Policy Brief: Policy Myopia as a Source of Policy Failure: Adaptation and Policy Learning Under Deep Uncertainty

Highlights
- Policy myopia—short-term decision-making—hinders long-term policy effectiveness and leads to failures.
- Adaptive policy learning offers tools to navigate deep uncertainty and improve policymaking.
- Strategies such as scenario planning, evidence-based decision-making, and continuous evaluation enhance policy resilience.

Summary
Policy myopia refers to the short-sightedness in policymaking that prioritises immediate gains over long-term sustainability. The paper "Policy myopia as a source of policy failure: adaptation and policy learning under deep uncertainty" emphasises the need for adaptive policy learning to address this short-sightedness. By integrating tools like scenario planning and evidence-based decision-making, policymakers can create more robust and resilient policies.

What's the Issue?
Policymakers often face deep uncertainty when addressing complex challenges. Policy myopia—focusing on immediate concerns while neglecting long-term implications—leads to flawed policies and failures. The assumption of short-term certainty can exacerbate risks and hinder adaptive responses.

Why Is This Important?
In an unpredictable world, policymakers must develop strategies to:
- Mitigate risks associated with short-term thinking.
- Build resilience against unforeseen challenges.
- Ensure sustainable and adaptive policy outcomes.
Adaptive policy learning provides a framework to anticipate future challenges, navigate uncertainties, and enhance decision-making quality.

What Should Policymakers Do?
Policymakers should adopt the following measures to overcome policy myopia and enhance policy resilience:

1. **Encourage Adaptive Learning:** Create a culture open to new information and continuous improvement.
2. **Invest in Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** Develop infrastructure for collecting and interpreting data. Use data analysis and research to inform policy decisions and anticipate challenges.

3. **Incorporate Scenario Planning:** Prepare for various contingencies by considering multiple future scenarios.
4. **Foster Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement regular policy reviews to refine and adjust strategies based on outcomes.
5. **Promote Robustness and Agility:** Design policies with built-in mechanisms for adjustments to remain effective in dynamic environments.
6. **Integrate Foresight Techniques:** Employ tools like trend analysis and horizon scanning to anticipate and prepare for long-term challenges.

Citation

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