How might different types of national development plans lead to successful outcomes? A research agenda

Lauchlan T. Munro, Ph.D.
Presentation to UNDESA VNR Lab
10 July 2020
Outline of the Presentation

• Research questions
• Data and methods
• The Chimhowu et al. typology of national development plans
• What does success look like?
• Pathways to success through the typology
• Conclusions and recommended readings
Research Questions

• What different types of national development plans are out there?
• What does “success” look like?
• How does each type of plan work?
• Resilience, development and planning: How do they fit together?
Data Sources and Methods

- Scour the web for national development plans => Electronic archive of 167 national development plans for 125 countries.
- Directed and summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) of these plans => Excel database of plans for word counts, prominence of terms, location of terms.
- Conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) of these plans for more qualitative understanding of meaning.
Communicative rationality vs. linear/ends-means rationality

• Linear/Ends-means rationality is the traditional form of planning:
  – set goals/targets,
  – organise and deploy resources to meet those targets,
  – results-based management, input-output tables, social cost-benefit analysis, linear programming, PERT, etc.
  – Search for specific end point or “optimal” solution.

• The large proportion of plans (60% +) based on communicative rationality is a key feature of the new national planning.

• Communicative rationality is based on the search for pragmatic amelioration, grounded in a broad consensus in a specific context, often allied with adaptive or “agile” management style.
# Different Types of Plans and Planning

Chimhowu, Hulme and Munro, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type A (26%)</th>
<th>Type B (42%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Largely top-down process</td>
<td>Largely bottom-up process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational blue print</td>
<td>Communicative Rationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong evidence base</td>
<td>Strong evidence base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited social embeddedness</td>
<td>Socially embedded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type C (12%)</th>
<th>Type D (20%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Largely top-down process</td>
<td>Largely bottom-up process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disjointed blue print</td>
<td>Communicative Rationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak evidence base</td>
<td>Weak evidence base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited social embeddedness</td>
<td>Socially embedded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does “success” look like?

• In many cases, attainment of the SDGs.
• Political support for SDGs: A mile wide and an inch deep?
  – Say yes, do no (e.g. Canada).
  – Development dissidents (ref. Munro, 2020) pursue a very different development agenda.
• Most plans do not take gender or inequality seriously, despite SDG5 and SDG10 (ref. Munro and Granger, 2020).
Pathways to success – Type A Plans

• Type A Plans: Top-down, linear rationality, technically strong, limited social embeddedness.
• Strengths: Clarity, rigor, state commitment
• Challenges/Issues: Limited buy-in from social actors, trouble adapting to radically changed circumstances; vulnerable to change of government.
• Example: Indian planning in 1950s-80s, Benin 2016-21
Pathways to success – Type B Plans

• Type B plans: Communicative rationality, technically strong, socially embedded.
• Strengths:
  – Clarity, rigor,
  – Broad social and political support; less vulnerable to change of government?
• Challenges/Issues:
  – How to evaluate and communicate “success”.
• Example: Benin 2011-15; Uganda 2015-21
Pathways to success – Type C Plans

• Type C plans: Top-down, linear rationality, technically weak, limited social embeddedness.
• Strengths:
  – None, except perhaps as political signaling.
• Challenges/Issues:
  – A plan destined to “collect dust on the shelf”?
  – A political signal to opponents, civil society, private sector, international actors?
• Example: Zimbabwe, ZimASSET 2013-18. Peru
Pathways to success – Type D Plans

• Type D plans: Communicative rationality, technically weak, limited social embeddedness.
• Strengths:
  – Communicative rationality has potential, but political commitment is questionable
• Challenges/Issues:
  – Key question: is it “weak by design” or is technical weakness due to lack of capacity or incoherent process?
• Example: Togo 2013-17
Resilience, development and planning: How do they fit together?

- National development planning is not just a technical exercise.
- It is deeply political too.
- Need to understand both dimensions of planning.
- Is there a “best” type of national development planning?
  - Unclear, though C and D hold little promise for developmental purposes. (They may have other purposes!)
- Likely, it is a question of “best fit” (ref. Ramalingam et al. 2014) between planning type and regime type, rather than “best practice”.

Lauchlan T. Munro, UNDESA VNR Lab, 10 July 2020. CC BY-NC-SA
Recommended Readings:


Thank you! Merci!

Lauchlan T. Munro
School of International Development and Global Studies
FSS8006, 120 University Private
Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5
www.nationalplanning.org
Imunro@uottawa.ca