SMART GOVERNANCE?
Politics in the Policy Process in Andhra Pradesh, India

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Abstract

Since a few years, the south Indian State of Andhra Pradesh has received a lot of attention, both in the Indian as well as in the international media. This state has made relatively good use of the new economic climate that has developed in the 1990s. A new type of dynamic leadership has come up, and in various policy areas innovative legislation has been formulated and new policies have been developed and pursued with great zeal. The interpretations of what is going on vary, however, enormously. The government itself claims that it is more performance oriented, aims to 'keep politics away from policy', and enhances professionalism in governance. The opponents of the regime claim that there is a lot of gimmicks and that not much is happening in actual practice. This paper, obviously work in progress, tries to interpret the developments in Andhra Pradesh. After a short general review of some of the literature on policy processes, focusing particularly on the role of politics in policy processes, the paper describes the specificities of the policy process in Andhra Pradesh. Three main characteristics are highlighted, namely a) the 'hype and hide' strategy of the AP government, b) centralisation of policy making process, and c) the way in which policy implementation is used for local level party building. The paper concludes with a few emerging contradictions in the AP policy process.

1. Introduction

Andhra Pradesh, a south Indian State in India with approximately 76 million inhabitants, has succeeded to capture the imagination of quite a few policy makers within and outside India. When India started to liberalise its economy after 1991, Andhra Pradesh (AP) followed suit, but in a slow and modest way. However, since 1995, the Andhra Pradesh State government has become one of the main advocates of the Indian reform process, in which the States have become increasingly important anyway. It was the first State that negotiated an independent loan from the World Bank, the AP Economic Restructuring Programme. This loan was meant to finance expenditure in neglected social sector areas, but also to support the government in its economic reform policies, including cuts in subsidies, reduction of employment in civil service, improvement of expenditure management, strengthening revenue mobilization and public enterprise reform.[2] AP is not the only State implementing such reform policies – in fact, there are other States which started earlier with a reform process or which have made more headway – but the explicitness of the AP State government to pursue a reform process and its overt attempt to make the economic reform policies part of a larger development and governance project, is

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[2] "India-Andhra Pradesh Economic Restructuring Project", Project ID INPE49385, project document downloadable from www.worldbank.org.

what makes the reform more prominent and visible. While in several other States reforms are implemented by stealth (Jenkins, 1999), the AP State government makes a point of advertising itself as a reformer. It is probably partly for that reason that Andhra Pradesh has become almost a darling State of several international donors – they like the overt commitment to the reform that is almost daily expressed by the political leadership. Andhra Pradesh has, thus, become an important State in the overall reform process. Given the explicitness, a successfully pursued reform process carries an additional weight, and it is probably for that reason that the World Bank and other donors want the reform to succeed in AP, or so it seems.[3] After all, if the reforms cannot succeed in AP, where in India can they?

That AP would become one of the most explicitly reforming States was not exactly foreseeable. The State is a relatively underdeveloped State, depending predominantly on agriculture. Its literacy rate was 61 per cent in 2001 (as compared to 65 per cent of the whole of India) and its human development rank in 1991 was 23 (of 32 States/UTs in India).[4] Since the early 1980s the State was known for its large-scale populism. The then chief minister, N.T. Rama Rao, a popular filmstar turned into a political leader, who had founded a regional party (the Telugu Desam Party) that had come to power in 1983 after an unprecedented defeat of the Congress party, introduced several populist schemes. The most important one was the so-called Rs. 2 per kg rice scheme, which involved the distribution of 25 kilos of rice at a subsidized rate to about 70-80 per cent of the households. These populist schemes have remained important in APs political history. The TDP was defeated in 1989, but it came back to power in 1993, partly again because of its promise to reintroduce the Rs. 2 per kilo scheme (which was not exactly abolished by the Congress government but the price had been enhanced to Rs. 3.50) and other welfare policies. So, it was in this context of underdevelopment and backwardness coupled with a rather extreme form of welfarist populism that the explicit attempt to reform and a very committed leadership emerged.

Among the many claims of the AP government, there are a few important ones that refer to governance. The AP leadership claims it wants to improve the performance of the administration, to enhance accountability and transparency, and to keep politics away from policy implementation. It has coined the term SMART governance to refer to these objectives. SMART stands for simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent. This paper will not exactly investigate the extent to which the government is, indeed, becoming more simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent, but in a way it is about the smartness of the government: what kind of changes are implemented in the policy process, and how do these affect the role and importance of politics in the policy process.

But what is meant by 'politics in the policy process'? The paper will start with a short review of some of the literature on policy processes. This review will focus particularly on the political nature of policy processes, and how this political nature can be conceptualized. The paper then proceeds with a discussion on policy processes

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[3] Despite, or perhaps as a result of, the lack of progress in many reform areas and the lagging economic growth, the World Bank decided to give Andhra Pradesh a second loan (of 250 million USD) in early 2002, basically meant to support the reform process. 250 million USD is almost 12 billion Indian rupees, which is about 5 per cent of the State's annual total revenue expenditure.

[4] All figures from GoI (2002).

in AP. What is happening in AP policy processes, and what is the role of politics in AP policy processes? The paper concludes with a short discussion on a number of contradictions that are emerging in the AP policy processes.

2. The Policy Process – A Short Review

There are probably (public) policy studies since there are (public) policies. These studies can focus on a variety of things (the administration; policy outcomes; allocation of resources, etc.) and can have a variety of objectives (contribution to better policy; better prediction of outcomes; better understanding of various kinds of variables, assessment of policy feasibility, etc.). The type of policy studies that I am particularly interested in focuses on policy *processes*. It is a blend of political science, sociology and anthropology, and its subject matter is the way in which policy is given shape in concrete historical processes. It does not assume that policies are 'natural phenomena' or 'automatic solutions' resulting from particular social problems and it does not privilege the state as an actor fundamentally different from other social actors. The why, how and by whom questions are treated as empirical questions, and it is concrete empirical research that can generate the answers. The growth of this branch of policy studies is relatively recent. There are several older studies which fall into this description (and therefore in between the disciplines of political science and public administration), and some of these are very interesting indeed,[5] but the wider interest in this subject matter and these kinds of questions is a relatively recent phenomenon of, say, the last 15 years.

It would be interesting to analyse the reasons behind the rise of this new sub-discipline. It probably has to do a lot the changing role of the state, the declining faith in planning and in the malleability of society. It is probably no coincidence that the interest in policy processes came at the same time that the neo-liberal economic ideology gained ground, that the ineffectiveness of the state was emphasized and a downsizing of the state was advocated. In the wake of this neo-liberal upsurge came an increasing emphasis on good governance. After all, and quite ironically, the successful implementation of reform policies depends on a capable state – even though the ideology stresses a reduced role of the state. A further exploration of these issues is beyond the scope of this paper. It can, however, be noted that, indeed, the study of policy processes in developing countries is partly stimulated by international donors and research institutions closely linked to development aid agencies and donors. In Britain, for instance, the Institute of Development Studies is one of the institutes producing interesting work on policy processes – a lot of it funded by the Department for International Development.[6] The Overseas Development Institute is also doing work on policy processes.[7] As far as India is concerned, recently three new research and training centers have been set up to stimulate work on policy processes, all with the help of international money.[8] In Hyderabad, a more intervention-oriented

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[5] To mention just a few of the classical contributions: Lindblom (1959) and Wildavsky (1979).

[6] The IDS working paper series has many papers on governance issues and policy processes. An insightful review paper – produced without DfID funding – is Keeley and Scoones (1999).

[7] See the overview paper of Sutton (1999), the project on bridging research and policy, or the study on the budget making process (Norton and Elson, 2002).

[8] These centres are the Centre for Law and Governance (part of the Jawaharlal Nehru University), the Centre for Public Policy and Governance (related to the Delhi-based Institute of Applied Manpower

centre is being set up, the Centre for Good Governance, with a 60 million UK pounds grant from DfID. There is no doubt that international donors have stimulated work on governance and policy processes.

Generally, and notwithstanding the activities of institutes like the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex and the funds released by donors to stimulate more work in developing countries like India, the literature on policy processes is dominated by examples and scholars from the United States, and to a certain extent Britain, rather than by examples and scholars from developing countries. An ordinary literature search for 'policy process' will yield many more studies on the US, or inspired by US policy examples, than on any other country.[9]

The literature on policy processes is of two kinds. First, there are many papers and books that are meant to contribute to our general interpretation and understanding of what is a policy process: how should we conceptualise it; what is wrong with the linear model of policy making; where does policy change come from, etc. Second, there is a wealth of case studies, about *particular* policy processes. The first type, let me label that the 'conceptualisation of policy processes' (COPP) literature, makes occasional use of case studies and examples, of course, but the ambition goes beyond the cases. If there are examples, they are often from the US, and it would not be implausible if the general conceptualizations of policy processes that are put forward are more valid in the US than elsewhere. The second body of literature, which could be labeled ISPP (interpretations of specific policy processes), is almost endless. In India, however, although there are a number of case studies,[10] this is certainly not a rich body of literature.

Is There a Third World Policy Process?
As far as I know, there is only one article that specifically addresses the question whether there exists something like a 'Third World policy process': a paper by Horowitz, from 1989. He argues that the process – "the constraints, the ripe moments that produce innovation, the tendency for policy to have unanticipated consequences and so on" (p. 197) – has many similarities in developed and developing countries. In his view, it is, therefore, possible "to understand many policy phenomena in terms of concepts already embedded in the emerging discourse on public policy in general" (p. 198). There are, however, some important differences. Horowitz cautions against too broad generalizations, and makes the point that perhaps it is not so much the level of development that makes the difference, but the extent to which there are democratic structures in place. Nevertheless, he mentions eight differences. Some of these seem important to me, indeed, and I will list them briefly. The first one has to do with regime legitimacy. Since many Third World regimes are fragile, state legitimacy itself is often in question. The result is that, on top of their other objectives, many policies are also meant to enhance state or regime legitimacy. This gives an additional risk and stake in the process of policy making/implementation. Second, the main policy concerns are often different. Third, many developing countries have a large state

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Research) and the Centre for Public Policy (part of the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore). The first two received money from the Ford Foundation; the last one from UNDP.

[9] When the search word is 'reform process' it is already a bit different, but there is no doubt that the bulk of studies on policy/reform processes is on the developed part of the world.

[10] Some exceptions are Currie (2000), Echeverri-Gent (1993), Harriss (1988), Jenkins (1999), Kohli (1987), Manor (1993), Mooij (1999).

structure, which means that the state is "inordinately important" (p. 201) as compared to the society. This does not necessarily mean that the state is strong or effective. The fourth point is that the capacity to effectuate policy is often weak. Fifth, in many developing countries there are often large groups of people excluded from participation in the policy process, and, sixth, the mode and channels of participation are often less well established or clearly circumscribed. Violence, for instance, may play a larger role. The seventh point is that, generally, in developed countries more weight is given to expert knowledge. Many people tend to believe that information is important and that research and understanding have to precede decision making. This, according to Horowitz, is less so in developing countries. Finally, the importance of foreign models and the dependence on foreign experts is larger in many third world countries. One more point that is not listed by Horowitz but mentioned just in passing by Thomas and Grindle (1990) is that, while in many developed countries the main area of policy contestation is in the process of policy formulation, in developing countries it is the process of policy implementation that witnesses most struggles and contestations.

Notwithstanding these differences, Horowitz concludes that there are "important regularities of the policy process that appear to transcend the categories of Western and Third World state" (p. 203). That there are regularities, and that it is possible to transcend particular cases and countries, is an assumption widely shared by scholars focusing on policy processes. The review paper of Keeley and Scoones (1999), for instance, is based on the idea that insights from the general COPP literature can contribute to the study of particular policy processes (related to soil management in Africa). In fact, the existence of the COPP body of literature itself, illustrates the belief that it is possible to transcend case boundaries (though not necessarily country boundaries) and develop more general insights in policy processes. What, then, are the most important ideas and themes coming out of the COPP literature?

Critique of the Linear Model of Policy Making
First, is the critique of the linear model of the policy process. The linear model assumes that the policy process consists of various subsequent stages: agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation, evaluation, etc. This model has been dominant throughout the 1970s and the 1980s (deLeon, 1999:23). The model often goes together with an idea that the policy decision is the key moment in the policy process. Once the decision is made, there is just execution or implementation. This implementation can be successful or not, but in case of (partial) failure, the blame is put on 'bottlenecks', interference or 'lack of political will', in any case external factors that have nothing to do with the 'policy proper', i.e. the decision. This model has been criticized by a number of policy scholars.[11] Apthorpe (1986) and Clay and Schaffer (1984) have argued that this separation between 'policy proper' and implementation (with all its 'bottlenecks and disturbances) enables policy makers to escape responsibility. Schaffer (1984) stressed that 'policy is what it does', thereby putting the emphasis on the way in which decisions are used in actual practices, rather than on the decision itself. Thomas and Grindle (1990) also stress the importance of the implementation process as the main phase in the policy process. The real job often only starts *after* the decision is made. Instead of a linear model, Thomas and Grindle propose an interactive model. Policy change, in their view, will always lead to a

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[11] Apart from the authors mentioned in the text, see, for instance de Leon (1999) and Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1993).

reaction. There will always be resistance by those who are against it and pressure for change. This pressure can be exercised at any stage of the policy process, and can lead to an alteration or even a reversal of the policy. Sutton's (1999) overview of the literature is completely centered around the idea that the linear model of the policy process is inadequate, and she concludes her review with a long list of social factors and circumstances that – rather than decisions *per se* – can lead to policy change.

Although from a social science point of view, this critique is fairly self-evident and hardly interesting,[12] the importance of the linear policy model in actual policy processes is not to be underestimated. Grindle and Thomas (1990:1165) refer to the fact that many donor agencies support policy analysis in developing countries, assuming that a better analysis automatically leads to good policy. "Once a decision to change policy is made by the recipient government, donors tend to consider that their job is largely accomplished. They may check on compliance at intervals, but in general, decision is expected to lead to implementation". Mollinga et al (2001) analyse the introduction of participatory irrigation management in Andhra Pradesh. Although there is ample evidence of the fact that this process was/is transactional in many ways, this aspect was, according to the authors, not sufficiently built into the design of the policy. The legal framework that was set up was a top-down one and it was assumed that legal force could affect the emergence of the relevant and necessary institutions (Mollinga et al, 2001:374). In other words, (international or domestic) bureaucracies themselves often seem to work with a linear model, and/or may not always be sufficiently equipped to take the interactive model to its full consequences in their policy design.

The conclusion that there is something wrong with the linear model of policy making does, of course, not necessarily mean that there are no stages in the policy process. First of all, it is possible to formulate stages in such a way that they do justice to the fact that the policy process is interactive, rather than linear. This is done, for instance, by Sudan (2001), who uses a stage model developed by Kotter (1996)[13] for business management to describe the introduction of e-governance in Andhra Pradesh. These stages are:
a. Establishing a sense of urgency
b. Creating the guiding coalition
c. Developing a vision and strategy
d. Communicating the change vision
e. Empowering broad-based action
f. Generating short term wins
g. Consolidating gains and producing more change
h. Anchoring new approaches in the culture.
These stages, clearly, are based on the fact that policy making is interactive, rather than technical or automatic.

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[12] One can even argue that, from a social science perspective, the critique is not radical enough. The fact that most scholars keep using terms such as 'policy implementation', 'state intervention' or 'policy process', means that they continue to regard the state as a privileged actor, and assume, rather than investigate, that public policies are important in structuring reality. A more radical perspective is to view policies as resources in interaction – money, rules, institutional power, authority are all resources that can come with particular policies – and to leave it to an empirical investigation to find out in what kind of processes these resources are used, by whom and for what kind of purposes. For an elaboration of this perspective on law, see von Benda-Beckmann and van der Velde (1992).
[13] John. P. Kotter (1996) *Leading Change*. Harvard Business School.

The second option is to stick to the traditional formulation of stages, but to reconceptualise the stages, their boundaries, and the relationships with subsequent stages. Stages are then conceptualized as arenas, each with their different set of institutions, actors and stakes. Some actors may be important in some arenas, while they are poorly represented in other arenas. The outcome of some arenas may be important in other arenas, but what this exactly means (i.e. the way in which these 'outcomes' are used in subsequent arenas and the feedback mechanisms that also exist between subsequent arenas) can only be understood through concrete empirical studies.

Indeed, in the general COPP literature, we can see studies that focus primarily on the process of policy formulation, while others focus more on the processes of implementation, to mention just a very crude distinction.[14] Many of these studies, in one way or another, are about politics. After all, if the linear model, stressing the instrumental and technical nature of the policy process, is left behind, it becomes clear that policy processes are inherently political. Policies are not the product of rational decision makers, but they are shaped in interactions in which a variety of actors takes place.

Politics of Policy – Interests, Interfaces and Policy Networks
This brings me to a second major theme within the policy process literature: the idea that actors interact and bargain with each other, and thereby produce a particular (albeit temporary) policy outcome. Actors can be individual, pursuing their own material interest, or they can be collective (interest groups). The most simple and fairly influential model is what Moore (1999) calls interest group economism. It assumes that a) actors pursue mainly short-term self interests, b) individuals aggregate in interest groups that are exclusive in membership, c) policy is made by the interaction of competing interest groups, d) high levels of information are available, and e) each policy decision is a separate event, unrelated to other policy decisions (Moore, 1999:38).[15] This model is a grossly simplified version of a public choice paradigm, especially popular among economists who want to (or are forced to) say something about politics as well, and who, basically, apply an economic model to the realm of politics. The state, or rather state incumbents, can also be regarded from this public choice perspective. "[G]overnment officials respond to incentives and disincentives. They are unlikely to undertake policies that are generally unpopular or that will lose them powerful support. They make deals that keep them in power and maintain revenue, votes, or whatever underlies their power" (Levi, 1988:201).

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[14] On formulation, see, for instance, Hilgartner and Bosk (1988), Kingdon (1984), Rochefort and Cobb (1993). For studies on implementation, see, for instance, Lipsky (1980), Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) and Thomas and Grindle (1990). The distinction is crude because it is possible to subdivide these stages much more. Agenda setting and policy formulation, for instance are often seen as two distinct phases. Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) distinguish five different stages in the implementation process alone. A small subset within the policy process literature focuses on just the budget making process. See, for instance, Wildavsky (1974), or, more recently, Norton and Elson (2002).

[15] The consequence of this model, according to Moore, is (unjustified) pessimism regarding the possibility of pro-poor policy making. This is so because the model predicts that pro-poor policies will give rise to high levels of opposition. Pro-poor policy is, hence, only likely in case there is active support of and/or pressure from the potential beneficiaries, In many developing countries this pressure does not exist, which makes, the model suggests, pro-poor policies hardly worth trying.

Another subset within the bargaining approach is comprised of the pluralist theories. Their starting point is that pressure groups exercise a major influence over the policy process, but, where public choice theory can deal with the state (incumbents), pluralists tend to neglect the role of the state in this bargaining process and underrate the influence of institutional structures (Smith, 1990). Pressure groups can be pursuing the own self-interest of its members, but they can also pursue wider public interests. This point that there is more to bargaining than just individual self-interest is made, for instance, by Snare (1995/6) and Rochon and Mazmanian (1993). They focus on, respectively, the conditions under which the (not so self interested) policy analyst can play a role in the policy process and on the way in which social/environmental movements can affect policy.

Long's interface approach is a more anthropological approach of actors and bargaining processes. Interface, according to Arce and Long (1992:214) "conveys the idea of some kind of face-to-face encounter between individuals with differing interests, resources and power. Studies of interface encounters aim to bring out the types of discontinuities that exist and the dynamic and emerging character of the struggles and interactions that take place, showing how actors' goals, perceptions, values, interests and relationships are reinforced or reshaped by this process. For instance, in rural development interface situations, a central issue is the way in which policy is implemented and often at the same time transformed." So, the bargaining process is quite complicated. It is not only that there is more than self-interests, that the state itself may not be a neutral arbiter and that there are institutional arrangements structuring the bargaining process. Long and his colleagues stress a fourth point: since actors are knowledgeable and capable (Giddens, 1984), they are also able to reflect on the bargaining process itself and in a position to redefine their values and interests in the course of interaction.[16]

Several policy researchers who focus on interests and interaction use the term 'policy network'.[17] Policy network-type of entities can be of different kinds, and different terms have been used, for instance, policy networks, policy subsystems, or advocacy coalitions. Although these various notions do not refer exactly to the same phenomena, they are similar in the sense that they refer to groups of people who share ideas and are influential in setting policy agendas. Howlett and Ramesh (1998:469) suggest that it is useful to regard policy subsystems as made up of two subsets. The first is "a larger set of actors [that] is composed of those who have some knowledge of the policy issue in question and who collectively construct a policy discourse …". These policy communities go by different names in the literature, but one of these is 'advocacy coalitions', a concept developed and popularized by Sabatier and his colleagues (Howlett and Ramesh, 1998:note 10). Within this larger community, there is a subset "composed of those who participate in relationships with each other to further their own ends and interests" (*ibid*: 469). What the members of a policy community have in common, according to Howlett and Ramesh, is their knowledge

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[16] Nevertheless, Long's interface approach is criticised by some of exactly the same fallacy it tries to overcome. "[V]ia the notion of representatives it tends to collapse interface-interactions, individual interactions, and inter-group interaction. The civil servant becomes the State, and the villager, the peasant. It thus tends to transform normative group categories into analytical categories, and runs the risk of reifying those categories" (Benda-Beckmann et al, 1989:217).

[17] For two critical reviews on the pros and cons of policy network theories, see, for instance, Dowding (1995) and Klijn (1996).

base. A policy network, on the other hand, acts in the pursuit of the interests of its members.

The origin of the 'network' term, according to Dowding (1995:137) is metaphorical. Used in a metaphorical sense, networks do not explain policy change; they are just heuristic devices, and as such they may be useful. Attempts, however, to go beyond the metaphor and to use the concept as a theory in order to explain policy processes have failed, according to Dowding. Even when this is true, we can probably say that the contribution of the network approaches is that they a) help to overcome a structure-actor divide by focusing on (small) structures composed of actors influencing policy, b) make clear that policy (change) often results from social entities that cross the state-society divide, c) emphasise that there are bargaining processes in the policy processes, and d) highlight the role of ideas in policy making.

In a way, all these approaches illustrate the fact that policy processes are inherently political. There is politics in all these approaches because they stress interactions between people, mobilization and pursuance of ideas and interests. There is nothing natural or automatic in a policy process; on the contrary policy processes are social processes, and the outcome cannot be established in advance, but depends on the interactions and the strength of the groups. Power, in this interpretation of 'politics', is instrumental.[18] People (or groups of people) use their power to get things done, and those who have more power are more likely to win. The amount of power an individual or a group has depends on the resource base, which can include assets of different nature: human (knowledge, awareness, skills, training, entrepreneurship, charisma, etc.), social (connections, caste, etc.), financial (money), or natural (land, water etc.). Individuals, interest groups, policy communities or networks can be better or worse endowed with these resources, and this influences their power to affect policy processes.

But apart from this instrumental conception of power, another conception surfaced already. As was suggested above, there can also be power in the (institutional) arrangements structuring the bargaining process. These arrangements may favour and empower some actors and disempower others. And it may, therefore, be that policy bargaining processes are not only about the immediate policy outcomes, but also about the terms and conditions under which this bargaining takes place. This brings me to a third major theme in the literature, as one of these structuring arrangements is the policy discourse.

Politics of Policy – Discourses
Discourses can be defined as "ensemble[s] of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to phenomena. Discourses frame certain problems; that is to say, they distinguish some aspects of a situation rather than others".[19] Discourses, thus, are thought and speech constructions that define the world in particular ways. They are not the product of individuals, but they are social (and political) phenomena. Discourses impose meanings, even if to a certain extent because they are often contested. Nevertheless, this means there is an important power issue: who has the

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[18] Within some policy community studies, there is, however, surprisingly little attention for power. The two volumes edited by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) and Sabatier (1999) have extensive indexes, but 'power' does not figure in them.

[19] This definition comes from Hajer (1993:45) and is quoted in Gasper and Apthorpe (1996:2).

power to define what?[20] What is the social basis of ideas and the social and historical context in which particular discourses can emerge and become dominant.[21]

There are two main ideas in the literature on policies and discourse (Keeley and Scoones, 1992:25). The first relates to the whole notion of policy. The discourse of policy is based on ideas of rationality, techniques, efficiency, ends and means. Policy creates sectors, which are subsequently seen as natural boundaries within a social reality (Apthorpe, 1986; Schaffer, 1984). Policy is this vision is a technique to control – a perspective that goes back to Foucault. Wood (1985:351), for instance quotes Foucault, who has said that we are controlled "not by right, but by technique; not by law but by normatisation; not by punishment but by control". Following this approach, Shore and Wright (1997) regard policy as a 'political technology' through which people are governed. Policies govern, not only because they "impose conditions, as if from 'outside' or 'above', [but also because they] influence people's indigenous norms of conduct so that they themselves contribute, not necessarily consciously, to a government's model of social order" (Shore and Write, 1997:6). Policies, hence, act *on* people, but also *through* people.

A second idea relates to specific policies. Within specific policy areas, some discourses have become dominant, and there is quite a bit of policy process literature focusing either on the discourse coalitions or on particular discourse techniques. Discourse coalitions[22] are, in a way, similar to advocacy coalitions, but the emphasis is more on the production of discourse and less on sharing ideas and technical expertise. There is much more emphasis on the power implied in this shared worldview. Techniques of policy discourses include labels (Wood, 1985), metaphors and other stylistic devices, policy narratives (Roe, 1994) and styles of argumentation (Fischer and Forester, 1993; Hoppe and Peterse, 1998).[23]

All these scholars and approaches illustrate the inherently political nature of the policy process. Almost all of them are also explicitly about power, which is now not conceived in an instrumentalist and resource-dependent way. Power is much more invisible. It is in the discourse itself. It works through interpretations, through concepts, through meanings. It controls thought processes and closes the possibility to think alternatives (although this closure is never complete, and meanings often remain contested).

By Way of Conclusion
It is clear that the policy process literature provides several important ideas and insights regarding the political nature of the policy process. There are, at least, two ways in which policy processes are political. They are bargaining processes in which people struggle and negotiate about policy outcomes, and they are structured by particular discourses that impose meanings, empower (some/in some respects) and disempower (others/in other respects). This means it is possible to distinguish in any case two layers in the bargaining process. People negotiate about immediate policy outcomes, but they also establish and contest meanings that, to a certain extent, set the

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[20] Shore and Wright (1997:18).
[21] Watts (1993:265), quoted in Gasper and Apthorpe (1996:5).
[22] Hajer (1993), Fischer (1993).
[23] Keeley and Scoones (1999:25-26) and Gasper and Apthorpe (1996:6-10) have similar lists.

terms and conditions for their bargaining. We will now turn to Andhra Pradesh and investigate the nature of the policy processes in that State.

3. Policy Processes in Andhra Pradesh

In September 1995, Chandrababu Naidu took over as Chief Minister in Andhra Pradesh. He replaced his father-in-law, the very popular and charismatic leader N.T. Rama Rao. Both belonged to the same regional party, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which was founded by N.T. Rama Rao in the early 1980s. With the assumption of leadership by Chandrababu Naidu, a new phase in the State reform process started. It is not that he became the first chief minister to introduce reforms.[24] What did change with Chandrababu Naidu, however, is the explicitness of the reforms and the extent to which the chief minister himself publicly identifies with and advocates the reform process. In 1996, a White Paper was released on State finances, emphasizing the need for fiscal prudence. In 1999, the AP government brought out the AP *Vision 2020*, a very ambitious[25] plan laying down what the State should head for in twenty years time. Several bold steps and unpopular measures were taken, such as raising electricity charges for a wide variety of consumers, enhancing the price of subsidized rice (in steps) from Rs. 2 per kilo to Rs. 5.25 per kilo, and a partial lifting of prohibition. Several other policies and programmes, some linked directly to economic reforms and some not, were introduced or intensified, and often highly publicized, such as the Janmabhoomi (a rural development programme), the participatory irrigation management reform, the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA).

It is not that the Chandrababu regime stopped being populist. As Suri (forthcoming) analysed, the regime continued to be very populist, especially during election time. To quote Suri (forthcoming), "Like a political wizard, Chandrababu pulled out welfare schemes one after the other, averaging one every week. (…) He concentrated most on securing the support of women, as he feared that resentment among them due to the lifting of prohibition on liquor might mar his electoral prospects. Several incentives were given to DWACRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas) groups and other schemes meant for women were introduced. The scheme that became highly controversial was the *deepam* (light), meant to supply 10 lakh cooking gas connections at subsidised rates, launched just one day before the election schedule was announced by the Election Commission (EC). If Chandrababu appeared pragmatic in his advocacy of fiscal prudence and downsizing the government after he came to power in 1995, he appeared equally pragmatic in his fiscal profligacy on the eve of elections." But there seems to be an important differences between NTRs populism and that of Chandrababu Naidu. The latters' emphasis seems less on

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[24] The Congress (I) government, which ruled in AP when the Government of India decided to make a real start with economic reform, introduced several reform measures already – meant, for instance, to attract more foreign investment and to restructure the power sector. These policies were contested by N.T. Rama Rao; in the 1993-94 election campaign he projected the Congress government and the liberalization process as pro-rich and himself as pro-poor, but when he came to power he continued in the same vain (although he reduced the subsidized rice price again and introduced prohibition) (Suri, forthcoming).

[25] The document, according to some, is not only ambitious, but also unrealistic and blind to ground realities (Narasimha Reddy, 1999). The vision was prepared with the help of consultants from McKinsie.

universal schemes and more on schemes targeted towards particular groups: *Deepam* (light) for rural women; *Adarana* (support) for people of traditional occupations, *Roshini* (light) for religious minorities, *Mundadugu* (going forward) for scheduled castes, etc. (Krishna Reddy, 2000:879).

Reforms and Governance
A striking characteristic of the AP reform process is the emphasis on governance. Vision 2020 is about growth and development, but it is also about governance. It stresses that the government should be made simple, transparent, accountable and responsive, and that people should have a strong voice in the governance of the State (GoAP, 1000:3-4). This is not just an empty statement. A taskforce on Good Governance was set up and a White Paper on 'Governance and Public Management' was brought out which discusses many goals and initiatives, such as the establishment of a Centre for Good Governance, speeding up of the decision-making process (file movement, etc.), e-governance, citizens charters, right to information, etc. In many of these areas, steps have been undertaken. The Centre for Good Governance[26] is in the process of being established; several e-governance initiatives have been introduced, and many other initiatives are planned.

These governance initiatives are highly publicized and play a prominent role in the image the GoAP tries to create of itself. The first part of *Plain Speaking*, the book that Chandrababu Naidu wrote,[27] is about governance and politics. He states that "both old-style politics and old-style governance have to change …. Today, with the state exchequer bled dry, the mandate is more for effective governance … The era of handouts as a part of electoral politics is over (p. 10). At the heart of the administrative reform we are attempting is the change in the role for the government from being an actor, to enabler and facilitator"(p. 12). According to Chandrababu Naidu, there are major problems with the administration. "The machinery which attempts to run the state needs and urgent overhaul itself. It is huge and self-perpetuating. It is slow and accountable to nobody. Above all, it is obstructive. It essentially exists for itself, not for the public" (p. 45). Corruption is an enormous problem and should not be tolerated. There are major problems also in the political sphere, in the sense that there is "too much politicking and too little governance" (p. 17). Politics, according to the author, should become more professional; politics of populism should be replaced by politics of development; and politics should become respectable and dissociated from corruption and incompetence (p. 17-18). Similar ideas on governance reform – or, we could say, policy processes – are regularly expressed by him in public meetings and reported in the media.

Four Articles of Faith
There are four recurring themes, or rather articles of faith, in the commitment to administrative reforms and good governance. The first one is the (desired) separation of powers between the administration and elected politicians. The discretion in policy implementation should be reduced. There should be implementation as per the norm. The administration should be allowed to do its work, without political interference, and elected politicians, particularly MLAs, should focus more on overall

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[26] Examples are the Computer Aided Administration of Registration Department (CARD) which enables the electronic registration of documents), the e-seva centres (basically multi-purpose service centres for the public).
[27] The book was written with a journalist, Sevanti Ninan.

development. Their role should become more that of a legislator, rather than that of a middleman in policy implementation.[28]

A second theme is 'governing for result', an emphasis on delivery and performance. Every month, there is a performance assessment of the bureaucracy. [29] According to one observer, almost everything that is measurable is taken into account, but the reliability of the data is doubtful. If a district office learns on Friday afternoon that it is expected to submit the data on Monday morning, and it knows that timely delivery will be one of the assessment criteria, one cannot expect reliable data.[30] The performance assessments take a lot of time, not only of those who have to submit the data, but also of those who process it (partly done in the Centre for Good Governance) and the chief minister himself, who studies the data, has follow-up meetings, etc. The performance assessments take place at individual and institution level. Individuals are assessed with the help of various indicators (such as, targets, feelings of the people, media reports), and it is claimed that transfers do now take place mainly on the basis of performance, and no longer on the basis of bribes and influence. Institutions (like government hospitals) are also assessed, ranked and progress is monitored. Politicians are also assessed. In the case of Ministers, this involves collecting data on, for instance, the number of hours worked per day, the number of meetings attended, the number of visits made outside Hyderabad, etc., but media reports are also taken into account. The propularity and progress of the government is further assessed occasionally by independent agents and through public perceptions studies.[31]

A third recurring theme is the introduction of e-governance in order to achieve accountability and transparency and reduce corruption in governance. The chief minister himself strongly believes that technology can help in improving governance. As he writes, "One solution [to problems such as departmental inefficiency, the enormous waste that is typical of the government machinery and endemic corruption] is information technology. In the last four years we have focused on this because I strongly believe in the transparency it brings. Without technology you cannot have progress. We cannot achieve things any more in the traditional way. Apart from transparency IT brings about accountability and removal of discretion. Misuse and wastage will become less, corruption will go" (Naidu, 2000:14).

One of the recent plans is to introduce electronic file movement. The idea is that files – in scanned form – should move electronically. If they do not move for a number of days, they go automatically to someone else. Information on the movement would be available on the Internet, and in case of confidential files, passwords would be given to the concerned clients. This system, it is claimed, would have the potential of

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[28] In order to encourage a change in the mindsel of the MLAs, Chandrababu Naidu encouraged them to go (and almost all went, indeed) on a study visit to east Asia in the summer of 2002.

[29] This is so since mid 2002. Before that these assessments were done quarterly.

[30] Interview with someone indirectly involved with performance assessments, Hyderabad, 20.09.2002.

[31] There is no doubt that some people, and probably the chief minister himself as well, really believe that these performance assessments are an important step forward. On the other hand, it is clear that it is very time-consuming and not always clear to those who are involved for what purpose all the data are collected. There is, of course, no doubt that performance assessments is important, but one may wonder whether a) doing it on a monthly basis and b) focusing exclusively on quantitative data and targets, is the right way forward.

improving transparency as well as accountability.[32] More generally, e-governance is believed to have an enormous potential to contribute to leapfrogs in development, and to change management within the bureaucracy (for instance, to make the bureaucracy less layered), apart from enhancing citizens' access to information, and thereby contributing to transparency and accountability.

A fourth theme is the necessity to increase participation of stakeholders in development efforts. Given the ineffectiveness of the state machinery and the perceived lack of professionalism and corruption of the political leaders, it is not surprising that the idea has come up that stakeholders should become more involved in policy processes. 'Make a stakeholder of every citizen' is a slogan of the AP government. Self-help groups (such as women thrift societies) and committees (water users associations, watershed committees, education committees, etc.) are presented as necessary countervailing powers to ineffective bureaucracies. The TDP flagship programme *Janmabhoomi* is based on this notion of participation in development. (See Box 1.) The idea is that groups of stakeholders put pressure on the government to perform, take over some of the responsibilities previously held by the government and/or contribute financially to the programme. (See also Box 2 about Participatory Irrigation Management.)

Changes in Policy Discourse
What can we conclude about changes in the policy discourse? Three main shifts seem noteworthy. First, there is a shift away from a discourse centering around welfare to one centering around development and governance. The welfare discourse was introduced by N.T. Rama Rao in the 1980s. He projected himself as the elder brother who gives rice and sarees to women – a benefactor doing well to 'his people'. This discourse can be characterized as 'donative', since it stresses hand-outs, charity and welfare provided by a benevolent ruler.[33] This discourse ended in 1995 and a new 'developmentalist' discourse came up, with keywords such as growth, development, delivery, performance, effective/good governance, etc.[34]

Second, in a sense, the policy discourse is technocratic and falls back on the linear/rational model of the policy process. Norms are supposed to be one thing. Implementation is something else. The norms are supposed to be OK; the problem is with implementation: there is political interference, inefficiency, waste and corruption. The solution – as expressed in the second article of faith – is an administrative one: better monitoring and assessments; performance-based incentives etc. The solution as given in the third article of faith is a technological one: ICTs as answer to poor governance. It seems there is very little attention for democratic procedures to solve problems of poor governance. The White Paper on *Governance and Public Management* also only stresses administrative and technological devices.

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[32] While there is no doubt about file delays and the necessity to do something about this, also here, one gets the impression that the advocates go over the top. If one imagines the size (in bytes) of many of the files, and how difficult it sometimes still is to download an ordinary PDF file from the internet, one cannot help wondering whether electronic file movement is the best way of solving the issue of file delays.

[33] See Mooij (1995). See also Schaffer (1984) and Wood (1985:358-9) about donative versions of reality.

[34] See Harshe and Srinivas (1999) about this shift.

There is nothing in this document on political checks and balances or democratic procedures in order to secure better governance.

BOX 1 THE *JANMABHOOMI* PROGRAMME

Janmabhoomi (literally, land of one's birth) is a flagship programme of the TDP regime. It is based on a south Korean concept and was launched in January 1997. It is a rural development programme that a) aims to bring government to the people, b) is based on voluntary labour contributions and c) involves microplanning at the grassroots level. It is implemented in rounds; initially there were four rounds every year; later this was brought down to two, Each round has a particular theme, such as health, women, water conservation, etc. During each round, officials go to the villages and conduct *Janmabhoomi* meetings, in which local people can come forward with their complaints and/or demands and in which necessary community works are identified. Some problems are sorted out on the spot itself. Works are carried out later.

Of crucial importance in the organization of *Janmabhoomi* are (stakeholder) groups and committees (related to, for instance, watershed development, forest, education etc.). *Janmabhoomi* is linked to a great many other government schemes, since the official distribution of funds or sanctioning of groups (e.g. DWCRA groups) happens at the time of the *Janmabhoomi* meetings. For instance, pensions are distributed, revolving DWCRA funds are sanctioned, gas connections and house sites are distributed at the time of *Janmabhoomi*. Community works, as coming under schemes like the Employment Assurance Scheme, rural road maintenance, rural water supply, education and others also come to the village as part of *Janmabhoomi* (World Bank, 2000:29). In effect, this means that *Janmabhoomi* has incorporated more or less all important government development programmes.

Janmabhoomi has become the TDPs model of decentralized development. The TDP has been very slow and reluctant in implementing the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, which lays down the procedures for decentralization of governance to village level bodies, called *panchayats.* According to a report of the World Bank, the *panchayat* institutions are ignored, marginalized and starved of funds (World Bank, 2000). On the other hand, *Janmabhoomi* received a lot of funds, for the works, but also for the infrastructure (jeeps for the nodal officers, etc.). While the 73rd Amendment is about political decentralization, *Janmabhoomi* is a bureaucratic form of decentralization. At the district level, it is the district collector who operates the funds. The programme is implemented by the local bureaucracy and the committees are appointed by the departments, rather than elected bodies.

There is no doubt that the Janmabhoomi programme has been very instrumental for the TDP to strengthen its base at the local level. The various committees are packed with TDP supporters and local TDP politicians are also the most important contractors for the works – because of their political influence, but also because they are often the only ones able to make a down-payment required in the name of 'community contribution'. A certain degree of corruption is allowed. Manor (forthcoming) mentions that the Chief Minister himself, at a gathering of party activists, has said that he would allow if one third of the funds would be 'eaten' up.

Sources: GoAP (2002); Krishna Reddy (2002); Manor (forthcoming); World Bank (2000).

Having said that, however, there is a third element of the policy discourse: the emphasis on 'active participation of the people in the development of the state' and on people becoming 'partners in progress' (GoAP, 1999:1-2). There is an emphasis on stakeholders who, not only take some financial responsibility, but who are also considered as important in pressurising the government to deliver. This, no doubt, is political reasoning. It is based on an interpretation of 'implementation as process'. After all, talking about stakeholders is the discursive component of an attempt to effectuate changes in the implementation arena. Emphasising self-help, participation, stakeholders etc. fits in with a wider discourse that assumes that development efforts are contested, that there are conflicts of interest and that empowerment is important for a level playing field.[35]

To conclude, there have been discursive shifts in the post-1995 period in Andhra Pradesh. It is also clear that the AP government draws on various repertoires and stresses both empowerment/pressure/stakeholders as well as administrative/technological devices to clean up the policy process. The new discourse does not go unchallenged, however. There is a lot of critique, not so much on the fact that development rather than welfare has become centre-stage, but certainly on the importance given to computers in development[36] and on the conceptualisation of stakeholders and the accompanying model of decentralisation (i.e. based on functional committees rather than on elected *Panchayat Raj* institutions). So far, however, there is no effective counter-discourse. There are critiques of Chandrababu Naidu's project, but an alternative vision or project, centring, for instance, around democracy, is still missing.

Characteristics of the Policy Process
Let us now move beyond the content of the discourse and look at some other major characteristics of the policy process. Three main characteristics of the policy process will be highlighted here. The first is the enormous concern with image building; the second relates to centralisation of policy making, and the third to the strategy to use policy implementation for party building purposes.

Strategic image building happens with regard to the person of Chandrababu Naidu, as well as the achievements of his regime. When Chandrababu Naidu took over from N.T. Rama Rao in 1995, he was in a difficult position. Although he is intelligent, has a very good memory, is excellent in party organisation[37] and is said to know more or less all party workers by name, he did not have the charisma of N.T. Rama Rao. So, it is likely that he had to find another image, source of popularity and support base that would distinguish him from his well-known and very popular predecessor, and present

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[35] On the other hand, however, we should also note that the stakeholders that are defined (and encouraged to emerge) are functional groups of people (water users, education committees, etc.). They are not political in the sense of elected in a wider democratic process of political decentralisation. An exception to this are the water users associations, which have elected board members. See Box 2.

[36] As one member of the opposition ridiculed Chandrababu Naidu: "He says: Is agriculture now longer productive? Buy a computer! You don't earn enough as a handloom weaver? Have a computer in your house!" Interview with a leader of the Congress party, Hyderabad, 05.09.2002.

[37] According to Ninan (2000:xvi), "As they tell you about this party in Andhra Pradesh, NTR founded it and Chandrababu Naidu built it". This quote comes from the introduction of Chandrababu Naidu's own book, and he certainly must have censured this introduction. Nevertheless, I still have to come across the first person who would not agree with this presentation of Chandrababu Naidu as a very competent party organiser.

him as a ruler in his own right. He found this image in computers, technology and modern management. There is an enormous amount of publicity around his person, stressing especially his commitment to reform, hard work, genuine ambitions for the state, modern outlook, etc.

BOX 2 PARTICIPATORY IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT

From 1996-97 onwards, a major reform has taken place in the irrigation sector in Andhra Pradesh, intended to introduce Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM). The main component of the reform was an institutional change: a move away from government management towards farmers/water users management. Water Users Associations (WUAs) have been formed at minor (tertiary) canal level; Distributary Committees have been formed at distributary (secondary) level; and Project Committees still have to be formed at system (primary) level.

The idea of PIM was new in Andhra Pradesh in 1996; this is why some observers have referred to the reforms as a 'big bang', rather than as incrementalist (Oblitas and Peter, 1999; referred to by Narasimha Reddy, 2002). Of crucial importance was a committed political leadership. Chandrababu Naidu probably saw these reforms as one of the ways in which he could further his development agenda and strengthen his image as a dynamic and innovative leader. Moreover, the 10.000 water users associations that were formed in 1997 promised to provide a considerable opportunity for building up local (party) cadres and securing/expanding TDP influence at the local level. The reform also matched with some ideas of the World Bank and the Bank was willing to support them. Several committed IAS officials were involved in designing the reform and drafting the legislation.There was considerable political consensus about the need and shape of the reform and the Act was passed unanimously. Water users were hardly consulted at the time of passing the Act, but there were massive awareness and training efforts afterwards. All in all, there has not been much opposition from water users, also not against the hikes in water charges.

To what extent has irrigation management become more participatory? This question has at least two components, namely a) the composition and functioning of the WUAs and b) the shift in responsibilities away from the irrigation department to the WUAs. Regarding the former, it seems that, generally, the leadership positions within the WUAs have been captured by members of the upper castes, relatively wealthy landowners, generally better educated people, usually with affiliations to a political party, often the TDP (Harshe, forthcoming:table 3; Jairath, 2001:111). The elections (in 1997) were conducted in great haste, and many people were not yet sufficiently aware of the importance of the committees. Mollinga et al. (2001:368) report of low levels of interaction between leaders and members and Harshe (forthcoming:37) states that participation of women and 'weaker sections' in decision making is negligible. Regarding the latter, a case study in two canals of the Tungabhadra Right Bank Low Level Canal showed that, since the rural elite was able to dominate the WUAs, not much has changed in the set of relationships surrounding water distribution. "The Irrigation Department engineers are under considerable pressure from the top to work in a different manner, but hardly so from the bottom" (Mollinga et al, 2001:371). In other regions, however, this may be different. The extent to which the reform will affect relations between the irrigation department and the water users in the long run is still to be awaited – and may vary from region to region. The next elections (probably in December 2002) will, in any case, be much more contested (along party political lines) than the previous/first one.

Sources: Harshe (forthcoming); Jairath (2001), Mollinga et al. (2001, and personal communication); Narasimha Reddy (2002).

There are also publicity hypes around particular so-called achievements. The development of Hyderabad as an IT city is a case in point. The official website of the government of Andhra Pradesh[38] suggests the site itself is 'an Odyssey into the Future'. Andhra Pradesh is called 'the knowledge hub of India'. There are two prominent pictures, one of the historic Charminar and the other of the Cyber Tower in Hi-Tec city, an IT park, located on the south-west of Hyderabad. On closer inspection, however, the claims about AP's 'hub', are fairly exaggerated. Kennedy (forthcoming) writes that "despite the attention it has received, the scale of Hi-Tec City is currently quite modest. Cyber Tower can accommodate about 40 firms. In addition, some larger firms have established themselves on the adjoining campus. This specialised industrial estate does not appear very different from those that Tamil Nadu and other states have built in recent years". Manor (forthcoming) adds that Bangalore (the capital of Karnataka) earns about eight times more from software exports than Hyderabad. This, according to Manor, "is unlikely to change much. Analysts argue that at best, Andhra Pradesh can only hope to operate at the 'low end' of this sector – performing low-skilled tasks which yield modest profits while Karnataka maintains its pre-eminence at the 'high end'".

While some ' achievements' are highly publicised, other aspects of the regime are rather underemphasized. This is particularly true for some of the economic and fiscal problems of the State. According to figures of the government itself, the average per capita annual growth rate of the AP economy between 1993-94 and 2000-2001 was only 3.9 per cent (at constant prices), while it was 4.8 per cent for India as a whole (GoAP, 2002: table 2.3). This low growth contrasts starkly with the ambitions of the regime.[39] The growth in employment between 1993 and 1999-2000 has been only 0.8 per cent in AP, as compared to 1.3 per cent for the whole of India (GoI, 2002: table 2.14). There has been a consistent revenue deficit between 1995-96 and 1999-00, the level of which has fluctuated considerably.[40] The fiscal deficit has doubled between 1995-96 and 1999-00, from Rs. 24450 million to Rs. 49430 million and debt servicing has increased in the same period from Rs. 22090 million to Rs. 51460 million. Interest payment is about 30 per cent of the state's own revenue (GoAP, 2002: tables 3.7 and 3.9). These figures, according to some observers, are reason for serious concern. According to Manor (forthcoming), the fiscal imprudence, particularly in the *Janmabhoomi* programme but also because of the 1999 elections, was such that in 2000, the AP government "was borrowing money to pay salaries. Many government departments did not have funds to pay for fuel for their vehicles". It is not surprising that the AP government has not been very upfront about these problems, but also the opposition has not paid much and consistent attention. Manor (forthcoming) compares AP with Karnataka and states that Karnataka has (had) a much more prudent fiscal management, and that the government of Karnataka is also much more upfront about the problems. Perhaps, one can say that the AP regime does not practice reform by stealth, but fiscal imprudence. The more general point is that a conscious 'hype and hide' strategy is part of the way in which the AP government governs.

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[38] www.andhrapradesh.com.

[39] According to *Vision 2020*, the per capita income growth should have been 4.4 between 1995 and 2000, 7.6 per cent in the next five years, 10.1 per cent between 2005 and 2010, 11.7 per cent between 2010 and 2015 and 13.4 per cent between 2015 and 2020 (GoAP, 1999:5).

[40] In 1997-98 it was about Rs. 7000 million, while it was almost Rs. 32000 million one year earlier.

A second characteristic is the extent to which policy making powers are centralised in the person of Chandrababu Naidu himself. In a sense, such centralisation is not new. The TDP has always been dominated by one leader. The drive and perhaps even workaholism of Chandrababu Naidu gives, however, a new twist to this centralisation. According to one observer, Chandrababu Naidu "is not a 'commandist', since he sees plenty of scope for the private sector and does not wish the government to dominate everything. But he seeks personal dominance of nearly everything within the reach of the government. So, he offers not 'commandism' but 'control freakery'" (Manor, forthcoming). This characterisation is reinforced in the interviews I did with senior policy makers and others. Without exception they confirmed the idea that Chandrababu Naidu is the main person taking decisions. Although he likes to brainstorm, meets a lot of people (including businessmen, representatives of international agencies, journalists and media tycoons) and is open to new ideas, he does not seem to rely on anybody but is himself in control. He has a small number of like-minded people within the bureaucracy, often hand-picked and put in particular places, but even there, it is doubtful to what extent they really influence him. Ministers, barring a few, seem fairly marginalized.

The question is whether this centralisation is on purpose or whether this is by default. The latter was suggested by several officials, who argued that Chandrababu Naidu outdoes almost all his ministers. As one observer described this: "No Minister has the same stamina and energy as the chief minister. He gets up at 3.30 am, reads all the newspapers and does other work. By 6.30 am he starts calling other people, but by that time, the days' agenda is set already".[41] The suggestion, confirmed by others is that it is very hard, if not impossible, to keep up with Chandrababu Naidu's pace.

This may explain some of the centralization, but certainly not all. The impression one also gets is that Chandrababu Naidu finds it hard to delegate powers and responsibilities to others. And, perhaps, this is not surprising. Estimates of the percentage of people in the bureaucracy who really identify with his project (i.e. Vision 2020, administrative reforms, e-governance etc.) varied between 20 and 30 per cent of the IAS officers, (and a lower estimate for the non-IAS). The other 70-80 per cent of the IAS, I was told in several interviews, were not so much against the project, but rather indifferent. So, there may be an issue of mistrust on Chandrababu Naidu's part that explains his drive to control. In turn, however, this drive may reinforce feelings of resentment among the civil servants.[42]

A third characteristic of the policy process has to do with the way policy implementation works out at the local level. Often the participation of stakeholders is not as good as the government claims it would like it to be. The example of participatory irrigation management (Box 2) shows that, although more than 10.000 water user associations are formed, most seem to be dominated by the economic and political elite, and many do not function as associations, let alone as democratic associations. The example of the food-for-work scheme (Box 3) illustrates that the supposed beneficiaries, i.e. poor

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[41] Interview with an IAS officer at Secretariat level, Hyderabad, 2 September 2002.
[42] Several reasons for existing resentment against Chandrababu Naidu's management style were mentioned to me, including that he does not give enough freedom, is too focused on statistics, does not trust officials sufficiently, is too harsh in his public criticisms, and does not give sufficient protection.

people/workers, were not involved in the identification of the works and played no role in the implementation. True, there were other stakeholders – contractors, Mandal-level officers, local politicians – who were very much part of the implementation process, but we can assume it is not to these groups of people the government refers when it talks about 'stakeholder participation'.

BOX 3 FOOD FOR WORK

Between mid 2001 and mid 2002, Chandrababu Naidu negotiated 3.1 million tonnes of rice from the Government of India, for food for work programmes in Andhra Pradesh. This rice was provided free of cost to the State. 3.1 million tonnes foodgrains means about 40 kilos per person, or about 200 kilos per household if distributed evenly over the State. In case it would go exclusively to the poorest 25 per cent of the population, it would mean about 800 kilos per poor household, which is about the full foodgrain requirement. 3.1 million tonnes is, hence, an enormous amount of foodgrains, and that too in a generally food surplus State. The market value of 3.1 million tonnes is about Rs. 30 billion. The conditions under which Chandrababu Naidu could negotiate this amount had to do with a) the fact that the GoI is holding a buffer stock of more than 60 million tonnes of foodgrains – far more than what is required for national food security, b) the fact that the TDP is an important partner in the coalition government that leads the country, which gives Chandrababu Naidu considerable political leverage, and c) the drought conditions experienced in parts of AP, which could justify the quantities given.

The correct procedure for the identification of the works to be undertaken starts at the village level with a *Gram Sabha* (village meeting) in which proposals are made, which then move higher up. Ultimately, the district collector has the responsibility to make district-wise proposals and estimates of the quantity of rice that is required. The works are supposed to be organised without contractors. Minimum wages have to be paid to the workers (can be partly in cash, partly in kind) and labour-replacing technology is forbidden.

The programme was launched in September 2001, and almost immediately the newspapers started reporting serious irregularities. It now seems that an enormous amount of rice has been diverted, either to the open market or back to the Food Corporation of India (and, hence, back to the buffer stock). The government itself has admitted to 20 per cent irregularities, but other estimates are much higher (Deshingkar and Johnson, forthcoming). According to Deshingkar and Johnson, there are five main types of irregularities, all harmful to the poor. These are:
1) Works are identified in a top-down manner and not by the beneficiaries/poor. In most cases, according to Deshingkar and Johnson, "local political party workers, engineers and other influential persons proposed works which were then 'approved' by Mandal officials and sanctioned by the Collector".
2) Although the guidelines specify that there should be no outside contractors, contractors were heavily involved. They succeeded in making enormous illegal profits by claiming amounts of rice disproportionate to the work done, and diverting it subsequently.
3) As far as work was done, it was done by the poor, and not by the very poor.
4) A lot of rice went to undeserving areas, i.e. areas with relatively less drought-affected households and less people willing to participate in the programme.
5) Labour-displacing machinery was used on a large scale.
Deshingkar and Johnson conclude that poor people/workers in the programme have had no influence on the design or on the implementation of the scheme. The media and the opposition have played a role in publicising the irregularities, but so far this has not led to real changes in the design or implementation process, although a vigilance drive is underway. The *Deccan Chronicle* of 6 October 2002 reported that, in a still ongoing investigation, 4609 cases of irregularities were detected so far. At the same time, however, Chandrababu Naidu was lobbying for another 2.5 million tonnes of rice.

Sources: Deshingkar and Johnson (forthcoming) and newspaper cuttings from *the Hindu* and the *Deccan Chronicle*.

In the case of food-for-work it is very clear who the stakeholders are that should have been consulted and included in the policy process. In other cases, it is a bit more ambiguous. In the case of the power reform, for instance, almost the whole population is a stakeholder (i.e. everybody who is an electricity consumer and everybody who would like to be one).[43] Generally, it is especially the clients, the recipients, the public that is seen as stakeholders. The case of the AP State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC), however, shows that the workers (represented in trade unions) regard themselves also as important stakeholders in the policy process.[44] In 2001, the workers went on a strike which lasted more than three weeks, demanding not only an increase in wages, but also a number of other measures which would be beneficial to the APSRTC as a whole, such as a reduction of the Motor Vehicle Tax to 10 per cent (from 15 per cent) on par with the rate for private buses; curbing of illegal private vehicles (buses, taxis, vans) that operate without licence; and, reimbursements by the government of the incurred losses due to concessional rates given to particular categories of people. The government, however, did its best to discredit the workers, the trade unions and the strike. Apparently, trade unions and workers – even in case they make points that are important for the survival of the government corporation that employs them – are not considered as legitimately acting/participating stakeholders.

One group that does not seem to be marginalized in the process of policy implementation are local TDP party men. Several observers have argued that *Janmabhoomi* was also partly meant for this purpose, i.e. to reach out to lower-level political cadres. (See Box 1). The advantage of policy implementation through *Janmabhoomi* rather than through the elected *Panchayat* bodies is that there is more scope for influencing the decision of who will become influential in the process (as committee member, president or self-help group leader). Works are often done by TDP-affiliated contractors. *Janmabhoomi* and the food-for-work programme are no exceptions in this respect. Nayak et al. (2002) make it very clear that a great variety of centrally sponsored rural development schemes is used to maintain coalitions of political support and favouring TDP-affiliated contractors. To give a few examples, watershed committees are criticised for being packed with party workers, and the resources are controlled by TDP party men. There are "tremendous personal benefits to those who are part of the implementing machinery … [and in] return these people have acted as mobilisers during election time and generated party interests at other times" (Nayak et al., 2000:40).[45] The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is another case in point. There are often middlemen involved who broker between the beneficiaries and the administration. More often than not, they are part of the party machinery (*ibid:* 43-4). Nayak et al. further state that beneficiaries of pensions are almost always selected on the recommendations of local leaders or middlemen. The same is true for the housing scheme, *Indira Awas Yojana*, where caste affiliations seem to play a considerable role in the identification of beneficiaries.[46] One point stressed at several points in the study of Nayak et al. is the fact that, while previously contractors and middlemen could be

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[43] In this reform, the consultation process failed, i.e. from the perspective of the government which hoped to be able to create a consensus around the reform. Considerable opposition continued to exist, but the government nevertheless decided to go ahead with the reforms (Harshe, forthcoming).

[44] The information on the APSRTC comes from Ramachandraiah and Patnaik (forthcoming).

[45] At this point, the report quotes from an interview with Professor G. Haragopal. Generally, the selection of people interviewed in AP for this report is somewhat biased: many more are opposed to, rather than affiliated with, the government. The report is, however, also based on secondary material and first hand observations.

[46] At this point, the report refers to a study of Chakravarty and Rajeswar (1998).

independent of political parties, nowadays the 'contractor class' has entered politics and the access of non-party middlemen to the bureaucracy is increasingly closed off.[47] What this illustrates is that policy implementation and party building happen in one and the same process. Two of the main characteristics of policy implementation – the stakeholder approach and the importance of contractors – both contribute to this dual purpose of strengthening the TDP at the same time as implementing the policy.

4. Conclusion – Politics in the Policy Process in Andhra Pradesh

In the final part of this paper, I will try to relate the characteristics of the AP policy process to some of the insights discussed in the earlier part of the paper derived from the COPP body of literature. Based on particularly Horowitz (1989), I discussed some possible features of policy processes in developing countries. Some of these can, indeed, be found in AP. One of these is the attempt to enhance regime legitimacy through the policies that are introduced. When the AP voters voted for the TDP in the 1994 elections, they voted for N.T. Rama Rao, and not for Chandrababu Naidu. When the latter took over in 1995, he had to make an effort to project himself as a legitimate leader. Among other things, he did this by introducing and reinforcing several policies. On the one hand, he projected himself as a reformer *par excellence*. On the other hand, by introducing *Janmabhoomi* and participatory irrigation management, he reached out to the rural population and showed that he was not just an IT adept and a World Bank client, but that he was also concerned with agriculture and grassroot development. He succeeded in broadening the legitimacy of his regime. In the process, he also improved and developed his personal image, and strengthened the TDP party cadre.

Another point mentioned by Horowitz (1989) is the inordinate importance of the state as compared to civil society. That, indeed, is also a feature of the AP policy process. There are few independent civil society organizations engaging with the government and actively involved in influencing policy processes, but, by and large, policy processes are state-driven. The initiative to establish users committees and self-help groups may help in strengthening civil society in the long run, but so far, they seem to function more as extensions of political parties.

Yet another point mentioned in the discussion about 'Third World policy processses' was the observation that in developing countries most overt struggles tend to be in the implementation phase, rather than in the phase of agenda setting and policy formulation. This observation is definitely true in the case of AP policy processes. Policy formulation is very much centralized and there is not much debate about (or protest against) 'policy on paper'. There is opposition (Suri, forthcoming), but it is weak and not able to develop alternative scenarios. In other words, the vision and project of the TDP regime are not really challenged. Policy implementation, on the other hand, is contested, sabotaged, manipulated/corrupted in many different ways. Indeed, it is in this phase that most struggles occur.

There are even observers who claim that redirecting public attention away from the process of (economic) policy making was one of the important intentions of *Janmabhoomi*. According to Krishna Reddy (2002), *Janmabhoomi* has helped

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[47] See, for instance, p. 37; p. 40 footnote 64; p. 42; p. 43.

Chandrababu Naidu to depoliticise development. Krishna Reddy's argument is that, by focusing mainly on local issues, many of which are related to governance in a rather technical sense, Chandhrababu Naidu would have succeeded in insulating the reform process from democratic procedures and people's participation (which was by and large reduced to non-economic issues). It therefore helped him to go ahead with the reform process.[48]

This lack of debate on policy formulation also means that I doubt whether one can usefully speak of policy subsystems or advocacy coalitions in the AP context. There is definitely a vision or a project that is pushed by the Chief Minister and shared by (some) people within the bureaucracy, some party members, some local businessmen, journalists and other opinion makers and endorsed by international agencies. But the policy making process seems too centralised – and implementation too much dominated by party political considerations – to make it possible to speak about something like advocacy coalitions.

At the local level, in the policy implementation phase, networks (of interest, rather than of shared ideas) play an enormous role in shaping policy outcomes. Policy implementation can be usefully formulated as a bargaining process. There are a large number of actors, some with more power, some with less, interacting in local arenas. The currently interesting phenomenon in AP is that there is a conscious attempt to create new actors (stakeholder groups) and to change the form of the arena. *Janmabhoomi* creates new resources (positions in committees, contracts, group membership, money) and new 'rules of the game', and therefore it affects power relations in the local arenas of policy implementation.

One thing that has become very clear is that the state is not a neutral arbiter. In fact, it is hard to see the state not primarily as a TDP regime. In that sense, it is an important actor which has at least two (contradictory) interests, namely a) to strengthen the position of the TDP at all levels, in order to endow/enrich individual party men, but also in order to secure the TDPs political future, and b) to project itself as a dynamic, modern, developmentalist and competent regime. The former is done in many practices of policy implementation. The latter is done through the developmentalist discourse that stresses good governance, results, performance, growth, development, ambitions and achievements and through related practices: performance assessments, introduction of computers, e-governance projects, ambitious targets, etc. There is not just policy speak (the developmentalist discourse) versus (party-building) practice, but there are different kind of practices going on at the same time in the AP bureaucracy. In part, these different practices are meant for different audiences. The local-level efforts of party building, with the diversion of funds and TDP-affiliated middlemen, are meant to reach out to the rural population and to enhance the regime's legitimacy in the eyes of the common man. On the other hand, the modern management practices and discourse is helpful in creating legitimacy in the international arena, in which AP has to show its credit-worthiness and has to compete with other States for foreign investments. But this is not the whole story. The drive towards output and performance is also meant to have a noticeable impact on day-to-day public service delivery. As one bureaucrat said, "the government has to be performance oriented. Politics cannot sustain itself. You have to

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[48] Elsewhere I have argued that I do not find this account entirely convincing (Mooij, 2002).

deliver outcomes. If you want to continue in office, you cannot fool people for a very long time. There is a compulsion of good governance if you want to be re-elected".

What the discussion of policy processes in AP has illustrated, is the enormous importance of party politics. Policy making is dominated by a strong TDP leader, and local politicians are very important actors in policy implementation. Policy making processes are shaped by concerns of regime legitimacy, and policy implementation is shaped by concerns with party building. In the earlier part of the paper, I have distinguished two different ways in which policy processes are political: they are bargaining processes, and the policy discourse is political. Here we see a third meaning of ' politics of policy' – the process is very much dominated by party politicians and party concerns.

Finally, let me stress the process is not without contradictions, especially because, on the one hand, the regime claims to keep politics away from policy implementation, while on the other hand, the whole process is fundamentally political. This leads, in any case, to four related contradictions. First, the developmentalist discourse produces expectations. If it is true, as Harshe and Srinivas (2000:1887) claim, that, even when the schemes fail and are criticised, there is still "the fact that the people are willing to debate the development agenda", it means that the discourse will strike back. Chandrababu Naidu's regime may be judged by the standards it has introduced itself. The new stakeholder discourse may also help in empowering people to stake their claims. This discourse, I would suggest, is not disempowering, but, if anything, empowering, and may produce challenges for the regime in the longer term.

Second, as Suri (forthcoming) has also argued, the identification of the person of Chandrababu Naidu with the reform process means that the opposition has little other alternative than to claim that it is against the reforms, and argue that Chandrababu Naidu is selling the State to the World Bank etc. As I mentioned above, there is no real alternative vision or project, but there is a lot of rather unproductive opposition. Perhaps, one can make the argument (as Suri does) that this is exactly because Chandrababu Naidu as a person is identified with the reforms. To a certain extent, as Suri claims, this may have closed off the possibility of a more consensus-based politics.

Third is the contradiction between modern management and party building. The regime works on both – but at some point, of course, they are no longer compatible. It is only because the 'modern management' has not trickled down far enough in the bureaucracy that both faces of this regime can continue to exist simultaneously. But the contradictions are emerging already. Party building involves money and diversion of funds. In many programmes, it seems this can be contained to an acceptable level: party workers and others take a share, but there is not too much protest against this practice. In the food-for-work programme, however, the rent-seeking behaviour went out of hand. The diversions were so many and it involved so much money that it attracted the attention, not only of the opposition, but also of the media. The consistent publicity of the corruption in this programme is now damaging the image of the TDP regime as committed to good governance, modern management, etc.

Fourth, the contradiction between centralisation and participation. Policy making is centralised, but policy implementation is supposed to be participatory. People are

supposed to become ' partners in development'. But partnership requires ownership, and this requires some kind of say in processes of agenda setting and policy design.

How these contradictions will develop over time is still to be awaited. There are openings for making the policy process more participatory and transparent and the government more responsive and accountable. There is a political leadership that claims to be modern, performance-oriented, in favour of participation and committed to make a difference. But given the compulsions of the electoral system as well as the rent-seeking behaviour at all levels within the bureaucracy, there are obvious limits to the changes that can be effectuated by actors from within the government itself. This means it now depends to a large extent on non-state actors and their capacity to make use of the openings and take the government to task. It is in this light that empirical studies of specific policy processes in AP are potentially useful and should be encouraged. They may show windows of opportunities for an engagement from outside with the policy process in the State.

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