliousness, more of the kind of trying out to see what will happen if you push your food off the highchair onto the floor without being punished for doing so, to see if the bowl will break or not. That does not necessarily mean that you jump off the third story porch to see if your head will break.

Liberals have a lot of trouble talking about socialization because it sounds like brainwashing people. It can be done in a brainwashing way, or it can be done in a way that encourages children to think things out for themselves to some extent. An example might be telling children not to discriminate on the basis of race or gender, as contrasted to setting up a situation where they more creatively reason that discrimination is undesirable. Such a situation might involve the teacher calling for volunteers to erase the blackboard and virtually everyone volunteers. The teacher says we cannot have so many people erasing the blackboard, and we might therefore just pick the black girls. She then asks for reactions and alternative suggestions. She thereby stimulates creativity and possibly an implicit understanding of such concepts as merit treatment, sharing benefits, sharing costs, having a minimum benefit threshold, having a maximum cost threshold, and other such ideas without using those words.

In the SOS context, this refers to creating a frame of mind that causes adults to do what is socially desired because the alternative is virtually unthinkable. This can be contrasted with a less effective emphasis on deterrence, whereby socially desired behavior is achieved through threats and bribes. Examples include childhood socialization to reduce adult behavior that is violent, alcoholic, drug addictive, and hostile toward constitutional rights

IV. Psychology of SOS Solutions

A. Innovative Risk Taking

This is an important SOS facilitator because many SOS solutions involve technological fixes. In order to develop new technologies, many people usually had to risk substantial amounts of money, time, effort, and other resources. There may have been a strong possibility that it would have all been wasted. An SOS society needs more people who are willing to take such chances. Classic examples include Marie and Pierre Curie who sacrificed about 30 years of work plus their health to develop radium and thus radioactivity, which is part of the basis for nuclear energy. Thomas Edison frequently not only risked his resources but his whole reputation by announcing inventions before he had developed them in order to give himself an ego risk as a stimulus to quickly inventing what he falsely said he had already done.

B. Sensitivity Opportunity Costs

This means either through socialization or an appropriate incentive structure trying to get decision-makers to be more sensitive to the mistake of failing to try out a new idea that might work wonders, as contrasted to being so sensitive to sins of commission rather than omission. Both wrongs are undesirable. One can, however, say that a police officer who wrongly beats a suspect is doing less harm to society than a president who wrongly fails to adopt a new health care program that could save numerous lives or a new education program that could greatly improve productivity and the quality of life. A person who is sensitive to opportunity costs tends to say "nothing ventured, nothing gained," whereas an insensitive person tends to say "nothing ventured, nothing lost." We need more of the former in order to facilitate the generating, adopting, and implementing of SOS solutions.

C. SOS Combination of Pessimism and Optimism

This does not mean a balance or a compromise between being pessimistic and being optimistic. It means being 100% pessimistic or close to it regarding how bad things are and how much worse they are going to get unless we actively do something about them including developing SOS solutions. It simultaneously means being 100% optimistic or close to it regarding how good things can get in the future if we vigorously work at them including developing SOS solutions. This is in contrast to those who say the present is wonderful and needs little improvement. It is also in contrast to those who say the present may be wonderful or not so wonderful but some invisible hands or automatic forces of Adam Smith, Karl Marx, or God will automatically improve the future.

D. Constantly Seeking Higher Goals

This list of societal facilitators has been presented in random order. Some of the items overlap or interact, but it is better to overlap than leave gaps in this context. It is appropriate perhaps to have the last facilitator relate to constantly seeking higher goals. Traditional goal-seeking leads to compromises. Worse, it can lead to one side trying to win 100% and the other side losing 100%, but the war, strike, litigation, or other negative dispute resolution leads to both sides losing close to 100%. Obviously seeking higher goals is more likely to result in higher goal achievement than seeking lower goals, including SOS goal achievement. The counter argument sometimes made is that higher goals lead to frustration because of the gap between goals and achievement. There may be more frustration in fully achieving low goals that provide a low quality of life when others are doing better. High societal goal-seeking (including SOS solutions) is facilitated by all of the above factors, but it is a factor in itself because high goal-seeking tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy.¹

Part Two: Creativity for Improving Public Policy

I. Pushing , Facilitating, Pulling to Innovative Public Policy

A useful way of organizing ideas for stimulating creativity is in terms of pushing factors, facilitators, and pulling factors. That three-part organization comes from Frederick Jackson Turner's (1932) analysis of the causes of people moving west in the 1800s. The pushing factors included undesirable aspects of the East, such as overcrowding, lack of jobs, and debts. Facilitating factors included wagon trails, railroads, river systems, and other means of transportation. Pulling factors included attractions in the West, such as free land and business opportunities.

In this context, the pushing factors include other people and commitments. The facilitators include relevant literature, working style, and multi-criteria decision-making. The pulling factors include the rewards that go to successful imagination. The rewards here emphasize intellectual rewards partly because the article is based on experience in academic and government activities where monetary rewards are not as great as they are in business. The reader can adjust the ideas, however , to fit other contexts besides the academic and governmental contexts.

A. Pushing Factors

1. *Other People as Pushing Factors.*

Talk with someone else about generating alternatives. Trying to explain alternative ways of achieving something with an audience listening stimulates more ideas than either talking or thinking to one's self. Put one's head together with someone else who is trying to come up with ideas. The interaction of two or more people trying to generate ideas tends to work better than one person alone. Have contact with stimulating colleagues via correspondence, conventions, informal campus relations, or other on-the-job relations. Work with graduate students and undergraduates to develop dissertations, seminar papers, and term papers.

Work with different people to provide a variety of interaction. Arrange to be asked questions by people with a variety of orientations, including sincere inquiry, skepticism, cynicism, and even a touch of malice. Try to operate in an interdisciplinary environment for a great variety of perspectives. Apply one's creative ideas to see what happens in practice.

2. *Commitments as Pushing Factors.*

Accept a commitment to write an article, a book chapter, or a conference paper on how to deal with a policy problem. That is likely to generate new alternatives. Teach in those fields in which one wants to generate policy alternatives. Take on obligations to co-author articles, chapters, or papers.

Take on obligations to do consulting work which involves generating alternatives. Prepare grant proposals. Arrange for competitive situations as a stimulus to developing new ideas.

B. Facilitators

1. *Literature.*

Consult the literature in the field. There may be lots of alternatives already suggested. There are some software checklists that might be worth trying such as "Trigger" published by Thoughtware and the "Idea Generator" published by Experience in Software, Inc., 2039 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 401,

Berkeley, CA 94701. Keep up with the newest ideas in various policy fields. Read provocative literature. Know the general literature in the fields in which one is interested.

Read some of the literature on creativity including the list of references attached to this article. Have theoretical frameworks that can serve as checklists and prods for developing alternatives. Be familiar with the methods of knowing, including how to inductively generalize, how to deduce conclusions, how to determine what authorities hold, and how to do sensitivity analysis. Think about ways of generating ideas like this article, or adding to this article.

2. Working Style.

Talk out loud about the possible alternatives. Dictating is better than thinking in generating ideas. Delegate work to others in order to have more time to think. Have a pencil and paper handy at all times or dictating equipment to write or dictate ideas that come to one's mind before they are lost. Schedule time periods for creative development and implementing of ideas. The more time periods the better. Occasionally travel in order to provide a variety of environments.

C. Multi-Criteria Decision-Making.

Try listing some alternative, even if one only has in mind one or two alternatives to begin with. Merely trying to generate a list tends to result in more items being listed than one originally had in mind, or thought one had in mind. After generating some alternatives, then list some criteria for evaluating them. That will lead to more alternatives. After generating alternatives and criteria, then generate some relations between the alternatives and criteria. That will lead to more alternatives. After generating alternatives, criteria, relations and initial conclusions, then do various forms of sensitivity analysis designed to determine what it would take to bring a second-place or other-place alternative up to first place. That may generate still more alternatives.

If there is a situation where there are two conflicting sides, each one favoring a different alternative, look to see what kind of alternative could maybe satisfy the goals of both sides. Also look to the possibility of a compromise alternative that will partially satisfy each side if it is not possible to find an alternative that will fully satisfy both sides. Then observing how the alternatives score on the criteria, ask how each alternative can be improved. Try to convert the alternatives, criteria, relations, tentative conclusions, and sensitivity analysis into a publishable table with notes. That may generate new alternatives.

D. Pulling Factors: Rewards

Be motivated to want to generate alternatives. Arrange to be in situations where one is rewarded for generating alternatives, such as recognition, grants, publishing opportunities, graduate students, consulting opportunities, etc. Non-intellectual rewards can also be arranged for. These might include money, power, love, food, sleep, pure recreation, etc. Operate in a permissive environment that encourages experimentation and new ideas. The earlier one can get into such an environment the better, preferably starting at birth.

Some people use heredity as an excuse for not being creative. In both areas, there is a substantial range in which each person can operate. If one is more determined, then one can operate closer to the top (rather than the bottom) of one's inherited range. Creativity is probably less a matter of heredity than intelligence is. It is more susceptible to the kind of pushing, facilitating, and pulling factors mentioned above. Thus one can more easily arrange to be a more creative person than one can arrange to be a

brighter person by seeking more favorable occurrences of those factors. Doing so can be rewarding in itself, as well as producing the kinds of rewards mentioned above. The broader rewards accrue not only to the individual, but also the many potential beneficiaries of individual creativity. It is an ability well worth stimulating by both society and by one's self.²

II. Sources of Goals and Alternatives

Public policy evaluation can be defined as the determination of which various governmental policies or decisions are best for achieving a given set of goals in light of (1) the relations between the alternative policies and the goals, and (2) various constraints and conditions.

This definition emphasizes four key elements in public policy evaluation:

1. A set of goals to be achieved within various normative constraints.
2. A set of alternative policies or combinations of policies that could be relevant to achieving the goals.
3. A set of relations between the policies and the goals.
4. The drawing of a conclusion from those goals, policies, and relations as to which policy or combination is best.

Where do these goals, policies, and relations come from? The answer includes four main possibilities:

- a. Authority; one or more persons, books, articles, or other reliable sources of information regarding the relevant goals, policies, or relations.
- b. Statistical or observational analysis; the analyzing of specific instances in order to generalize what the goals, policies, or relations might be.
- c. Deduction; the drawing of a conclusion from premises that have been established from authority, observation, and/or intuition.
- d. Sensitivity analysis; the guessing of the goals, policies, or relations and the determination of what effect, if any, the guessed values have on the final decision regarding which policy is best.

Intuition.

The five basic sources can be sub-classified in various ways. For example, authority can be meaningfully discussed in terms of expert authority and general public opinion. Authority could also be contemporary or historical. Observation can be impressionistic or systematic, including statistical. Deductive approaches can be based on intuitively accepted premises or based on empirically validated premises. Sensitivity analysis is threshold analysis in which we want to know the break-even point, above which we should take one course of action, and below which we should take another.

A. Authority

Consulting authorities, rather than establishing the goals, feasible policies, or relations in a policy evaluation with original data or reasoning, can be a big time saver. Traditional social science tends to downplay asking insiders in contrast to observational methods. In policy evaluation, however, perhaps more consultation with insiders is needed in order to obtain more meaningful information about relationships than can be obtained from the limited and questionable data records that are available.

Who constitutes an authority on goals, policies, or relations? The answer depends on the subject matter. The Supreme Court is an authority, for example, on what goals are legitimate in satisfying the right-to-counsel clause of the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution. The Court has said that saving

money is not an appropriate goal, but that saving innocent persons from being convicted is. If, however, the issue is not where right to counsel should be provided but rather how it should be provided, then saving money is an appropriate goal. For this issue, the goals of a county board would be relevant because it generally appropriates money to pay court-appointed lawyers to represent the poor. Such goals might include satisfying local lawyers while minimizing expenditures. The board might, therefore, decide on a salaried public defender system, rather than on a less expensive but less politically feasible assigned counsel system or a less legally feasible volunteer system. For other policy problems, the key authorities might be legislative opinion, public opinion, the head of an administrative agency, or the like.

B. Statistical Observation and Induction

Statistical analysis is the most systematic form of inducing generalizations from many instances or observations. It is generally used for establishing relations, rather than for establishing goals or feasible policies. Statistical analysis can, however, be useful in establishing goals or weights for the goals whenever the goals, rather than being ultimate, are instrumental for achieving higher objectives.

Accounting is a variation on statistical analysis. Like statistical analysis, it involves aggregating data, but accounting data is generally more precise than statistical analysis that is based on averages or the fitting of curves to scattered data points. A public opinion survey is not a variation on statistical analysis in the context of the typology of sources used in this chapter. Rather, it is a form of consulting authority in which the authority is the general public or a special segment of it. A statistical analysis (as a distinct source of information on goals, policies, or relations) involves a cross-tabulation, an analysis of the variation between averages, or a regression-equation analysis. These forms of statistical analysis involve determining a relation which is relevant to (1) weighting goals, (2) deciding which policies are feasible to choose among, or (3) relating a policy to a goal.

C. Deduction

Deduction involves arriving at a conclusion from premises that have been established by way of authority, empirical validation, prior deduction, or intuition. The more acceptable the premises are, the more acceptable the conclusions should be, assuming the conclusions have been validly deduced from the premises. Deduction is especially helpful where there is no authority and no empirical data for determining the information desired.

It is important to note that deductively analyzing premises may lead to an alternative policy that might be missed if one only relies on authority or statistical analysis. Authority is often not very creative in foreseeing problems, and statistical analysis is incapable of dealing with policies that have never been adopted.

D. Sensitivity Analysis or Trial-and-Error

In policy evaluation, sensitivity analysis is a useful source of information about goals, policies, and relations when authority, induction, and deduction do not provide clear answers regarding them. Sensitivity or threshold analysis enables one to determine how much room for error there is in weighting the goals, listing out the policies, or measuring the relations. Often, the controversy over precision in these matters is wasted because, within the range in which the controversy occurs, the overall conclusion as to which policy or combination is best is still the same. Sensitivity analysis also enables the policy evaluator to convert difficult questions about goals, policies, and relations into

relatively easy questions, such as, "Is a given weight, policy, or relation above or below some threshold?" rather than, "What is the exact weight, policy score, or relation?"

In using sensitivity analysis to determine a set of feasible policies, we have to distinguish between a method that will provide a set of policies from which we can choose, rather than a method designed to arrive at an optimum policy. All four sources of information can be used to arrive at either feasible policies or an optimum policy.

E. Intuition

Intuition is closely related to sensitivity analysis as a source of goals, policies, and relations. Sensitivity analysis frequently involves determining how different guessed values affect the optimizing conclusions. Intuition is also a form of guessing or basing estimates on strong feelings. Goals are sometimes accepted intuitively rather than being justified in terms of authority, statistics, or higher premises. This is especially so if the goals are general or near-ultimate goals, rather than instrumental. Policies may often be suggested as a result of a flash of insight, which is the case with hypotheses in traditional social science research. Although it is not generally respectable in social or policy science to arrive at relations through intuition, one can repeatedly guess at a relation until the reasonable possibilities have been exhausted and then see how these guesses affect the optimizing conclusions. One may find that it is unnecessary to be any more scientific than that, since all the reasonable guessed values may yield the same conclusion as to which policy is best.

Ultimately all goals and relations depend on intuition. Goals can be justified by appeal to authority, statistics, or deduction. However, how does one justify (1) the authority, (2) the dependent or goal variable in a statistical analysis, and (3) the basic premises in a deductive analysis? One can likewise ask for a justification of these justifications. In policy evaluation, one usually has an overall goal that is accepted intuitively, such as promoting the greatest happiness for the greatest number or satisfying the decision-makers. Likewise, one can ask, why does policy X cause goal Y? The answer might be that there is a Z variable between X and Y which is caused or increased by X, and which in turn causes or increases Y. One can then ask, why does X cause Z and why does Z cause Y? At each stage of the causal regress, one tends to move further away from substantive policy and social science toward natural science and metaphysics. Ultimately, the question becomes, how do we know there is an X or a Y? That is, how do we know there is such a thing as a congressional statute or an American population that has social-indicator characteristics? In other words, on a philosophical level, we have to accept some empirical reality, such as the existence of the world. Fortunately for most policy evaluation, the goals in dispute are seldom ultimate goals, but rather instrumental goals that can be justified in terms of authority, statistics, or deduction. Similarly, the relations are seldom, if ever, metaphysical; rather, they can also be explained in a satisfactory, non-philosophical way in terms of authority, statistics, and deduction.

We can conclude from this analysis of the sources of goals, policies, and relations in policy evaluation that there are a variety of sources that can be systematically classified. We can also conclude that perhaps policy evaluation should be making more use of the variety of sources available.

Unfortunately, certain disciplines tend to overlook some sources at the expense of others. Law and political science seem to rely heavily on authority as a source, especially legal authority. Psychology and sociology may rely too heavily on statistical analysis, which tends to overemphasize variables that are easily measurable and policies that need to be adopted before they can be evaluated. Economics and engineering often rely too heavily on deduction, especially mathematical modeling, which

sometimes involves unrealistic or incomplete premises. By working with a combination of authority, statistics, and deduction, one provides a form of triangulation which increases the likelihood of arriving at more meaningful goals-weights, policies, and relations.

There is no need to argue over which source between authority, statistics, and deduction is the most desirable. Authority is clearly a big time-saver if an accessible and respected authority is involved. Deduction enables one to draw conclusions about goals, policies, and relations without having to gather original data, but instead by synthesizing already known information. Statistical analysis does constitute a more ultimate, but more difficult, form of proof. In any concrete policy evaluation situation, the best source depends on the subject matter and what is to be done with it. If the policy evaluation involves constitutional policy, an appeal to Supreme Court authority may be most relevant. If it involves the effects of a strike in the coal industry on another segment of the economy, a deductive input-output model may be the preferable type of analysis. If it concerns the trade-off problem of inflation and unemployment, a time-series statistical analysis may be especially appropriate in relating inflation and unemployment to suicide rates, to the percentage of the two-party vote that goes to the incumbent party, or other social indicators.

We can also conclude that sensitivity of threshold analysis is a useful tool in policy evaluation because even with authority, statistics, and deduction, it may still not be possible to arrive at precision in weighting goals, measuring policies, or determining relations. Sensitivity analysis enables one to determine whether increased precision is needed. It is only needed if the range of unclearness on a goal-weight, a policy, or a relation happens to encompass a threshold value. Thus, if the range of unclearness on a goal-weight or a relation is between 20 and 30, but the threshold value of the goal-weight or the relation is 10, then one can forget about clarifying the unclearness if one is mainly concerned with determining which policy is best. If, however, the threshold value is 26, then one should seek additional information from authority, statistics, and/or deduction to determine whether the actual value is above or below 26.

The purpose of this article has been to discuss the sources of goals, policies, and relations in policy evaluation. The article represents a synthesis of reasonable common sense, at least as a matter of hindsight. That is what good policy evaluation should be, namely, codified common sense. For thousands of years, many human beings have been making effective and efficient decisions. What decision science and policy science should now try to do is to capture the essence of what these good decision-makers have done implicitly. Less naturally competent decision-makers can then improve their decision-making or policy-evaluating skills.³

Part Three. A Typology Toward Win-Win Public Policy

There are about fourteen different ways of arriving at win-win super-optimum solutions, whereby conservatives, liberals, and major viewpoints can all come out ahead of their best initial expectations simultaneously. The list could be used as a checklist to prod one's mind into thinking of solutions to specific problems.

1. More Resources to Satisfy all Sides

A. Expanding Resources.

An example might include well-placed subsidies and tax breaks that would increase national productivity and thus increase the gross national product and income. Doing so would enable the tax revenue to the government to increase even if the tax rate decreases. This would provide for a lowering of taxes, instead of trying to choose between the liberal and conservative ways of raising them. It would also provide for increasing both domestic and defense expenditures, instead of having to choose between the two.

B. Third Party Benefactor.

Some situations involve a third-party benefactor that is usually a government agency. An example is government food stamps, which allow the poor to obtain food at low prices, while farmers receive high prices when they submit the food stamps they have for reimbursement. Another example is rent supplements, which allow the poor to pay low rents, but landlords receive even higher rents than they would otherwise expect.

C. More Efficiency in Achieving Goals

1. Setting Higher Goals.

An example of setting higher goals than what was previously considered the best while still preserving realism might include the Hong Kong labour shortage with unemployment at only 1%. Hong Kong is faced with the seeming dilemma of having to choose between foregoing profits (by not being able to fill orders due to lack of labour) and opening the floodgates to mainland Chinese and Vietnamese (in order to obtain more labour). A super-optimum solution might involve adding to the labour force by way of the elderly, the disabled, and mothers of preschool children. It also would provide more and better jobs for those who are seasonally employed, part-time employed, full-time employed but looking for a second job, and full-time employed but not working up to their productive capacity.

2. Decreasing Causes of Conflict.

An example of removing or decreasing the source of the conflict between liberals and conservatives, rather than trying to synthesize their separate proposals, would be concentrating on having a highly effective and acceptable birth control program to satisfy both proponents and opponents of abortion, since abortions would then seldom be needed. Another example would be concentrating on a highly effective murder-reduction program to satisfy both proponents and opponents of capital punishment. Such a murder-reduction program might emphasize gun control, drug medicalization, and anti-violence socialization.

3. Redefining Problem.

Quite often a highly emotional controversy between liberals and conservatives may be capable of being resolved beyond the best expectations of each side through the approach of redefining the problem. They may be arguing over how to deal with a problem that is really relatively unimportant in terms of achieving their goals, as contrasted to a more important problem on which they might be likely to get mutually satisfying agreement. This involves seeing beyond a relatively superficial argument to the higher level goals that are endorsed by both liberals and conservatives, although possibly not to the same relative degree.

4. Increasing Benefits and Decreasing Cost.

There are situations where one side can receive big benefits but the other side incurs only small costs. An example is in litigation where the defendant gives products that it makes. The products may have

high market value to the plaintiff, but low variable or incremental cost to the defendant, since the defendant has already manufactured the products or can quickly do so.

5. *Early Socialization.*

The socialization matter could be discussed across every field of public policy. If one is going to have a super-optimum society, then it is important what kinds of attitudes children have with regard to discrimination, poverty, world peace, crime, education, consumer-merchant relations, labor-management relations, free speech, and fair procedure. One could even say that the key purpose, or a key purpose of public policy, is to provide for a socialization environment in which children have socially desired attitudes on every field of public policy. If that is done properly, then a good deal of the problems of what policies to adopt will take care of themselves because the need for public policy will be lessened. If children, for instance, are imbued with more of the idea of judging each other in terms of their individual characteristics rather than in terms of ethnic characteristics, then we have less need for public policies dealing with racism because there is likely to be a lot less racism.

6. *Technology Fix.*

The second level of insight is to communicate recognition that such super-optimum solutions are realistically possible and not just conceptually possible. A good example relates to the ozone problem and the use of fluorocarbons in hair sprays and other aerosol containers. As of about 1985, such devices represented a serious threat to depleting the ozone layer and thereby causing a substantial increase in skin cancer throughout the world. The solution was not to rely on an unregulated marketplace, which normally provides almost no incentives to manufacturers to reduce their pollution. The solution was not regulation or prohibition, which tends to be evaded, is expensive to enforce, and is enforced with little enthusiasm given disruptions that might occur to the economy. The most exciting aspect of the solution (although the problem is not completely solved) was the development of new forms of spray propellant that are less expensive for manufacturers to use and simultaneously not harmful to the ozone layer.

This kind of solution tends to be self-adopting since manufacturing firms, farmers, and others who might otherwise be polluting the environment now have an important economic incentive to adopt the new low-polluting methods because they reduce the expenses of the business firm. This approach does require substantial research and substantial government subsidies for research and development as contrasted to paying the polluters not to pollute, which is even more expensive and often not so effective, because they may take the money and pollute anyhow. The business firms generally do not have capital for that kind of research and development, or the foresight or forbearance which public policy and governmental decision-making may be more capable of exercising. This includes international governmental decision makers, as well as those in developing nations.

7. *Contracting Out.*

As for how the super-optimum solution operates, it involves government ownership, but all the factories and farms are rented to private entrepreneurs to develop productive and profitable manufacturing and farming. Each lease is renewable every year, or longer if necessary to get productive tenants. A renewal can be refused if the factory or farm is not being productively developed, or if the entrepreneur is not showing adequate sensitivity to workers, the environment, and consumers. Conservatives like the privatization of state factories and farms. Liberals like the contract specifications which provide for workers, the environment, and consumers.

As for some of the advantages of such an SOS system, it is easier not to renew a lease than it is to issue injunctions, fines, jail sentences, or other negative sanctions. It is also much less expensive than subsidies. The money received for rent can be an important source of tax revenue for the government to provide productive subsidies elsewhere in the economy. Those subsidies can be used especially for encouraging technological innovation-diffusion, the upgrading of skills, and stimulating competition for market share, which can be so much more beneficial to society than either socialistic or capitalistic monopolies. The government can more easily demand sensitivity to workers, the environment, and consumers from its renters of factories and farms than it can from itself. There is a conflict of interest in regulating oneself.

8. *International Economic Communities.*

An exciting new development with regard to international interaction to deal with shared policy problems is the international economic community (IEC). It involves a group of countries agreeing to remove tariff barriers to the buying and selling of goods among the countries as a minimum agreement to constitute an IEC. The agreement may also provide for removal of immigration barriers to the free flow of labor, and a removal of whatever barriers might exist to the free flow of communication and ideas. The European Economic Community is a good example, but other examples are developing in North America, Africa, Asia, and East Europe.

The alternative of having an economic community does well on the conservative goal of preserving national identity, since no sovereignty is lost in an IEC, as contrasted to the sovereignty that is lost in a world government or a regional government. The IEC may also add to the national stature of the component parts by giving them the increased strength that comes from being part of an important group. Thus, France may have more national stature as a leader in the European Economic Community than it has alone.

Likewise, the alternative of having an economic community does well on the liberal goal of promoting quality of life in terms of jobs and consumer goods. Jobs are facilitated by the increased exporting that the IEC countries are able to do. Jobs may also be facilitated by free movement to countries in the EC that have a need for additional labour. Consumer goods are facilitated by the increased importing that the EC countries are able to do without expensive tariffs.

D. More Combinations of Alternatives

1. *Big Benefits of One Side, Small Costs on the Other.*

An example of this kind of SOS is the case of growers versus farm workers in Illinois. The essence of the solution is that the growers agree to deposit \$100,000 to begin an employee credit union. Depositing \$100,000 costs nothing to the growers since it is insured by the federal government and can be withdrawn after an agreed-upon time period, possibly even with interest. The \$100,000, however, serves as the basis for the beginning of an economic development fund that enables the workers through real estate leveraging to obtain a mortgage for building over \$500,000 worth of housing as a big improvement over their current housing. The existence of the credit union also enables them to avoid having to get advances from the growers, which generates a lot of friction as a result of alleged favoritism in giving and collecting the advances. There are other elements involved, too, such as new grievance procedures and reports regarding compliance with other rules governing the working conditions of migratory labour. The essence of the solution, though, is that both sides come out ahead of their original best expectations.

2. Combining Alternatives.

An example of combining alternatives that are not mutually exclusive is combining government-salaried legal-aid attorneys with volunteer attorneys. Doing so could give the best of both public-sector and private-sector approaches to legal services for the poor. Another example is combining tax-supported higher education plus democratic admission standards with contributions from alumni and tuition plus merit standards. Doing so results in universities that are better than pure government ownership or pure private enterprise.

3. Developing Multi-Faceted Packages.

One can develop a package of alternatives that would satisfy both liberal and conservative goals. An example is pretrial release where liberals want more arrested defendants released prior to trial, and conservatives want a higher rate of appearances in court without having committed a crime while released. The package that increases the achievement of both goals includes better screening, reporting in, notification, and prosecution of no-shows, as well as reduction of delay between arrest and trial.

4. Sequential SOS.

We can put the land reform example in with sequential SOS. The current verbalization does not say anything about encouraging the landless peasants to subsequently upgrade their skills to be able to take on nonagricultural work, or to upgrade the skills of their children. We could change the SOS definition to say simultaneously or sequentially. One drawback is that there is subjectivity and favoritism as to which alternative goes first. Simultaneity has an air of equality and equity; doing it sequentially may be essential in terms of developing feasibility. It is not so feasible to do various alternatives or goals simultaneously.⁴

Summarizing Conclusions

Public policies that tend to stimulate creativity are those that relate to:

- Competitive political parties.
- Better policy analysis methods and institutions.
- Competitive business firms.
- Well-targeted subsidies and tax breaks.
- Increased national productivity.
- Childhood socialization that encourages creativity.
- Innovative risk-taking.
- Sensitivity to opportunity costs.
- Combination of pessimism and optimism.
- Seeking higher goals.

Some of these stimulants are part of the culture, not just official or unofficial public policy.

Factors that stimulate innovative improvements in public policy include:

- Pushing factors, including other people and commitments.
- Facilitators, including literature, working style, and multi-criteria decision-making.
- Pulling factors or rewards.

- Consulting authorities as a source of policy goals and alternatives.
- Statistical observation.
- Deduction.
- Sensitivity analysis or experimenting.
- Intuition.
- More resources to satisfy all sides in win-win policy.
- More Efficiency for achieving goals in win-win policy.
- More combinations of alternatives in win-win policy.

It is hoped that this article will help build some bridges between people interested in creativity innovation and people interested in improving public policy.⁵

About the Author:

Stuart Nagel is a professor emeritus of political science at the University of Illinois. He is also the coordinator of the Policy Studies Organization, the Dirksen-Stevenson Policy Institute, and the Miriam Mills Research Center. He is the author of such relevant books as *Creativity and Public Policy: Generating Super-Optimum Solutions* (Ashgate, 2000) and *Creativity: Being Usefully Innovative in Solving Diverse Problems* (Nova Science, 2000). He is also the editor of the quarterly journal called *Creativity Plus* and the coordinator of the Creativity Plus Association.

Footnotes:

1. On public policy in stimulating creativity, see "Win-Win Societal Facilitators" in S. Nagel, *Super-Optimum Solutions and Win-Win Policy: Basic Concepts and Principles* (Greenwood-Quorum, 1997). Also see "The Economic Process of SOS Solutions" and "The Psychology-Sociology of SOS Solutions" in S. Nagel, *The Policy Process and Super-Optimum Solutions* (Nova Science, 1994).
2. On pushing, facilitating and pulling toward innovative public policy, see "Multiple Alternatives and Criteria with Discrete Choices" in S. Nagel, *Evaluation Analysis with Microcomputers* (JAI Press, 1989).
3. On sources of goals and alternatives toward innovative public policy, see "Sources of Goals, Policies, and Relations" in S. Nagel, *Public Policy: Goals, Means, and Methods* (St. Martins, 1984).
4. On a typology toward win-win public policy, see S. Nagel, *Creativity and Public Policy: Generating Super-Optimum Solutions* (Ashgate, 1999).
5. On creativity and public policy in general, see the new quarterly journal called *Creativity Plus*. It is a journal of the Policy Studies Organization and the Creativity Plus Association. Both are headquartered at the Everett-Dirksen-Adlai Stevenson Institute for International Policy Studies, 711 Ashton Lane South, Champaign, Illinois 61820. Also see S. Nagel (ed.), *Creativity: Being Usefully Innovative in Solving Diverse Problems* (Nova Science Publishers, 2000).

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