THE ROLE OF LEGISLATURES IN POLICY PROCESSES

İlter TURAN*

The decline of parliaments has been a common theme in literature on legislatures. As early as 1921, Lord Bryce complained that representative assemblies were losing authority to the executive and to the electorate[1]. More generally, it has been argued that the development of disciplined mass political parties and an executive equipped with a bureaucracy which has more information and expertise have gained power and authority at the expense of legislatures. Jean Blondel, for example notes, "in the post-war years, legislatures of Western European states often seemed to become increasingly streamlined and increasingly confined to obeying fiats of strong executives backed by a disciplined party"[2].

Another line of argument explaining the decline of parliaments has alluded to the increasing role of the state in society, which has meant, in turn an increasing amount of business of greater variety before the parliaments. Consequently, parliaments have had less time to deliberate on issues before them while at the same time their members, often unfamiliar with the technicalities of issues they are asked to consider, have been placed in a position of being mere supporters or opponents of proposals put before them by the executive.

1) Gerhard Loewenberg, **Modern Parliaments: Change or Decline** (Chicago: Aldine - Atherton, 1971), p. 6.

2) Jean Blondel, **Comparative Legislatures** (Englewood Cliffs; Prentice - Hall, 1973), p. 6.

Despite the fact that their decline has provided ground for agreement among many observers, legislatures have demonstrated a remarkable ability to survive. They have continued to exist in societies which have traditionally had them (i.e. established before or during the XIX th century). New legislatures have been established in countries which have either gone through a transformation of their political system or have emerged as new units in the international community. Where they have been closed, or dissolved, new ones have soon reappeared.

The persistence of legislatures despite their alleged decline has led some scholars to ask why this has been the case. In his perceptive article, Packenham pointed to where the answer might lie :

> "Specialists in legislative studies have not studied the functions of legislatures very much .... Most of the legislatures of the world seem to have functions which do not fit at all closely the assumption adopted by most studies of legislatures. Although most studies use the working assumption that the principal function of legislatures is to allocate values, this seems not to be the case for the vast majority of the world's legislatures[3].

One cannot but agree with Packenham's analysis. Institutions may serve functions either in addition to or other than those which they were intended. These may change over time. Therefore, it may be more meaningful to talk about the decline of legislatures in performing a particular function or set of functions or possibily a declue in the importance of some functions themselves. It is, however, possible to take exception to Packenham's suggestion that a vast majority of the world's legislatures do not in fact allocate values not necessarily because it is inaccurate, but because the topic has not been studied very much. Packenham himself admits that the "decisional function" of legislatures has not received rigorous treat-

---

3) Robert Packenham, "Legislatures and Political Development" in Legislatures in Developmental Perspective, Allan Kornberg and Lloyd D. Musolf, eds. (Durham. N.C.: Duke University Press. 1970), p. 537.

ment[4]. Wahlke points to the same deficiency in legislative research. After noting that "legislative policy decisions are commonly understood to be the most important type of legislative output", he finds it "rather startling to discover that the term "policy" remains almost totally unconceptualized"[5].

This paper is an attempt to provide a framework for the study of the role of the legislatures in the policy-making process. It will start with an examination of the concept of "policy" and will then proceed to a discussion of the units of analysis to be used in studying the policy-making role of legislatures and what factors affect that role. It will conclude by making suggestions both of a theoretical and methodological nature on how to study the public policy making role of legislatures.

POLICY AND POLICY PROCESSES

Policy - making, decision - making, legislative outputs, allocation of values, legislating and law making are some of the familiar terms used to identify a set of activities legislatures engage in and which have consequences or impacts on the actions and behavior of other parts of the political system.

The utilization of "almost" synonyms to describe the same phenomena gives an indication not only of a lack of standard terminology but also of a lack of consensus on the meaning of what has been called policy - making. I have for the moment preferred policy - making to other possible alternatives for I feel "policy - making" describes better the phenomena which I want to examine than others. Legislating and law - making, for example, cover only one type of activity which is subsumed under policy - making, legislative oversight of the bureaucracy or publicly criticizing the actions of government, may, on many occasions, constitute a dimension of the policy - making process but would not be thought of as legislating or law - making. Decisions - making relates often to how a legis-

---

4) **ibid.**, p. 556.
5) John C. Whalke, "Policy Demands and System Support" in Gerhard Loewenberg, **op. cit.**, p. 152.

lature reaches its own decisions rather than affecting the decisions of others. Not all legislative outputs may comprise "policies." An amnesty granted to an 80 - year - old man who was sentenced to lifetime imprisonment and who has already served 50 years, as I shall explain later, may not mark the existence of a policy. The same can be said of resource allocation. Each action of the legislature as a collectivity or of one or more of its constituent units including individual legislators, may involve an allocation of a resource. That does not automatically mean, however, that the particular resource allocated constitutes a manifestation of a "policy."

Policy

I have narrowed my choice to "policy" and policy - making". Needless to say, this is not sufficient ground to achieve a standard meaning for the terms. In common usage, "policy" has been employed to denote several related but distinct phenomena. Policy is sometimes used to express intent. If one asks an opposition party leader "What is your national defense policy?" one means, "What sort of things do you intend to do in the field of national defense if you should become the government party?"

From a legalistic point of view, policy may simply mean all the rules and regulations in effect regarding a particular field of societal activity. The emphasis in this definition is on prescription, not action or behavior.

Few political scientists would be willing to adhere to such a narrow legislatic definition. Policy is often used to mean actions, activities and behavior of public authorities, includings legislatures or their constituent units, in a given area of societal activity.

Finally, policy is sometimes employed to refer to the consequences of the actions, activities and behavior of public authorities on society or a part of it. When I say "The agricultural - development policy of the government was disastrous", I do not mean the policy itself was disastrous if I employ "policy" in a neutral, empirical way as I have done in the previous paragraph, but I mean, the consequences of what public authorities did in the field of agriculture, did

not meet by approval according to a set of criteria which I happen to think of as being desirable.

I shall use "policy" in this paper to refer to *all actions, activities and behavior of public, institutions and persons in public roles which are patterned and which have consequences or impacts on a given society or some part of it in a given area of interest, concern or activity.*

Policies naturally change over time and it is very difficult to identify a minimum time period before which a policy may not be said to exist. I can not propose to overcome this difficulty. I can only emphasize that a particular action by a public institution or a person occupying a public role in a particular area cannot be taken as an indication of the existence of a policy in that area unless that action can be related to a broader set of activities directed toward a particular end (consequence and impact).

Policy - Making

Defining, "policy" does not render the job of defining "policy-making" much easier. The difficulties encountered in attempting to propose a definition derive from the fact that policy-making consists of two very closely related stages. The first stage may be called the "decisional." In this stage, public actors (institutions and persons in public roles) decide what actions will be taken, what activities, will be carried out and what rules and modes of behavior will be adopted and observed in a given area of public concern, interest or activity in a society or a part of it. The second stage, often called the "execution" stage is the stage where the decisions reached in the first stage are implemented.

Although the two stages appear to be conceptually distinct, they are closely related to such an extent as to render the distinction not very meaningful. First, what is decided (intended) at the decisional stage and what actually happens, i.e. how actions, activities and behavior of public actors affect the society at large or some part of it may vary greatly. Given this possibility of divergence between the two stages, policy - making may be said to occur in both stages. Second, at the decisional stage the outputs are often not of a detailed

nature and room is left for those charged with policy implementation to make smaller-scale decisions and engage in interpretations. What this means, needless to say, is that public actors compete to affect outputs vis-a-vis society not only at the decisional but also at the execution level.

Policy-making carries a connotation more closely associated with the decisional than with the execution stage. It may therefore be more useful to talk about "policy-processes" to describe the phenomena which I have been alluding to above. In addition to covering the two stages, policy processes I feel, captures better two other dimensions, that of time and interactions between the actors.

In studying the role of public actors, the legislature and its component units in our case, policy-making should be understood as "policy processes. "Each actor in these processes competes with others at both the decisional and execution stages to influence the consequences and impacts of the actions, activities and the behavior of other public actors on society or some part of it.

Scope of Policies

Public or governmental policies, may be grouped into three types: *distributive, sectorally-fragmented* and *redistributive* policies. Distributive policies are characterized by little or no conflict. Beneficiaries of the policies do not compete with each other in seeking favorable outputs from the government. Sectorally fragmented policies differ from distributive policies in that they include several actors competing for benefits, and not every actor can be satisfied to the same degree. However, both the benefits and the deprivations (negative benefits) deriving from the policy tend to be specific. Redistrubutive policies, on the other hand, affect broad aggregates of people. They are associated with intense conflict of wide scope, including class interests and ideological differences[6].

---

6) Alexander T. Smith, The Comparative Policy Process (Santa Barbara, California : Clio Press, 1975), pp. 34, 64, 127-128. This section bas been based on a manuscript by Joel D. Barkan, Malcolm Jewell, Chong Lim Kim and İlter Turan. The Legislative Connection : Respresentatives and Represented in Kenya, Korea and Turkey (unpublished manuscript; University of Iowa, Comparative Legislative Research Center, 1979).

Types of governmental policies, as can be inferred from the classification above, have differents scopes in terms of the benefici-airies they entail. Distributive policies often involve individuals and groups which are acting alone, i.e. not in competition with others. Sectorally fragmented policies, as their definition implies, covers not individuals or a single group but several groups. Therefore often a larger group of beneficiaries or losers (negative beneficiaries). The scope of beneficiaries in redistributive policies, on the other hand, is very large, since the issues they are dealing with are usually societal.

The scope of beneficiaries of a governmental policy is closely related to the role the legislature or its component units may play in the policy processes. I shall later return to how the scope of policies is related to the role of the legislature and its sub-units in the policy processes.

UNITS OF ANALYSIS PROBLEMS

In the introduction of this essay, reference was made to the decline of legislatures. Upon careful examination of what it is about parliaments that is declining, one discovers that what is often meant by decline is the failure of legislatures to perform functions in a way expected of them according to 18th and 19th century political thought. As Loewenberg notes :

> "The academic study of legislatures has long been influen-ced by an eighteenth century model of the political sys-tem, a model which regards the legislature as the central policy - making institution that Anglo - American law - yers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries expected it to be. This is a demand - input model of representative institutions which assumes that citizens have well formu-lated policy preferences and that the function of the mem-bers of the representative assembly is to convert these preferences into public policies. The study of public opinion and legislative behavior within the last two decades, ho-wever, has discovered strong evidence that neither of these assumption is tenable"[7].

7)   Gerhard Loewenberg, op. cit., p. 15.

The perception of parliament as a supreme sovereign body representing a sovereign people is an ideological position[8] which bears little relations to the empirical reality today. It is also doubtful whether it was so closely related to the empirical reality in the 18th and 19th centuries when ideas about liberal democracies flourished. All actors involved in the policy processes today are somewhat "representative" to the extent they receive demands from individuals and various social aggregations and engage in activities to respond to them or cope with them.

The way I have conceptualized "policy" and "policy processes" runs counter to a legal conceptualization of the division of functions in government, that familiar division of executive-legislative-judicial functions. Although, it is known that the judicial branch of government is also involved in various ways in the policy processes, I shall leave it out of my analysis, because it is more immune to being directly influenced by other branches of government, and shall elaborate on the executive and the legislative.

Viewing the governments as consisting of branches has resulted in a misconception of treating the legislature as a unit *vis-a-vis* the executive. This has been particularly unfortunate in studying the role of legislatures in policy processes, for it is in rare instances that the legislature acts as a collectivity, competing for power against the other branches of government. What Hennis says about the German parliament and its law-making functions has relevance both for other policy processes and other systems :

> "Lawmaking without the most thorough cooperation of both the cabinet responsible to the parliament and the bureaucracy contributing its expertise is neither conceivable nor desirable under modern conditions. Furthermore, parliament cannot claim an exclusive prerogative to exercise control over the cabinet or administration. Our whole system of government is based instead on a complicated, tightly interrelated set of checks and balances in which initiative, criticism, and decision - making are va-

---

8)   Wilhelm Hennis, "Reform of the Bundestag, The Case for General Debate" in Gerhard Loewenberg, **ibid.**, p. 67.

riously combined. There is no room in this system for the concept of a sovereign parliament"[9].

In most political democracies, the parliament is a divided house. The division between government and opposition, far from being unwanted, is seen to be the very manifestation of a democratic way of life. This being so, it is indeed surprising that the legislature should be treated as a main unit of analysis in studies of policy processes, when one segment of it, cooperating with the government ,tries to produce outputs, whereas the other segment often works to reject the outputs as proposed by the former.

In a perceptive article on executive-legislative relations, Anthony King has suggested that if we wish to examine the influences brought to bear on the government by the parliament in a cabinet system like that of Great Britain, we might do better if we avoid the term parliament. Even if we subtract the legislators who are members of government, he continues, what we have left is not a useful unit for analysis since there are party groupings pro or against the government. These party groupings or their combinations, if no one party has a majority, may be the more appropriate units in studying the role of the legislatures in policy processes[10]. Let me emphasize for fear of being misunderstood that, the unit of analysis is not a political party *per se*, but the parliamentary party which is sometimes referred to as the party caucus or the party group.

The bias in favor of treating the legislature in its entirety as a unit of analysis, I suspect has partly been based on a pervasive American interest in legislative studies where the belief in separation of powers is strong and where disciplined political parties do not exist. Because it is not unusual in the American presidential system for the Congress and President to engage in debates on how much power belongs to which branch of government and because

---

9) **Idem.**
10) Anthony King, "Modes of Executive - Legislative Relations : Great Britain, France and German" **Legislative Studies Quarterly**, Vol. 1, pp. 11-13. See also his "Executives" in Fred J. Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., **Governmental Institutions and Processes, Handbook of Political Science, Vol. 5** (Reading, Mass.: Addison - Wesley, 1975), pp. 233-238.

the consensus building for policy decisions in that system is a reasonably open process, executive-legislative relations in the United States have been treated even in standard textbooks. In parliamentary sistems, particularly those with a disciplined party system, the party tie between the government and the legislature has blurred the fact that support for the government by the parliamentary government party (parties) is not automatic. It has also resulted in neglect of how opposition parties may influence the policy processes.

In studying the role of parliamentary parties in the policy processes, to assume that the government parliamentary party is engaged in a struggle for power with the government as "branches of government" and separation of powers ideology would have us do, is probably not realistic. On many matters of policy, the predominant choices in the government and in the parliamentary party may not diverge. Equally important, the legislators themselves may not perceive the government and the parliamentary party as being separate but as a part of the same political force, while the opposition party (parties) may not deem it important to make a distinction between the government and the government parliamentary party. This, of course, is an empirical question, but it has received scant attention among students of legislatures, at least to my knowledge.

To understand how parliamentary parties influence the policy processes, it may be appropiate to begin by studying the unusual or exceptional cases, where there were rebellions among government party legislators against the government. In systems where disciplined political parties are lacking, as well as in those where the executive is elected independently of the legislature, a similar line of reasoning may be employed. That is to say, situations where the executive finds it difficult to enlist support for his policies in the legislature may help us understand better how the legislature or its sub-units may influence the policy processes.

A second way to delve into the problem of the role of legislatures in policy processes is to study the relations between the backbench and the frontbench in parliamentary parties. This is no original or brilliant suggestion. It is simply made to point to the paucity of studies in the field. I have a hunch that this paucity may owe

itself partly to the fact that the methodological tools political scientists employ may only be half adequate for the question to be studied. Especially for those of us with a quantitative persuasion and a proneness toward survey research, there may be some reluctance to engage in participant observation which may be better suited to studying the nature of these relationships which are often informal, personal and not public.

Next to parliamentary parties, committees provide another unit of analysis which have been used to examine the role of the legislature in policy processes. The committee systems in the U.S. Congress has been well studied. While committee systems in other democracies have also been studied, their treatment has not been nearly as exhaustive as that of the U.S. There is some agreement that the committee system in the American legislature is unique and that legislative committees in other systems do not wield as great an influence as their American counterparts in the policy processes. Yet, although the committees may not be very influential in general, some committees may have important inputs to the policy processes. Committees on Finances or the Budget may provide one example of this type of committee. If bills have to be cleared by committees before being taken up by the legislature, a procedural necessity in many systems, committees may be studied to see whether they utilize procedural privileges as a tool to elicit decisions or compromises from the executive desired by legislators, party groups or any other grouping within the legislature.

Parliamentary investigatory committees may be examined carefully in systems where they exist. The activities of such committees may impose serious restraints on the government or the bureaucracy. In some cases, the decisions to conduct a parliamentary investigation in itself may have similar consequences.

The administrative oversight of bureaucracies by committees, I suspect modifies executive and administrative behavior in any system where such functions are expected from legislatures.

Finally, the role of the individual legislator in the policy processes deserves to be examined carefully. What is known as "constituency service" is closely related to what we have called the policy

processes. The efforts of the individual legislators inside and outside
the legislature to provide favorable outputs on behalf of their cons-
tituents have impacts on society or some part of it such as indivi-
duals, communities or other groups.

In summary, in this section, I have argued that adopting units
of analysis smaller than the legislature as a collectivity is more likely
to yield insights into the role of the legislatures in policy processes.
Although, I have not assumed that legislatures and their component
units are important actors in the policy processes, I have suggested
that it is premature to say without further research that they are
not important[11].

FACTORS AFFECTING THE ROLE OF LEGISLATURES
IN POLICY PROCESSES

Many factors affect the role of the legislature in policy processes.
Neither these factors nor their effects are the same in all systems, yet
a concise but hopefully comprehensive discussion of them may give
us an idea as to what kind of factors should be taken into con-
sideration when studies on the role of the legislatures in policy pro-
cesses are undertaken.

Structural Factors

Legislatures differ in their symbolic status, the powers they are
granted by constitutions, the type of regime in which they operate
and their internal organization. Although such structural factors in
themselves are not sufficient to insure an effective or alternatively a
symbolic role for legislatures in the policy processes, they constitute
an important set of constraints which affect that role.

A number of structural factors relate to the place of the legis-
lature in the political system. In some systems, the legislature is tre-

---

11) For an interesting discussion on and treatment of the unit of
     analysis problems in governance", see Heinz Eulau and Kenneth
     Prewitt, **Labyrinths of Democracy : Adaptations, Linkages Rep-
     resentation and Policies in Urban Politics** (Indianapolis : Bobbs-
     Merri] Co., 1973), esp. ch. 2.

ated as one of the pillars of the regime, an institution without which a constitutional order may no longer be said to exist. In others, the legislature is perceived mainly as an advisory body to a ruler whose powers may include the appointing of legislators and dismissing them, suspending the activities of the legislature or dissolving it.

Even in systems where the legislature constitutes an integral institution of the political system there are differences in the privileges accorded to the legislators and the legislature to insure that they conduct their activities independently and without fear of unacceptable costs. Parliamentary immunity and inviolability are examples of such privileges extended to individual legislators. As regards legislatures, procedural independence; that is the right of a legislature to organize its own agenda, make its own internal rules, and decide to meet wheneverit so desires in addition to meetings stipulated by law or the constitution, is such an example.

The relations between the legislature and the executive are usually affected by how the executive is elected into office. In some systems, the executive is elected through an independent election. Whereas in others it is elected from among the members of the legislature and is dependent on parliamentary support for remaining in office. Regardless of how the executive is elected, the power of the executive and the legislature to force each other out of office is also likely to affect the behavior of these institutions toward each other.

Another set of rules concern the power the executive enjoys to stop, modify and delay the execution of decisions rendered by the legislature, and the power the legislature enjoys to force the executive to act even if the latter is not favorably disposed toward action. An important point in this regard is whether the executive can resort to measures such as referanda to counter the choices and sentiments preponderant in the legislature.

It is often suggested that the executive has more access to information than the legislature and legislators. On this point, it is important to know what means the legislature and its constituent units have access to, such as subpoena powers, to extract information from the executive about the latter's activities.

Turning to means specific to the legislature, several factors appear to have a bearing on the role of the legislatures in policy pro-

cesses. One such factor is the length and the frequency of the meetings of the legislature. For example, does the legislature have suf ficient time to consider many matters it deems important or are the constraints of time so great that little time is available to deliberate even on issues considered to be very important by the legislature or a majority of legislators.

Closely related to the same point is whether legislators and other component units of the legislature are accorded facilities such as secretaries, expertise, office space, mailing and telephone privileges that render their job easier and enable them to do more things in a given amount of time.

The job of being a legislator is not a full-time affair in all systems. Yet whether and how much a legislature can develop an institutional identity, formal and informal rules of operation and proficiency in dealing with matters which are within the realm of its own jurisdiction would depend on how professional legislators are[12].

The internal organization of a legislature influences its effectiveness *vis-a-vis* other governmental institutions. It has often been argued that the existence of a strong committee system enhances the role of the legislature in policy processes. In this context, several questions come to mind which may help explain how committee systems relate to the effectiveness of a legislature. To begin with, is a legislature divided into specialized committees? What are the bases for being appointed to a committee? Is there continuity in committee membership or is the turnover rate of members high? Are the committees given supporting personnel both of the secretarial and expert kind? Does legislation have to go through committees before being considered by the whole house or can committees be bypassed, and under what conditions? Is the executive equipped with powers to compel committees to act? Are the committees endorced with powers to stop or delay executive proposals? How? Can committees hold hearings, do they have subpoena powers regarding the mem-

---

12) In drawing up these questions, I have received inspiration from Jean Blondel, op. cit., pp. 31-46 as well as my **Siyasal Sistem ve Siyasal Davranış** (İstanbul; İktisat Fakültesi, 1976), pp. 165-186.

bers of the executive branch? What happens if bureaucrats do not comply with a subpoena? Can they be punished, or more broadly what kind of sanctions can committees invoke if non-compliance occurs? Are there informal ways through which a committee or some of its members can influence the actions, decisions and behavior of the members of government and bureaucracy?

Needless to say, this discussion of structural factors which affect the role of legislatures in policy processes can continue *ad infinitum*. I have tried to capture what I consider to be some of the more important factors which would help us understand better how legislatures relate to policy processes.

These factors should be evaluated not only in a legal but also in a behavioral way. By way of example, it is not sufficient to know what legal powers an executive might have to dissolve a legislature. It is equally important to examine how these powers have been used in the past, under what conditions and whether there are informal rules, norms and traditions which contribute to the determination of the behavior of the executive toward the legislature[13].

Environmental Factors

Those factors which affect legislative behavior but derive from outside the legislature, I shall call, for convenience's sake, environmental factors.

In trying to apply principles of organization theory to explaining important characteristics of the U.S. Congress, Lewis Froman suggests; "The more highly differentiated the social setting, the more salient the organization itself." He than contrasts the U.S. Congress with the British Parliament and observes that because the diversity of interests in Great Britain are already aggregated in a cohesive majority party the Parliament is a less salient (i.e. less influential)

---

13)   For an example which combines an examination of both legal and behavioral approaches see Guisseppe Di Palma, "Institutional Rules and Legislative Outcomes" in Legislative Studies Quarterly, Vol. I, No. 2, May 1976, pp. 147-180.

institution in the policy processes[14]. The party system is, of course, one of the major enviromental factors which affect significantly the place and the role of the legislature in a political system.

I shall, however, begin by discussing some factors pertaining to the nature of the body politic in a country and its relations to governmental institutions.

One major factor is the degree of support extended to the political institutions of a country by the citizenry and sometimes by even those who are occupiers of roles within the political system. Some important questions come to mind in this regard. Is there widespread consensus on the existing form of government as a desirable form of government? Do the occupiers of major roles in the political system feel that the continuation of the system is threatened? Are there significant portions of the citizenry who bear anti-regime or separatist sentiments for ethnic and ideological reasons?

The degree of existence of a national political life would also affect the effectiveness of the legislature in policy processes. If political life is fragmented by region, such fragmentation is likely to be reflected in the legislature, placing the executive in the influential position of being the arbiter between factions. The legislature on the other hand might fail to develop an *esprit de corps* and an institutional capability to challenge the actions of the executive.

Another set of factors may be called the "mood-style" dimensions of politics in a country. In some countries, even though there may be widespread consensus on the regime, there may exist deep social and political cleavages and the political life may be polarized. Polarization often discourages dissent within the poles.

Major crises such as war, threat of invasion, economic collapse and similar emergencies often work to enhance the power of the executive at the expense of the legislature. The same can be said of the existence of politically powerful organizations such as the army which can put pressure on both the executive and the legislature to

---

14)   Lewis Froman, "Organization Theory and the Explanation of the Important Characteristics of Congress" in Herbert Hirsch and Donald M. Hancock, eds., **Comparative Legislative Systems** (New York : The Free Press, 1971), pp. 167-168.

behave in ways which it deems desirable. The need to cope with such pressures reduces opportunities for conflict among the ordinary political institutions, enhancing the leadership privileges of the executive.

The importance of "hard" ideologies in the political life of a country, from what we know so far, would reduce the influence of the legislature in the policy processes. "Hard" ideological orientations would also reduce the demand inputs in the legislative system, thus undermining the legislature's ability to be assertive in the name of being representative.

The nature of political leadership is another factor which should receive attention. Charismatic leaders, for example, are often able to mobilize mass support behind their choices and programs, and then use that support to elicit compliance from other political institutions including the legislatures.

The administrative-bureaucratic traditions of a country can be tied to the role of the legislature and its constituent units in the policy processes. If, for example, even minute matters need to be treated as questions of law rather than being left to be handled in the form of by-laws or orders or left to the discretion of administrators or possibly voluntary associations such as professional organizations, one might predict that the agenda of a legislature will be bogged down with detail, leaving little time to deliberate on matters of greater consequence.

Some bureaucracies have a tradition of non-partisan professionalism whereas others are more closely linked to partisan politics. It may be suggested that a non-partisan professional bureaucracy may be able to resist pressures from the legislators and the legislature better in the latter's attemps to affect their decisions, actions and behavior.

And finally, we can turn to the effects of political parties and the party system in a country on the role of the legislature in policy processes. A sample of questions may help us understand how characteristics of political parties and party systems may relate to the legislature in policy processes.

What is the size of the majority party (parties), what is the extent of minority opposition? Are political parties disciplined parties? If they are, can they enforce party discipline successfully? If party discipline does not apply, how cohesive are the political parties in any case?

Does the distribution of seats among parties in the legislature necessitate a coalition government? If so, how many parties are in the coalition?

How do political parties recruit their candidates for the legislature? Do the central organs of parties (if they exist) exercise a significant influence in the nominating process or is the nominating process mostly a local affair? Are party organizations important actors in the electoral process or is it mainly incumbent on the individual candidates to conduct their electoral campaign?

What is the nature of the relationship between the national party organization and the parliamentary party, the party leadership and the backbenchers in the legislature?

Again, I shall stop here, reminding that the number of factors which may be considered and the number of questions which may be asked can be expanded very easily. What is intended here is to identify groups of factors which I feel are important in affecting the role of legislatures in policy processes.

POLICIES, FACTORS, HYPOTHESES

In the discussion of factors which have a bearing on the role of legislatures in policy processes, some hypotheses on what the relationships may be, have either been implied or stated. To discuss every possible hypothesis is not necessary, nor is it possible tor me to state them and justify them within the scope of this paper. However, I feel it may be useful to give some futher examples of hypotheses which I have encountered in the pertinent literature.

If we tahe the scope of policy as an independent variable, for example, we might hypothesize that as the scope of policy moves

from narrow (distributive) to broad (redistributive), the role of the legislature in policy processes tends to decline[15].

Miller has observed of British parliamentary committees that they have little direct influence on government, ministers and civil servants but that they have some indirect influence through informal communications between committees and departments[16]. His observation may serve as a starting point to examine committees in other parliaments.

Bernard Crick has suggested that changes in the background of Labor MPs in Great Britain resulted in their greater aggressiveness against their leadership. Whereas earlier, there were a lot of retired labor leaders just happy to sit in the House, currently many MPs come from professional background and are not content just to sit and wait for an occasional opportunity to ask a few questions[17]. More broadly, it may be hypothesized that professional backgrounds of legislators affect the role of the legislature and legislators in policy processes.

Speaking about organizations, Froman says, "The greater the degree of conflict with the social setting, the greater the amount of authority exercised at all levels, and the more cohesive the group structure"[18]. Applying Froman's generalization to legislatures, we may derive the hypothesis that in a parliamentary system, where the relations between government and opposition are tense, the parliamentary government party is likely to be more obedient to the

---

15) Jean Blondel has a discussion of the role of legislatures based on detailed change, policies of intermediate importance and broad policy question which roughly correspond to the scope of policies categories I have proposed. The relationships Blondel suggests are similar to what I am proposing below. See Jean Blondel, op. cit., chs. 8, 9, 10.

16) Harris N. Miller, "The Influence of British Parliamentary Committees on European Communities Legislation" in **Legislative Studies Quarterly**, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 45-76.

17) Bernard Crick, "Parliament in the British Political System", in Allan Kornberg and Lloyd D. Musolf, eds., **Legislatures in Developmental Perspective** (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1970), p. 47.

18) Lewis Froman, op. cit., p. 169.

authority of the government and it is therefore less likely to be influential in the policy processes.

I have suggested elsewhere, the higher the turnover rate of legislators in elections, the greater the likelihood that the parliamentary parties will be dominated by their leardership. In the case of the parliamentary government party, this means domination by the executive[19].

Blondel has hypothesized that "the more nationalized and the less fractionalized parties are, the more the executive is likely to be strong"[20].

These examples may give us an idea of how hypotheses can be formulated in studying the role of legislatures in policy processes by utilizing some of the factors which I have alluded to earlier. Needless to say hypotheses need to be justified, not just stated as I have done. Btt my purpose has not been to test well articulated and defended hypotheses, but rather to cite, examples of hypotheses which may be tested to identify if and how legislatures relate to policy processes.

CONCLUSION

Jean Blondel remarked in his *Comparative Legislatures*:

> "The study of legislatures is not by itself interesting. It is interesting only if we can throw some light on the question of the influence of legislatures in the political process and on the ways in which this influence is exercised. What difference does it make if a country has a legislature and what is the direction of that influence, are the main questions?..."[21].

This essay began by offering definitions of policy and policy processes which may be utilized in studying how legislatures and then component units affect the decisions, actions and behavior of

---

19) İiter Turan, "Parlamenter Demokraside Denetim İşlevi ve Türkiye" in **Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi**, vol. 33, no. 1-2, p. 28.
20) Jean Blondel, op. cit., p. 52.
21) Loc. cit., p. 26.

other governmental institutions such as the executive and the bureaucracy *vis a vis* the public at large or some part of it.

Next, a case was made that it might be premature to conclude that the role of the legislatures in policy processes was unimportant. It was pointed out that often the legislature as a collectivity was adopted as the main unit of analysis in studying what difference the existence of a legislature made in policy processes. It was suggested that such a stance was somewhat inappropriate because not the legislature as a whole, but its component units such as parliamentary parties, factions, committees and individual legislators are the main actors in the policy processes. Therefore, their adoption as the units of analysis in researching the role of legislatures in policy processes was urged to gain better insights and understanding of what really happens.

Third, it was argued that it may be mistaken to assume that legislatures are engaged in constant competition with other governmental institutions. It might therefore be more fruitful to begin by examining cases where there were known conflicts between some part of the legislature such as the government parliamentary party and the government on what is to be done. In other words, a harmonious relation, between the legislature or some of its component parts and the executive and the bureaucracy does not in itself provide sufficient evidence to assert that the government dominates the legislature or the parliamentary party, unless it can be demonstrated that the latter would have behaved somewhat differently if it had its own way. This is a particularly important point to note, because governments often behave in a way to preempt resistance or opposition from legislative sources.

Fourth, it was observed that the policy processes are often informal and personal and not public. These constraints render survey-type research by itself insufficient in studying policy processes. Participant observation as a method should be utilized either alone or to complement survey research in understanding how legislatures and their constituent units affect policies.

Fifth, factors affecting the role of legislatures in policy processes were dicussed and some examples of hypotheses between these

factors and the role of the legislature in policy processes were put forth.

Throughout the discussion, sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly, what was talked about is a process. A process occurs over time, therefore it needs to be studied over time. This is a difficult task and does not have the ease one might find in cross-sectional undertakings. Yet, we can not understand and explain the role of legislatures in policy processes unless we are willing to undertake this difficult task.

ÖZET

Siyasal önlemlerinin azaldığına ilişkin çözümlemelere rağmen, parlamentolar dünya üzerinde yaygınlaşmağa devam etmektedirler. Bu durum, parlamentoların öneminin azalmasından ziyade, işlevlerinin değiştiğini düşündürmektedir. Makalede parlamentoların siyasal yapımı sürecindeki rolü incelenmektedir.

Siyasa, kamu kurum ya da görevlilerinin, toplum ya da bir kesiminde etkileri olan ve düzenlilik gösteren eylem ve davranışları olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bir siyasanın kapsamı, parlamentonun siyasa yapımı ve uygulanması sürecindeki rolünü etkilemektedir.

Parlamentoların siyasa yapımındaki rolünün incelenmesinde bazı eski kavramsallaştırmalar zorluk yaratmaktadır. Örneğin, kuvvetler ayrılığı yaklaşımı, siyasal gerçeğin algılanmasını saptırmakta; parlamentonun parlamenter partilerden ayrı bir birim olarak düşünülmesi, onun siyasal gücünün azımsanmasıyla sonuçlanmaktadır.

Parlamenter partilerin siyasa yapımındaki rolünü incelemek için, olağandan ayrılan (parti disiplinine başkaldırma gibi) olayları incelemek uygun bir başlangıç olabilir. Parti lider kadrosu ile sıradan temsilcilerin ilişkilerinin incelenmesi de verimli bir yol olarak gözükmektedir. Parlamento komisyonlarının faaliyetlerinin daha yakından incelenmesi yerinde olabilir. Parlamento üyelerinin seçmen hizmeti adı altında yürüttükleri faaliyetler de araştırılmağa değer niteliktedir.

Parlamentoların siyasa sürecindeki rolü hem yapısal, hem de çevresel değişkenlerden etkilenmektedir. Bu değişkenlerin parlamen-

tonun siyasa yapımındaki rolünü nasıl etkilediğine ilişkin çok sayıda denence üretilebilir.

Parlamentoların, siyasal sistemini diğer öğelerinden soyutlanmış birimler olarak incelenmesi anlamlı gözükmemektedir. Siyasal süreç içindeki etkilerinin anlaşılması, ancak zaman boyutu içeren bir etkileşim süreci içinde ele alınmalariyle mümkündür.

Not : Bu makale Uluslararası Siyasal Bilimler Derneği'nin (IPSA) 12-18 Ağustos 1979 tarihleri arasında Moskova'da toplanan üç yıllık kongresine tebliğ olarak sunulmuştur.