

King & Kraemer (1993): Models, Facts, and the Policy Process: The Political Ecology of Estimated Truth

The authors King and Kraemer are focusing in this paper on requirements for models in the policy process. The main key paradox they are figuring out is that not the truth of results is the main importance for models used in politics. More crucial is the integration of different perspectives into them to be able to use them as “weapons to win on the political war zone” and achieve feasibility to defend offences from different directions. Models used in this way will produce results in an “acceptable range”. Furthermore the authors comprehend that connecting policy models with Geographical Information Systems is the next step after using models based on econometric information or participatory information collection in large governmental programs.

Introduction

- Knowing technologies is not enough; important is how they fit into the world.
- Focus on public policies → Role of computer-based models in local and national policy making. → “Making the technology purely political.”

Datawars Perspective on modeling

- Americans figured out more successful to implement models in the policy process than Germans.
 - American models were used, because they “effective weapons in ideological, partisan, and bureaucratic warfare.”
 - German public policy making was restricted to established and independent entities (Bundesbank, National Banking Authority, etc.). → technical expertise in “non-political”
- “Pure” models were useless as “pure” science and “pure” technology.

Politics of modeling

- Changing governmental leadership is not disturbing modeling, if the aim is to model in a pluralistic way. ☑ Makes it more robust.
- “Some numbers beat no numbers every time.”

Constructive Roles for Modeling in Policy Making

- Role as a clarifier (modeling as a systematic and formal process).
- Role in enforcing a discipline of analysis and discourse.
- Role of giving advice (an interesting form of it).

Scientific Modeling

- Difference between social science models and models of physical processes (=“scientific m.”)
- But: Policy models are useful when the results what might happen are remaining unclear.

GIS-based models

- Basic elements of a geographic data base are observable and geographic facts tend to remain facts over time (=“Boundary objects”).
- Big advantage: GIS can support many policy needs.