

Seeing the Big Picture

Purpose

Beware of focusing too tightly on one aspect of change.

Importance of anticipating the effects of decisions: political -> economic -> educational -> sociocultural

Example from Micronesia

Shift of US policy in TTPI from “hands off” to “full steam ahead” strategy in response to UN criticisms

JFK increase in budget tenfold: 1962-1970: \$6m to \$60m. Effects?

Rapid growth of economy in 1960s: jobs multiplied (2,000 in 1960 to 14,000 in 1980), worker incomes increased (\$2m to \$42m in 14 yrs)

Self-support of household possible due to increase of jobs; father could feed his wife and children.

This led to weakening of the lineage system (authority as well as land); reduced involvement of kin in parenting.

Social consequences: suicide, delinquency, spouse abuse

Lesson: Political and economic change often give rise to social changes— they often have a major impact on social organizational patterns, usually in unpredictable ways.

Example from Guam

Military base expansion and population growth after War

Base build-up on five different parts of the island. Road construction but sometimes cut through traditional communities.

Recruitment of labor needed for construction and maintenance of bases. Guam population tripled: from 20,000 in 1945 to 60,000 in 1950. Immigration from mainland US, Philippines, Korea, and even Palau

Relocation of some Guamanians to get access to good housing in other villages.

Expansion to other parts of island, especially north.

Resulting changes in mayor’s contact with families and ability to mediate in instances of conflict.

Result: Tight village community on island before war erodes. Once there were a hundred pairs of eyes on kids; importance of shame; role of mayor in dealing with disturbances through mediation. Afterwards the community is less connected with one another; role of shame diminishes; mediation doesn’t work as well. Hence, island police system and prison called upon to maintain order. Traditional mechanisms less often used; tendency to resort to US court system with its neglect of community and its lack of direct reach right to family.

Other Examples

Improvement of health and education: opening of new high schools in early 1960s.
Increase of yearly high school graduates from 100 to 900. Effects?

Pell grant for college in 1974. Increase of college students from 200 in 1970 to 2000 by the end of the decade. Effects?

ADB program to cut the size of government 1995-2000. Effects: cut jobs soon returned, and emigration for work accelerated.

Suicide prevention program. Hotline phone number as means of dealing with the crisis.
Has reluctance to discuss family problems with outsiders changed?

US neighborhood of the 1940s and 1950s. Changes from front porches to backyards, increased privacy, breakdown of community spirit.

Conclusion

When presented with project or funding plan, consider the side-effects and unintended consequences of the plan.

Importance of anticipating the effects of decisions: political -> economic -> educational -> sociocultural.

Remember that you can't have everything—eg, cultural integrity or development

Important to be able to read the situation:

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Supplement on US Social Changes

US neighborhood of the 1940s and 1950s

low income housing project, self-policed, force of shame on people
police depended on support of families, as did school teachers
was time of social restraint, not unbridled crime

Changes undid this:

new housing settlements (eg Levittown) with white fences, no porches, eyes to the back of the house rather than the front
with new norms for privacy and eyes focused on the backyard, the street was no longer safe as it had been, people did not knock on the door to borrow sugar from one another, they no longer hung together as they once did
Were there other forces contributing to the culture of privacy at this time? (Check out woman in NY who recounted break up of communities there)

Resulting change

neighborhoods could no longer patrol themselves; they needed help from authorities.
grand legislation on big issues in 60s: vs segregation, for school bussing to integrate schools, building low-cost housing (tenements) for the poor
crime bills that mandated higher penalties and offered less wiggle room for offenders—in other words, one size fits all.

Further movement in the same direction

direct intervention of law system into the family: child abuse/spouse abuse, restraint orders against fathers
not even the nuclear family is left to itself.
the individual is all!