LARGE-SCALE INFORMATION SYSTEM INTEGRATION:
RATIONAL AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Tae Kyung Sung and *David VanDyke Gibson
Department of Information Systems, Sung Kyun Kwan University, Seoul, Korea;
*Department of Management Science and Information Systems, College and Graduate
School of Business, and Research Associate, IC² Institute, The University of Texas,
Austin, Texas (78712).

ABSTRACT
In 1987, a large South Korean conglomerate formed an
independent information services company (in partnership with
a US company) to provide a variety of improved information
services, at reduced cost, from software design and
development to network services and factory automation. The
centralization effort has met with considerable resistance from
member companies of the conglomerate. Rational and political
theory are used to interpret interview and secondary source
data on this attempt to implement large-scale IS across a range
of company types. IS-user perspectives are contrasted across
different hierarchical levels and tasks.

INTRODUCTION
In January 1987, a large South Korean conglomerate
(hereafter Conglomerate XYZ) formed an independent
information services (IS) company to plan and integrate
all IS activities. The conglomerate consists of 29 major
member companies whose size range from 100 to 25,000
employees who work in more than 25 industries which
trade with 65 foreign countries.

The independent information services company is a joint
venture between the conglomerate and Electronic Data
Systems (EDS), USA. EDS contends that by centralizing
all data processing facilities and services with carefully
designed long-term planning it will be able to offer, at
low-cost, much improved IS support for the entire
conglomerate. A second major goal of the IS integration
effort is to gain strategic advantage in the South Korean
and world-wide information industry. This centralization
effort has encountered considerable resistance from the
member companies' MIS directors and end-users.

This unprecedented large-scale integration of information
services is important since (1) the success or failure of this
organizational change attempt is considered critical to
Conglomerate XYZ's success in the high-tech and
electronics industries, and (2) the South Korean
government and private sector has identified the
information industry as one of the country's strategic
industries of the future.

According to Allison (1969), the interpretation of an event
is largely dependent upon the conceptual model an analyst
employs. He states (1969:689), what each analyst sees
and judges to be important is a function not only of the
evidence about what happened but also of the "conceptual
lenses" through which he looks at the evidence. Analysts
think about policy and organization problems in terms of
largely implicit conceptual models that have significant
consequences for the content of their thought.

Most analysts attempt to understand events as the more or
less purposive acts of decision makers, the so called
"rational perspective." Therefore, what actually happened
in organizations is analyzed through a rational conceptual
lense which limits other explanations. Organization
theorists have recently urged researchers to consider other
models such as viewing organizations as arenas of
political activity where actors engage in conflict and
negotiate and struggle for power [7,8,21,23]. The present
research uses both rational and political perspectives to
investigate Conglomerate XYZ's attempt to implement a
large-scale IS across a variety of company types and
national boundaries.

A exploratory field research approach was used to study
the initiation and implementation of this large-scale
integrated information systems. In-depth interviews and
secondary source data were gathered to fully explain the
events discussed in the subsequent sections of the paper.

CONGLOMERATE XYZ
Conglomerate XYZ was founded in 1947 as a chemical
company whose first product was a cosmetic cream. By
1952 the company was producing Korea's first plastic
household items. The chemical company expanded its
activities in 1958 with the production of electric (and later
electronic) appliances and in 1967, with the formation of
an oil refinery company. By the late 1960's, the two
business areas of chemistry and electronics, which would
become the main focus of the Conglomerate, had been
formed. In 1968, Conglomerate XYZ was the first Korean
corporation to adopt the EDPS accounting system. The
stated goal was to prepare for the future by putting an IS
in place for more effective and rational business
management.
As of early 1988 Conglomerate XYZ was composed of 29 major companies and exported goods, technology and capital world-wide. According to Fortune, in 1986, Conglomerate XYZ is ranked 4th in the world in terms of sales, approximately $11 billion US dollars. In 1987, sales totaled $16 billion US dollars.

Conglomerate XYZ consists of four basic industry sectors: chemistry and resources, electric appliances and electronics, services, and public services and sports. As of 1987, Conglomerate XYZ had the following descriptors:

1) Motto: Human, Technology, and Future
2) Number of major companies: 29
3) Number of employees: 75,000
4) Total sales: $16 billion
5) Total exports: $6.4 billion
6) Growth rate: 30% in sales and 45% in exports
7) Total capital: $8.3 billion
8) Number of branches: $1 offices in over 30 countries

Conglomerate XYZ considers its R&D activities to be the critical foundation on which its products and future is built. It spends 6-7% of sales on R&D with a total investment of $1 billion in 17 domestic and 2 overseas research institutes. R&D priorities are genetic engineering, specialty chemicals, high polymer chemicals, new materials, semiconductors, computers, communication systems, consumer products, electronic components, and integrated control systems.

CONGLOMERATE XYZ's USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Conglomerate XYZ first used computers in 1968. Its oil refinery company, which is a joint venture with Texaco, USA, adopted the EDPS accounting system to "rationalize" Korean business management. Another underlying reason for this adoption was to help Texaco understand Korean accounting procedures and regulations. However, in the late 1960's and early 1970's, since hardware and software costs were high when compared to Korean labor costs, the conglomerate's use of computers was limited to a few applications: payroll, inventory, and accounting.

Even with their general economic success, most South Korean organizations suffered serious business contractions due to the two oil shocks in the 1970's. (Korea does not produce any petroleum.) These contractions hindered Conglomerate XYZ's expansion in its use of computers because of the resulting budget constraints. But in the late 1970's, the South Korean government began to encourage investment in heavy industry (steel and shipbuilding), high-tech, and electronics to facilitate the country's economic development. At this time, Conglomerate XYZ decided to concentrate on high-tech and electronics. To do this, the conglomerate initially introduced computers into its R&D operations and administrative functions. In the administrative area computers were to help bring order to the rapid growth experienced in many of the member companies which had resulted in many conglomerate-wide redundancies and inefficiencies.

In the 1980's, with established success in high-tech and electronics, Conglomerate XYZ was able to fund the production of its own microcomputers while still purchasing mainframes and other IS services from the US and Japan. During these growth oriented years, major decisions were made by the member companies concerning the purchase of hardware and software as well as the development of business applications using information technology. These decisions were decentralized to fit each member company's unique information needs and management style.

In January 1987, an independent information services (IS) company (hereafter IS Central) which is a joint venture between Conglomerate XYZ and Electronic Data Systems (EDS) of USA was formed. By centralizing all data processing facilities and services under IS Central, EDS contended that it would be able to offer quality computer resources and support that would be unmatched by any other data processing company in South Korea. Furthermore, a stated goal of this major centralization effort was to cut the conglomerate's data processing budget. IS Central advertised that through their partnership with EDS, they would ultimately facilitate system integration, software design and development, facilities management, remote computing services, demand processing, network services, and factory automation.

RESEARCH METHODS

According to Yin (1984), Benbasat (1985), and Boroma (1985), the case study approach is particularly appropriate when "how" and "why" questions (qualitative questions) are of major concern, when the topic is contemporary, and when a natural setting is desired. Recently, this holistic qualitative research technique, which emphasizes understanding and meaning rather than measurement of organizational phenomena, and describes real-life situations, has been increasingly used in organization studies in the information systems field.

Franz and Robey (1984) suggest the use of ideographic research rather than nonideographic research strategies when conducting a study that attempts to understand a phenomenon in its natural setting. Nonideographic methods seek general laws and employ only procedures admitted by exact sciences. On the other hand, ideographic methods endeavor to understand particular events. It is "wading through the clusters upon clusters of symbols by which man can confer significance upon his experience" (25). Weick (1985:112) states "we need methods that generate theories, ideas, and hypotheses rather than 'test them' and agrees with Franz and Robey that the ideographic approach should be a valued method for much current IS research.

Thirty-two in-depth interviews were conducted in South Korea (during December, 1987) with Conglomerate XYZ's employees and managers as well as other knowledgeable informants. All of the conglomerate's interviews were with executives and third with subunit heads. All interviews began open-ended and progressed to a more structured format.

Major difficulty was experienced in collecting interview data with IS Central employees. Conglomerate XYZ
executive advised that IS Central was off-limits to all outsiders. Since the Korean member of the research team was not allowed to interview the core personnel of IS Central, he relied on an informal network of knowledgeable informants to obtain needed information. The researcher also secured secondary source data (archival, meeting minutes, annual reports, standard operating procedures) to supplement the interviews. These interviews and archival data were analyzed for contradictions and similarities.

It is the goal of the present research to reflect the meaning provided by the actors and documents rather than impose the researchers' preconceived notions on events. To this end, both rational and political perspectives are used to interpret the data.

RATIONAL AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

The rational perspective is normative and focuses on the logic of optimal choice [14]. According to Pfeffer (1982), this perspective has several critical elements. First, behaviors are construed to be chosen. Second, choice is presumed to occur according to a set of consistent preferences. Thus rationality presumes that events are "purposive choices of consistent actors" [2]. As a result, behavior is determined by and presumably reflective of conscious, purposive action. Third, choice is presumed to occur prior to the action itself --- rationality is prospective rather than retrospective in that actions are consciously chosen in the light of some anticipated consequences.

Fourth, rational action is oriented. As Friedland (1974) argues, rationality cannot be defined apart from the existence of goals. Choice, then, is value maximizing. Schelling (1973:4) succinctly summarizes the rational perspective as follows:

... the assumption of rational behavior--not just of intelligent behavior--is of behavior motivated by conscious calculation of advantages, calculation that in turn is based on an explicit and internally consistent value system.

The basic assumption of value-maximizing behavior produces propositions central to most rational-based explanations of behavior in organizations. According to Allison (1969), the general principle can be formulated as follows: the likelihood of any particular action results from a combination of (1) relevant values and objectives, (2) perceived alternative courses of action, (3) estimates of various sets of consequences which follow from each alternative, and (4) net valuation of each set of consequences.

But, the rational perspective has its weaknesses. At its extreme, the model is completely unrealistic and there have been numerous criticisms in recent years. Keen and Scott Morton (1976:65) state that "there is virtually no descriptive support whatsoever for its conception of decision-making." Nonetheless, it remains a dominant influence in organization literature [23].

The political perspective considers organization action as the outcome of bargaining processes of units or actors. Organization actors are presumed to act in their own self-interest and to engage in strategic action in pursuing these interests [14]. While the rational perspective focuses on actions, the political perspective tends to focus on the outcomes (decisions or allocations) that result from the interaction of interdependent, competing political actors. However, awareness of political motives does not mandate that behavior becomes overtly political [12]. Actors tend to observe prevailing norms of rationality by justifying actions on rational grounds and honoring the appropriate organizational rituals [20,24].

Pfeffer (1982:63,64) includes political theory in his framework of microlevel rational action because of the presumption of intentional rational action on the part of individuals or subunits. Participants act in their own self-interest and engage in strategic action in pursuing these interests. In short, political models focus on the decisions and allocations that result from value maximizing behavior. Action results "from games among players who perceive quite different faces of an issue and who differ markedly in the actions they prefer" [2]. As Pfeffer (1982:64) concludes, because decisions are the result of bargaining and compromise, the resultant choice, often does not perfectly represent the preferences of any one social actor. It is power that determines whose interests prevail in the conditions of conflict [16].

The concept of power is fundamental in political theories. Political games are played to determine outcomes which advance and impede each player's specific programs and interests to which he is committed [1]. Overlapping interests constitute the stakes for which games are played and each player's ability to play successfully depends, in part, on his power. According to Allison (1971), organizational power is an elusive blend of at least three elements: (1) bargaining advantages drawn from formal authority and obligations, institutional backing, constituents, experts, and status, (2) skill and will in using bargaining advantages, and (3) other players' perceptions of the first two ingredients.

Researchers in the IS field need to be aware of both rational and political perspectives of organizational phenomena because the same events may generate two different sets of stories or myths [12]. Investigators must not exclude either set by virtue of the way they conduct their inquiry. Fieldman and March's (1981) analysis of "nonrational" information processing behavior in organizations and Boland and Pondy's (1983) analysis of accounting systems both support the notion that rational and political perspectives can coexist and indeed complement one another.

CONGLERATED XYZ'S INTEGRATION DECISION

South Korea's economic future, as well as the success of Conglomerate XYZ is seen, by some, to depend on the development of Korea's service industries. Contributing to such an orientation is South Korea's lack of almost all the natural resources needed for an industrial economy. Several of Korea's largest conglomerates have targeted the strategic use of information technology as most important to the service industry.

The mid-1970's decision of Conglomerate XYZ to heavily invest in high-tech resulted in high profits for the company. Building on this success, the conglomerate considers the information industry its strategic focus for
the 1980's and 1990's. However, inhibiting this objective have been two main factors: the conglomerate's lack of experience in developing software or application programs, and problems experienced in implementing existing IS technologies.

Given the objective of using information technology to move effectively and strategically into Korea's information industry, three possible action alternatives were identified by XYZ headquarters. The first was to let each of the 29 member companies decide on the best solution for their own individual IS development and use (i.e., to basically keep the present IS policy). The second alternative was to form an IS steering committee or strategic IS group to study and control the development and use of information technology at the conglomerate. The third alternative was to contract with Electronic Data Systems (EDS). In 1986, Conglomerate XYZ was aware that a rival conglomerate had been discussing, with EDS, the integration of its information activities and the strategic use of information technology. In November 1986, a rival conglomerate XYZ announced that the pendexion deal between the rival conglomerate and EDS fell apart.

XYZ Headquarters considered the three alternatives in terms of projected costs and benefits, a rational perspective. According to these criteria, the first alternative was considered too risky since it was feared that it would result in a continued lack of top management control and a continued increase of information processing costs which was perceived to be the result of the rapid explosion of IT use throughout the conglomerate. It was thought that adopting such a decentralized approach would lead XYZ's 29 member companies to increase their production of redundant as well as inconsistent application programs. There were also fears expressed about the lack of data security which was perceived to result from such autonomy. Less consideration was given to the possible benefits of increased creativity and the development of information services which would better fit the needs of the individual users in the member companies.

From a rational perspective, it was also argued that the second alternative would take too long to implement since the conglomerate did not have available the experience or the technical base required to form a competent IS steering company. Such an alternative, it was argued would take a lot of time, effort, and resources and produce questionable results. By the time Conglomerate XYZ had completed such a self-study of information services needs, it was believed that that the conglomerate would have lost the race to be the leader in Korea's information industry.

The third alternative, forming a partnership with EDS, was argued to be the most rational solution since EDS would provide the specific strategic plans as well as the required talents and IS designs and implementation. Late November 1986, headquarters of Conglomerate XYZ announced that IS Central would be formed in January 1987. This announcement shocked the management of the 29 member companies since none of the top managers had the opportunity to participate in the decision. This deal was made in a short period of time and the talks were confidential and at top management levels. Headquarters also announced that the president of the new IS company would be "Manager Q."

Manager Q had been with Conglomerate XYZ since the early 1960's. In 1968, when the conglomerate introduced the EDPS accounting system, Manager Q was a junior manager with no prior computing experience. He was assigned to the project team whose responsibility was to facilitate the IS implementation. Manager Q was commended for his effort and performance and he became an executive of XYZ in 1985. Seventeen of Manager Q's 25 years with Conglomerate XYZ have been in the information services area. Manager Q was a strong proponent of the partnership with EDS.

Manager Q found the opportunity to enact his preference for large-scale, composite solutions at the conglomerate, which he learned of the proposed deal between EDS and a rival Korean conglomerate had been disbanded. Manager Q immediately got permission from Conglomerate XYZ's Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board to initiate talks with EDS. Within a couple of days, Manager Q arranged for EDS's presentation about possible future information service plans to conglomerate XYZ's Board. Manager Q strongly suggested to the Board that EDS was the best solution to the current lack of control over Conglomerate XYZ's information services. He and EDS focused on two words to convince the Board of the merits of their proposal: "improved efficiency" and "reduced cost."

The announced goal of XYZ's newly formed IS Central was to improve IS support for all the member companies of the conglomerate at reduced cost. The location of IS Central was to be the same building where most of the 29 member companies were located.

From the rational perspective EDS and the new president of IS Central, Manager Q, had powerful arguments to sell the centralization plan to the Board of Conglomerate XYZ. From EDS's perspective, their success in Korea depended on "selling" a large conglomerate, such as Conglomerate XYZ, on the advantages of their services. The urgency of this goal increased when the proposed contract with the other Korean conglomerate fell through.

Before the formation of IS Central, each member company of the conglomerate had the autonomy to control its software and hardware purchases, and application development. However, such decentralized decision making of IS activities had been a major concern for headquarters of XYZ. One major issue driving this concern was the dramatic increase in the company-wide budget for information and data processing services.

Using a rational perspective, Manager Q suggested that the most effective, if not the only way, to control the rapidly increasing cost of each member company's information processing activities was to centrally control the budget with a well-integrated composite information system. On the other hand, some of Manager Q's colleagues and subordinates were very ambitious in this objective and that his goal of controlling all information service activities was unrealistic and to the detriment of what is best for the long-term success of the conglomerate. In short, depending on one's interpretation of the data, either a rational or political perspective might be used to explain the desire for and obstacles to the centralization of IS activities at the conglomerate.

At the same time, EDS executives told the Board that there were other Korean companies who were interested in
working with EDS if the deal between EDS and Conglomerate XYZ did not work out. There was also a rumor that other rival conglomerates were actively engaged in contacting several other US information services companies. These events added to the pressure on the Board of Conglomerate XYZ. Within one week they approved the EDS plan to form a joint-venture independent information service company, to integrate the information service activities of the entire conglomerate.

Conglomerate XYZ and EDS justified the partnership based on the following rationales:

First, EDS would conduct an IS feasibility study at the conglomerate which would be a valuable opportunity to evaluate current information technology and to design long-term IS planning. Such a study would also facilitate the integration of the conglomerates' current information service activities.

Second, the proposed integration would result in much improved IS support at minimum cost.

Third, successful information services integration would facilitate more effective and strategic information technology use and would facilitate the accumulation of technology experience and development of advanced high-tech.

Fourth, XYZ's IS Company would increase the conglomerate's profits by offering improved information services not only to the conglomerate but also to other Korean companies. Conglomerate XYZ would ultimately be the leader in Korea's information industry.

THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

According to the EDS plan, the integration of Conglomerate XYZ's information service activities will happen as follows:

1. Establish an independent information service company;
2. Conduct a feasibility study for the entire conglomerate;
3. Make the necessary hardware and software conversions;
4. Test and conduct final fine-tuning of the IS; and
5. Commence full operation, development, and maintenance of the IS.

In January 1987, IS Central was formed as a joint venture between Conglomerate XYZ and EDS. As of Spring 1988, about 800 DP personnel from the member companies were officially assigned to IS Central. All the DP personnel were then reassigned to the DP departments of the member company to which they previously belonged. This reassignment of the DP personnel was to make it clear that their formal commitment was to IS Central and not to the XYZ company for which they originally worked. These contact positions within each member company are referred to as the IS-liaisons. The objective was a smooth and easy transition from decentralized to centralized information activities.

The administrative positions of IS Central were filled with Conglomerate XYZ personnel, while most of technical positions were filled with EDS personnel. All administrative positions and technical positions held by EDS personnel were located at IS Central and were charged with handling IS responsibilities at the conglomerate level.

From a political perspective, IS Central's assignment of DP personnel to IS Central was intended to reinforce that the MIS directors of each company were to follow the orders from IS Central instead of the top management of their member companies. And, in fact, this policy deprived each member company of budgetary and personnel control in IS matters. From each member company's perspective the personnel assignment to IS Central meant the loss of autonomy on information service activities. After this change, to obtain new information services, each company had to request the service with the local IS-Liaison and then the IS-Liaison would request approval from IS Central.

From January 1987 to July 1987, IS Central was located in the headquarters building with most of Conglomerate XYZ's member companies. In July 1987 IS Central moved to another building located about 5 miles away. IS Central explained that existing equipment and facilities at the old building did not provide an adequate working environment.

Phase 2 of IS centralization at the conglomerate was to determine (1) the best possible form of IS integration, (2) how long the it would take, and (3) what intermediary steps were required. After a 6 month feasibility study (which many respondents argued was quite cursory), IS Central began Phase 3 and decided to use the IBM 3090 mainframe as the host computer throughout Conglomerate XYZ. The IBM 3090 was new to all the member companies since most of them used IBM 3080's or Honeywell DPS systems. IS Central ordered all member companies to use IBM 3090 and covert all software programs to fit this configuration. At the same time IS Central asked member companies to use the mainframe as much as possible rather than their PC's so that IS integration processes could be expedited. According to the initial EDS plan, the conversion process would end by March 1989. However, this initial schedule has been delayed and the completion of Phase 3 is now set for September, 1989.

RESISTANCE TO THE CENTRALIZATION PLAN

The interview data suggest that the integration effort of Conglomerate XYZ's IS activities has encountered considerable resistance from most member company MIS directors and end-users for the following reasons. First, since the formation of IS Central, improvements of company based information services, which are stated to be desperately needed, have been stopped. This stoppage is scheduled to continue until September, 1989. This means few, if any, information services improvements for almost three years (since the formation of IS Central) for all member companies of Conglomerate XYZ.

1 As of Spring 1988, the first two phases have been completed and the third phase is in process. Therefore, only the first three phases will be discussed in the present paper.
Second, member company respondents argue that the expected IS centralization will be effective only for certain standard tasks. IS Central believes greater centralization and standardization is possible because it does not have a realistic appreciation of the task specific and sensitive information needs of each company.

Third, while the centralization effort pushes the use of mainframes, most MIS directors and end-users believe that PC’s are more effective in accomplishing most company-based tasks. Furthermore, they contend that as the cost of PC hardware and software decreases and capacity increases, the use of PC’s will be more attractive to users in the member companies.

Fourth, users believe that the centralization of information services will create backing problems so extensive that users needs in the member companies will not be met. And they express concern about who will set the priorities of processing time and software development and maintenance. On the other hand, the software development and implementation cycles for PCs in the member companies have been relatively short.

Fifth, the efficiency of information services should not be evaluated solely in terms of an overall decrease in the conglomerate’s IS budget. Many member company managers believe that cutting DP budgets will not benefit overall conglomerate objectives.

Sixth, to better understand and meet company IS needs and to facilitate communication, IS Central should have remained in the main building with other member companies.

Two XYZ companies have managed to avoid the massive reassignment of DP personnel to IS Central: the conglomerate’s finance company and an oil refinery company. The finance company successfully convinced IS Central that the much higher pay structure of finance personnel would cause dissatisfaction of other DP personnel at IS Central. And top management at the finance company informed XYZ’s Board that any hindrance of their information service activities due to the proposed integration would likely cause big losses in profits for the conglomerate. The oil refinery company, which is a joint venture between Texaco, USA and Conglomerate XYZ, has also succeeded in avoiding being involved in the IS integration attempts. This resistance was the result of a protest from the American employees who complained that the centralization attempts were intolerable.

Two Korean IS managers in XYZ’s member companies quit their liaison jobs with IS Central even though this action put them on a "blacklist" within the Korean IS community. Since career opportunities for Korean MIS directors are very limited, such resignations indicate how frustrated at least some of the IS directors are about the IS centralization attempts at Conglomerate XYZ.

Some XYZ member companies have been reporting problems about the conversion process to IS Central. Sometimes they complain that the procedures are too complicated to follow and they ask for technical help. Until help arrives, they halt production. As some respondents indicated, since IS conversion decisions are being made by IS Central without the consultation of member companies MIS directors and DP personnel protest through work sabotage.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has observed that the initiation and implementation of a large-scale composite information system within a complex organization can be viewed from both rational and political perspectives. The rational perspective indicates that the events occurred to support improved information service support for Conglomerate XYZ at reduced cost. An objective that was quite attractive to the Board, especially when competitors were rumored to be making the same centralization moves to increase their overall efficiency. In short, large-scale composite information systems were argued on the grounds of providing increased information processing efficiency and effectiveness at decreased costs. On the other hand, the political perspective suggests that such rationally based arguments may, at least in part, mask covert power and control interests and strategies.

These different explanations derive from different perspectives as a result of the reference frame a researcher employs. Hab and Lindquist (1975) suggest that the differences in the resulting explanations are due not only to unit of analysis but to differences in level of analysis since the rational perspective focuses on only a single actor while the political perspective deals with aggregates. While both rational and political explanations of the same events generate perfectly plausible explanations, they need not be contradictory. Rather the two explanations together provide a more complete understanding of the initiation and implementation of a large-scale composite information systems within the organization.

Political actors are not isolated episodes to be interpreted within the context of rational problem solving efforts. It is the other way around. The rational elements are tools used by participants to gain new grounds or to protect ground already won. They also serve as "facades" to mask political motives and legitimate self-interest (Franz and Robey, 1984:1208).

And as Allison (1969 and 1971) and Hab and Lindquist (1975) emphasize, rational and political perspectives should not be considered the only approaches. For example, Pfeffer (1982) suggests two other perspectives on action which may also help complete the understanding of such case analyses: action as externally constrained or environmentally determined, and action as emergent from social processes.

Formulation of alternative frames of reference and demonstration that different analyses, relying predominantly on different models, produce quite different explanations should encourage the analyst's self-consciousness about the nets he employs. (Allison, 1969:715)

This study is intended to provide new directions for IS research in such areas as IS planning and IT adoption and the strategic and effective use of IT. To date such research has heavily concentrated on the rational perspective. More research based on political as well as other perspectives may provide more insights and
understanding on organizational change processes and consequently help theoreticians and practitioners better understand IS implementation and use within complex organizations.

REFERENCES


