POLICYMAKING IN THE
EGYPTIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The Egyptian Olympic Committee (hereafter, EOC), like other organizations, pursues a set of policies which are centered around the Olympic Movement, and, in particular, the preparation for the Olympic Games. This study explores the policymaking process of that organization.

The questions which this study addresses are as follows: How is policy made? How do individuals and organizations behave in the policy process? And what are the underlying strategies?

Definition of Terms

Concepts such as policy, policymaking, power, rationality, universal issues, and strategy pose complex and intriguing problems. A working definition of each may help clarify its use in this study.

Policy. There is no single definition of policy. For many authors, the demarcation between policy and decision is particularly loose. Even Parsons (1956:75) mixes policy with decision: he argues, "by policy decisions are meant decisions which relatively directly commit the organization as a whole." Theodore Lowi (1964, 1970) distinguishes policy from decision: he contends that decisions are components of larger entities that should be called policies. In this study, policy is different from decision. Policy is defined as a set of decisions taken
by an actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the methods of reaching them (Roberts, 1971) and which engage the organization as a whole.

**Policymaking** involves a set of interrelated acts and continuous activities rather than one single decision. The awareness of continuous activity in policymaking is best expressed by describing it as a process rather than one single act set once and for all (Rose, 1969:xii). Policymaking involves a "pattern of action, extending over time" (Anderson, 1975:10) and its implementation process (Pressman & Wildawsky, 1979:xxiii). Policymaking is also understood as a process which commits the organization as a whole. These continuous activities result from the processes of relationships and interactions among the actors, be it an organization, an individual, or group of individuals, participating in a given situation.

The actors are interdependent and need each other to generate actions; they bargain and negotiate with the amount of power available to them. The policymaking process integrates all these phenomena and regularizes the power relationships. The policy process resembles Crozier and Friedberg's (1980:56) understanding of game which is the "mechanism" that integrates relations, negotiations, power, and interdependence.

**Policymakers** are the office holders responsible for the policy process. Lindblom (1980:52) defines the policymakers as "those participants in the play of power with authority over policy." The EOC policymakers include officials of the organization and representatives from other organizations who are delegated into that organization and influence the policy process.
Power is a relationship of force in which one party can seek and obtain more than the other, but where neither party is totally defenseless (Crozier & Friedberg, 1980:3). It implies consensus and compliance.

Rationality. March (1976:70) views rationality as a "procedure for deciding what is correct behavior by relating consequences systematically to objectives." Rationality is not ideal, and Simon (1957) and March (1976) suggest a bounded and limited rationality. While individuals are incapable of ultimate rationality in actions, there is a general rationality on the organizational or systemic level (Crozier & Friedberg, 1980:176).

Universal Issues are fundamental structural characteristics of all organizations around which organizations function such as power, rules, goals, and organizational boundaries. For a National Olympic Committee, another universal issue is added -- the Olympic movement.

Strategies are the actors' ability of employing resources and skill toward the realization of a policy. They can be seen as the use of power available to the actors within the constraints imposed on them, and the evaluation of their capacity for action. Strategies are revealed through a pattern of activities and moves to maximize actors' influences on policy process. They reflect the actor's determination to engage in the policymaking process, to interact with other actors and to compete with them. The underlying strategies are supposed to be rational and to integrate the irrationality of the individuals.
A focus on strategies for policymaking analysis has the advantage of directing the attention to the constraints facing the actors and, thus, emphasizing the issues of power. Power is viewed, not only in terms of influence and authority in the Weberian conception, but also in terms of interactions and relationships including various strategies. Bargaining, disturbance, manipulation, and dominance of one organization, group, or individual by other organizations, groups, or individuals are analyzed.

The importance of the concept of strategy, as viewed by Crosier and Friedberg (1980:25), lies in the fact that it does not consider the individual alone; it goes beyond the "dichotomy" existing between individual and organizational objectives. Instead of isolating the individual from the organization, a study of strategies focuses on the individual's behavior and underlying rationality within the organization. In turn, the organizational structure can be understood through the individual's experiences.

**Methodological Approach**

How can one study the policymaking process? Prior studies have utilized step-by-step analysis, input-output analysis, and contingency theories which are all rather mechanical and deterministic. Such approaches neglect the policymakers and their freedom in acting upon the process and their interactions. We have selected a different approach; our interest in EOC
policymaking converges with Lindblom's (1980) approach to studying the policymaking process. Lindblom rejects the step-by-step method and searches for "universal issues" present in all steps of the process. He views policymaking as dependent on the play of power, the dependence of the play on rules, the methods by which people control each other, and adjustment and regulation among actors. These universal issues are all essential for the EOC as well, but one could add to them organizational goals, interdependence with the Olympic Movement, bureaucratization, organizational autonomy, and allocations of resources.

The present study will focus on power, political and religious constraints, and adjustment and organizational survival. In line with Crozier and Friedberg (1980), the ultimate universal issue will be the identification and analysis of the strategies involved in the EOC policymaking.

This project represents what conventionally may be referred to as an exploratory case-study. We adopt a restricted phenomenological method which is partially adopted from Crozier and Friedberg (1980:259). In order to reconstruct the intrinsic logic and rationality of the interrelationships within the organization, we shall attempt to identify and explain the strategies involved in the policy process and to attain the deep sense often hidden behind the participants' insights and actions. Restricted phenomenology has the merit of going beyond individual introspections toward the social structure and awareness of the organization itself. In order to reach this depth of understanding, this study focuses on the process in only two selected