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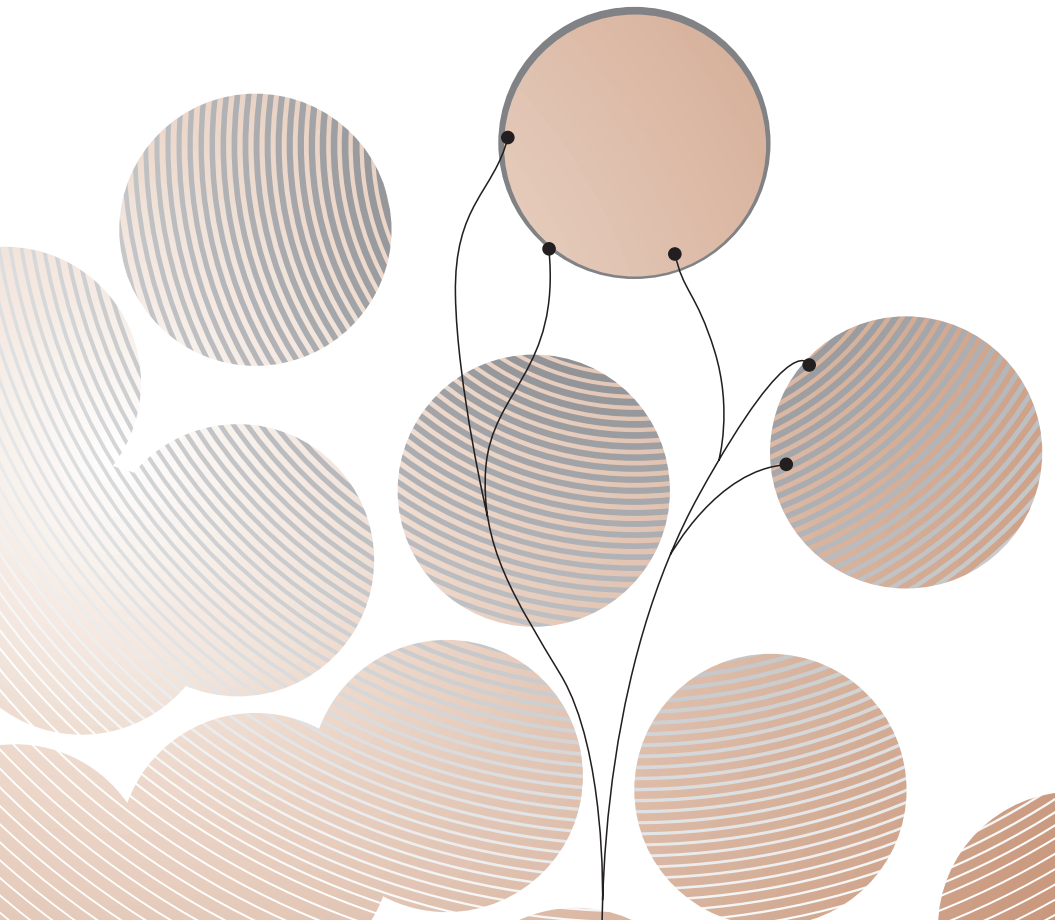
Social Science and Policy Challenges

Democracy, values and capacities

Edited by Georgios Papanagnou



RESEARCH & POLICY

Social Science and Policy Challenges
Democracy, Values and Capacities

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SOCIAL SCIENCE AND POLICY CHALLENGES

DEMOCRACY, VALUES AND CAPACITIES

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Research & Policy Series

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Introduction
BUILDING BRIDGES? THE CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL SCIENCE FOR POLICY

Georgios Papanagnou

The social sciences are a vital part of modern societies. They play a significant role in national higher education curricula, absorb a fair part of national and international research funding and investment, provide career opportunities for highly qualified individuals, inform and influence public debate, and help shape the direction of policy in various fields. Indeed, if one adopts a diachronic perspective the social sciences have been, for some time now, in the ascendance. From the number of university students[1] and Ph.D. candidates[2] to that of professional researchers and academics;[3] from the profusion of different scientific publications (books, journals, policy briefs) and disciplines, to the extent of the subjects covered, the social sciences appear to be thriving (see UNESCO's *World Social Science Report 2010*).

Of course, this success is not surprising. The social sciences were created and institutionalized in the nineteenth century precisely to serve a fundamental human concern: the need to understand the forces driving human societies and by extension the reasons behind social ills (Gagnon, 1989). The purpose was to understand the social and propose remedies. Under the influence of Enlightenment ideals about the capacity of reason to understand, explain and potentially predict events in the natural and human

1 Students in Social Sciences Business and Law (SSBC) made up around 30 per cent of total global tertiary enrolment in 2006. Also total enrolment in SSBL increased from around 11.4 million in 2000 to 22.0 million SSBL students in 2006 (UNESCO 2010: 364).

2 In 2006 there were about 1.9 million doctoral students in SSBL in the world (UNESCO 2010: 364).

3 See UNESCO 2010: 363.

milieux, the social sciences were conceived, and in great part designed, as fact-finding and truth-establishing instruments. Aiming to parallel the achievements of the natural sciences, especially post-Newtonian physics, in discovering universal laws explaining the behaviour of objects, the social sciences were designed to investigate the complex interactions of people. Thus, the institutionalization of the social sciences in the nineteenth century marked a significant milestone in humanity's study of itself. From then onwards, the study of social phenomena achieved a unique status. Scientists trained in the proper methods (causal laws and empirical verification) and supported by the proper institutional infrastructure (universities or research institutes) could make informed statements concerning the explanation of social phenomena.

In the course of the twentieth century the social sciences solidified their status. New disciplines were created, university departments and faculties were institutionalized, and social scientists made the move as experts into public administration or began working for private enterprises and research institutes (Radin, 2000). In the Western hemisphere the social sciences, especially in the United States, provided tools for policy design and became part of standard operating procedures in policy analysis (the Planning Programming Budgeting System or PPBS) (Yang, 2007). Likewise, in the Eastern bloc the social sciences were put to the service of the reigning regimes. The belief in the capacity of social engineering to deliver modern societies from various problems bolstered the conception of the social sciences as truth-establishing and problem-solving. If advanced societies could put a man on the moon, then one could reasonably expect that social science could solve the 'problem of the ghetto', or such was the prevalent reasoning (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

PROBLEMS, DIVIDES AND CHALLENGES

However, despite these successes many problems and doubts remain; problems and doubts having to do both with the direction the institutionalization of the social sciences has taken and with the social sciences' proper epistemic status.

The *World Social Science Report* (2010) published by UNESCO and the International Social Sciences Council, entitled 'Knowledge Divides', marks a major contribution in the attempt to offer a global view of the main challenges facing the social sciences.[4]

4 The *World Social Science Report* identifies eight crucial divides: a geographical divide; a capacity divide; the unequal degree of internationalization of knowledge production; the divide between

Aiming at a brief synthesis, the report notes with some preoccupation that social scientific research, despite its marked internationalization over the past twenty years, is still to a significant extent dominated by the United States (and Western Europe) and the English language. It is a matter of fact that the superior means and capacities of scientific institutions and communities of the global North (although increasingly challenged by the ascendance of some key developing countries) tend to influence the development of social scientific theory and practice (UNESCO, 2010: 143; for more detail see chapters 4 and 5). Social scientists from developing countries struggle to construct their separate voices and theoretical paradigms in an atmosphere that does not facilitate alternative approaches. This translates into a conceptual and epistemological predominance, whereby the concepts, perspectives and methods seen as canonical in the global North are *grosso modo* adopted by research communities in the South. The process evidently is not without merits, as standards of quality and excellence are equally transmitted and adopted. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the richness of context is often neglected in an attempt to adhere to internationally set standards. Additionally, exactly because of the gaps in terms of funds and capacities, social scientists from the periphery have greater difficulties in taking advantage of what technology and modern information and communication technology(ICT) have to offer to their profession.

Moreover, as the report highlights, the divides between the different social scientific disciplines pose a further challenge. An outcome of specialization, and of the desire to find concrete solutions to well-defined problems, the clear institutional and theoretical demarcation of disciplines impacts negatively on the search for inter disciplinary or trans disciplinary approaches. As society seeks to cope with ever more complex social problems, demanding the intermeshing of both natural and social epistemic knowledge (climate change being the obvious example), the reproduction of social scientific research along discipline lines (reinforced by academic discipline-based peer review) acts as an obstacle to the redirection of relevant research and training. To this one must add the epistemological divides that have given the social scientific field great heterogeneity.

In addition, the conduct of social science research has become more and more project-based, and subject to intense competition. At the same time, state subsidies have decreased significantly, while private sources of

disciplines; the divide between mainstream and alternative approaches; the competition resulting from new managerial practices; the sometimes tense relations between academics and society and those between academics and policy-makers.

funding, or partnerships between the public and the private sectors, play an ever increasing role. The situation is worse in low-income countries where public funds allocated to social research verge towards extinction. In these cases, it is often non-gorvernment organizations (NGOs), think tanks and private consultancies, which however mostly depend on external funding, that have undertaken the task of sustaining social research (UNESCO, 2010, p. 53–54; see also chapters 2 and 3).

MAKING SOCIAL SCIENCE RELEVANT

Overall, the main problem that the *World Social Science Report* seems to be pointing at, and what many critics but also defenders of the social sciences would be ready to admit, is an anxiety over the relevance of social science. Funding difficulties, the turn towards project-based research (which is supposed to be more in touch with actual social preoccupations), the move towards greater competition, the increasing importance of quality-measuring indicators and assessment processes and the anxieties over the epistemological and methodological heterogeneity of the social sciences are to some extent (although other key factors are evidently at play, which have to do with the general direction of research policies) related to the fact that social science has not managed to convince authorities and the wider public of its importance. At the same time, some of these processes and developments accentuate the apparent weaknesses of the social sciences. Thus, despite their institutional solidification and global successes, it is an oft repeated complaint that the social sciences are neither relevant nor truly scientific – and it is precisely because of their unscientific status, so argue the critics, that the social sciences seem not to be able to solve problems in the same way as the natural sciences do.

Critics speak of professors who live in academic ivory towers and who employ over-complicated and abstract scientific jargon. They speak of researchers who work on topics and issues with no relevance for modern societies and only for the pleasure of pure reflection. Furthermore, they speak of a soft science and point to its inability to produce robust and cumulative theories. It is a widely accepted truth that the social sciences have not managed to establish causal social laws that are valid across contexts and eras, and they also have difficulties in providing cumulative knowledge of social facts and phenomena (Elster, 2010). Equally, critics note the lack of precise predictive social scientific theories or statements. Few economists predicted the financial crisis of 2008. Likewise, the collapse of the Berlin

Wall and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union caught almost all international relations scholars by surprise – especially those who adhered to the more scientific-like theories.

Thus, were we to simplify, there would seem to be two options available. The first is to recognize the irrelevance of a big part of the social sciences and hence accord them a significantly less important place in research and education. The social sciences in this extreme scenario would be good for giving people some basic social knowledge and familiarizing them with key political, social and economic concepts. As such they would have a cultural role to play, but not much more. Of course, this scenario does not inform policy as such, but one can trace certain aspects of it behind recent calls to make social science research compete for funds, the moves towards altering its organizational *modus operandi,* and sporadic measures to decrease its presence in academic curricula. Nonetheless, it quickly becomes obvious that this is not an option for the social scientific community. Equally, it is a path that lacks serious political support. The social sciences are still seen as valuable parts of modern academia and research.

The other, more realistic, option is to persist with what we have been doing thus far. Namely, continue with our attempts to bolster the scientific status of social science – especially via the use of experiments, econometrics and statistical analyses – reorient its thematic coverage so as to render it more relevant, engage into more interdisciplinary work, address various capacity-building issues. The most recent trend in this attempt is the move towards evidence-based policy (EBP) (Nutley et al., 2008). EBP is associated with the attempt to place hard evidence at the heart of policy-making. It recognizes the fact there are other sources of knowledge competing for attention in the making of policy (e.g. professional knowledge, political ideas, stakeholder knowledge) but argues that evidence has to be robust. It also endeavours to distinguish itself from earlier efforts to instrumentalize social science in that it seeks not to be ideological. Thus, it tends to privilege evidence acquired through rigorous, verifiable methods. According to the logic of EBP, improving social, economic and environmental outcomes demands reliable and robust knowledge; knowledge which is not ideological, short-term or arbitrary. Hence, in most instances advocates of EBP tend to favour 'hard' social science, i.e. complex quantitative research or reviews of such studies. Nevertheless, EBP is open also to some more 'soft', or qualitative methods, provided that these are coupled with systematic reviews (Head, 2010, 2009). Equally, EBP advocates capacity-building in relation to

the utilization of social research. Indeed, establishing practical links between policy and research is necessary for the successful promotion of soundly evidenced policies.

> The advocates of EBP urge the incorporation of rigorous research evidence into public policy debates and internal public sector processes for policy evaluation and program improvement. The primary goal is to improve the reliability of advice concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of policy settings and possible alternatives. The quest for rigorous and reliable knowledge, and the desire to increase the utilization of rigorous knowledge within the policy process, are core features of the EBP approach.
>
> *(Head, 2009, p. 16)*

It goes almost without saying that EBP approaches towards increasing the relevance and impact of social scientific research are commendable. It is also important that international organizations, like UNESCO, promote evidence-informed policies and capacity-building across the globe. Although one could agree that scientific research does have an enlightenment function, i.e. a gradual and long-term impact on human beliefs and eventually policies, it is practically and – arguably – morally naïve to consider this as sufficient. Increasing the utilization of social scientific results is paramount for the improvement of policies, social progress and the well-being of people. It is vital for directing action in the face of pressing, current challenges. Thus, it is in need of effective bridges that bring it, on time, to the heart of policy.

Nonetheless, there exist certain *aporias* associated with current scientific practices and with the attempt to continue in the path that we have set out, which demand at least a pause for further reflection.

The fact remains that the social sciences have immense difficulties in making predictions and have not been able to establish laws. Despite over-specialization, intensification in capacity-building and readjusting their thematic focus via processes of learning, the social sciences do not enjoy the same epistemic status as the 'hard' sciences. This constant failure seems to point towards the existence of a more fundamental factor that influences their constitution as science. This is something that, more often than not, advocates of rigorous methodologies and testing are somewhat reluctant to consider.

In the same vein, the social sciences have not been able to solve social problems the way that the hard sciences have. Progress is constantly made in a number of areas of concern (poverty, racism and integration, democratic

rights, gender issues, children's rights, justice and equality etc.) often as an outcome of the findings and reflections produced by social research. However, improving the social realm is not like building bridges or innovating in telecommunications. Social research often has trouble reaching its stated goals because those whom analysts often proclaim as 'subjects' are not receptive to change. Prejudices or simply different patterns of engaging in social interaction impede social research from having any impact. And vice versa; one cannot neglect the strong constitutive character of the social sciences – what Giddens has called the double hermeneutic (Giddens, 1987). In essence, the social schemata, the categories used to explain social phenomena, enter the social world and help constitute it. One only has to think of the importance of class as an analytic category, and the different social interpretations of class that have led to different political and policy outcomes. What this means is that it is precisely the social character of the social sciences that hinders them, to a significant but not exhaustive extent, from measuring themselves, their theories and their concepts against an external reality. It is often the case that before social science can empirically and experimentally test its hypotheses, there has to be a consensus over the broader direction of the policies we want to pursue. There has to be an agreement over values. On the whole, it becomes clear that evidence has not been able to act as the final arbiter in clashes over values, something which is particularly relevant to the social sciences. As noted by Weale:

> Even the best technical expertise cannot be decisive where issues of value and principle are involved, and wherever we have decisions about acceptable risk, then questions of value apply.
>
> *(Weale, 2001, p. 414)*

What is more, modern societies have to respond to increasingly complex problems with potentially global consequences. Again, one need only consider the social impact of the last financial and economic crisis and the effects of climate change. The risks produced by modern complexity pose multiple challenges to the received understanding of social science as truth-establishing and problem-solving (van Langenhove calls this the *scientist* approach: van Langenhove, 2007). First of all, they cast doubt on the strict institutional demarcation of social science into disciplines. Interdisciplinary work is not something that can be achieved only via cooperation among the different disciplines. As convincingly pointed out by Balstad in the *World Social Science Report* (Balstad, 2010, p. 212), public authorities and academic communities have to further promote the establishment of interdisciplinary

undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and curricula and find new sources of funding for similar research positions.

Furthermore, modern complexity and situations of risk require an interaction of multiple perspectives. The belief in the capacity of (social) scientific reason to offer foolproof advice has been found wanting in many instances (such as the financial crisis). It is often the case that perfectly valid knowledge that could have averted policy failure was sidelined in the build-up of policies, because it did not fit the preconceptions of leading analysts or was not compatible with the targets set by the key decision-makers.

Moreover, in the interaction of perspectives what is often missing is rich contextual knowledge, a kind of knowledge that can surface only if we include citizens in the policy debate. The inclusion of affected publics in the policy dialogue does not only improve the chances of research actually having an impact, but also broadens its horizons. Thus, dealing better with modern risks and complexity requires establishing reflective institutions where experts and lay people can deliberate over the acceptable course of policy (*hybrid forums* according to Callon et al., 2009). To borrow Nowotny's astute phrase, policies need to be 'socially robust':

> Far from being an unwelcome intrusion, socially robust knowledge is capable of better withstanding various tests to which it exposes itself as it affects society, and is better adapted to anticipating societal aspiration and to responding to latent needs. It leaves room for human agency. Participation, especially upstream, creates a sense of ownership and allows for a vision of scientific citizens to emerge.
>
> *(Nowotny, 2010, p. 321)*

This line of thought brings us to a final consideration, which pertains to issues of democracy and citizenship and the technocratic tendencies of the established social scientific approach (Papanagnou, 2010). Effectively, scientific approaches are based on a strict distinction between the capacities of professional experts and those of laypeople. However, policies that are not publicly debated and negotiated have fewer chances of being embraced by communities and thus of making a deep, long-lasting impact. In addition, if there is something that characterizes late modernity it is the mistrust that citizens show towards the political system as a whole and towards policies that are made for them but without them. Citizens have trouble coming to terms with policy initiatives that affect them – and which are often presented in overtly bureaucratic or even cryptic language – but which are made by technocratic elites without much regard for their preoccupations or desires.

Thus, involving citizens in the making of policies does not only make them more efficient, but also reinvigorates public interest in political life (see van Langenhove, 2007). In effect, it gives citizens a greater degree of control over the policy process, provides them with an extra stake in policy choices, and safeguards and extends democracy. What is more, evidence seems to show that public participation in policy also makes for more confident, responsible and competent citizens. In other words it helps improve the quality of democracy (Gronlund et al., 2010).

The social sciences have a privileged role to play in setting up public participation in policy-making. They have a crucial role to play in helping bridge the divide between publics and political authorities. Precisely because of their social and intersubjective nature, the social sciences can assist in the transition to more inclusive democratic systems. And that is no mean feat. Hence, facilitating such tripartite dialogues (citizens, decision-makers and analysts) over social issues should be a priority for the social scientific community. In effect, one could reasonably argue that this is one of the most important contributions the social sciences can make towards the achievement of greater social progress and human development.

Thus, returning to our pause for reflection, we come to the conclusion that continuing in the same path as before is not the best choice. Addressing the public divide and working towards extending the boundaries of democracy requires certain innovations in the social sciences, which shall act as a complement to already established practices and efforts.

DEMOCRACY, VALUES AND CAPACITIES

It is these considerations that led the MOST programme to produce this collective volume. The purpose was to bring together a host of internationally renowned experts that would have the opportunity to address the previous points and elaborate, in some detail, on the challenges that surround the social scientific enterprise. They would also have the chance to describe and propose different ways of overcoming pitfalls; different ways of innovating in social science. On the whole, they would have the chance to point to crucial directions in addressing issues relevant to values, democracy and capacities which are the heart of science and policy encounters.

Offering a concise overview, we begin by noting that many of the contributors point out the constitutive difficulty of the social sciences in emulating the 'hard' sciences (see for example the chapters from Flyvbjerg, Torgerson, van Langenhove, Milani, Zittoun, and Griggs and Howarth).

As a consequence, they seem to prescribe a different mission for social research: a mission that is centred in setting up participation in policy-making and facilitating policy dialogues, whereby participants exchange ideas and visions, and bring forward different types of knowledge and perspectives. The purpose is not only to make policies more efficient, but also to address issues of power and vested interests, values and practical ethics, and to expand the social accountability of policies. Above all, the purpose is to deepen public participation and to renovate notions of citizenship. As nations seek to bring their national research systems up to speed with modern risks and political challenges, it is important that they devote a great part of their energies in setting up participatory processes and that they institutionalize spaces for wider policy dialogue.

In the same vein, contributors point out that social scientists will have to play new roles. For example Griggs and Howarth speak of interpretive mediators and deliberative practitioners (see also the chapter by Flyvbjerg). Hence, in modern societies, the work of the policy analyst should not only consist of unearthing and presenting data; crucially, it must also involve orchestrating and managing policy dialogues that guarantee public participation (see the chapter by van Langenhove). Thus, it becomes evident that public authorities need to increase training in relevant techniques (case study analysis, content analysis, stakeholder analysis, narratology and interviews) and communication skills (interpersonal communication techniques, workshop moderation and mediation competencies), which will complement the established tools of policy analysis (quantitative and causal analyses). Social researchers and analysts need to be able to build bridges between science, policy and lay opinion, hence the need to approach issues from a transdisciplinary perspective. That is to say, from a perspective that combines knowledge generated by the different scientific disciplines with lay knowledge. There is therefore a clear need for establishing research posts that address interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary challenges and for training social scientists in understanding such issues (see UNESCO, 2010, p. 356).

Likewise, the implication for the assessment of social research seems to be that in some cases it should move beyond strict academic standards of excellence (academic peer review) and embrace social and theme-relevant standards (enlarging peer review to include different publics and policy-makers). What is more, as social scientists increasingly move out of the confines of academic research to work in think tanks, NGOs, the media, governmental agencies or business, they are increasingly in need

of communication and moderation skills, as much as they are in need of quantitative skills.

Furthermore, the contributors agree that stepping up our efforts in capacity-building is of paramount importance (see the chapters by Carden and Kastrinos). In particular, as Carden points out '…This means increasing the capacity of researchers to think about the policy process in relation to their research, as well as increasing the capacities of decision-makers to make use of knowledge, especially knowledge that might not fit their preconceived notions of what is correct and what is politically feasible'. Improving the links between social science and policy involves studying carefully the political and economic context, the decision-making process and existing research-policy institutions. Establishing processes whereby research becomes a key part of policy-making calls for mechanisms and practices that further the familiarization of policy-makers with science and vice versa. In this process the informal dimension is often crucial (see also UNESCO, 2010, p. 355).

National authorities have to work hard in order to put social research at the heart of the policy process. Taking decisions on a whim is simply not acceptable. Research communities and policy-makers have to allow for established channels of communication, relationship-building, institution-building and for the role of networks. As Kastrinos notes in relation to the efforts of the European Union to promote effective policy responses to modern challenges, it is most important that we enhance the absorptive capacity of the policy communities and the various publics or communities of practitioners. Significantly, enhancing this absorptive capacity, Kastrinos notes, passes also through the establishment of hybrid forums.

The authors also make the point that, in the era of globalization, policy-making is no longer the sole prerogative of the nation-state. Policy solutions and choices are often developed and promoted by transnational knowledge networks or coalitions; while the role of international governmental organizations is also paramount. Knowledge networks of different guises and various politico-epistemic communities (see Stone, Milani and Ladi) are important not only in promoting policy solutions and the exchange of ideas, but also in establishing the norms that help set up particular policy fields. This has some important consequences. On the one hand, it becomes clear that policy and scientific authorities have much to gain from engaging in the work of knowledge networks. Participating in the workings of global or international policy communities brings significant gains in terms of influencing the agenda and learning

from others' experiences (see also UNESCO, 2010, p. 356). On the other hand, the work of international organizations and knowledge networks raises issues of democracy. Policy authorities need to consciously strive to make the workings of global knowledge networks as transparent and accountable as possible.

Finally, the contributors put the emphasis on the effects of language in framing policy issues and leading to policy choices (Zittoun, Ladi, Milani, Griggs and Howarth). If the way we understand a policy issue and/or discuss it is the source of a problem, then social research has a role to play in changing our conceptualization of the problem and our discourses. By extension, what this means is that public authorities have to allow for social research to play a wider communicative role. They have to promote the wide public diffusion of social-scientific results, in a way that is easily accessible to laypeople, as a prelude to specific participatory policy experiments. Developing such capacities is a priority for modern national research-policy systems.

THE CHAPTERS

In Chapter 1**, Bent Flyvbjerg** reflects on some of the larger questions concerning the epistemic status of social science: What is it that makes social science different from natural science? Why has it been unsuccessful in establishing laws and producing cumulative and predictive theories? Flyvbjerg argues that the social sciences should not seek to emulate the natural sciences. On the contrary, he finds that their strength lies in the analysis of values and power. Drawing on Aristotle's distinction between *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis* he argues that social-scientific research should focus on the study of the particular. Prudential knowledge of policy practices and relations of power in concrete situations is the best means for orienting policy action. Policy inquiry according to Flyvbjerg should be oriented towards the search for 'practical knowledge' and 'practical ethics' rather than towards the ideal of a predictive science (*episteme*) that promises greater social and technical control of the world (*techne)*. This also has implications for the status of the expert–policy analyst whose role is reconfigured towards collaborative practices.

In Chapter 2 **Douglas Torgerson** concentrates on the relation between cogitation and interaction in the making of policy. Drawing on Laurence H. Tribe's examination of 'policy science', he brings to the fore the democratic challenges that surround the 'technocratic' character of

policy orientation in the social sciences. Torgerson reconsiders Tribe's contribution in terms of his account of the way the 'limits of instrumental rationality' tend to promote inadequate conceptualizations of policy problems. Democratic politics is thus treated not simply in regard to the question of legitimacy, but primarily in terms of the way problems come to be identified and defined in the policy process. In particular, Torgerson focuses on how the US Environmental Policy Act was related to issues surrounding the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and to the way new issues have emerged in connection with the continuing operation of the pipeline. Issues involving the construction and operation of the pipeline are addressed in terms of developments in environmental activism and in the identification and definition of environmental problems, including the emergence of concerns about climate change.

In Chapter 3, **Luk van Langenhove** argues that the social sciences should not only seek to have an instrumental impact on society. Rather they should try to develop as much as possible 'generative powers', namely to advance and explore new ways of understanding and dealing with problems. In doing so, they should empower people to live their lives as 'well-informed citizens'. Thus, van Langenhove tells us, the social sciences should first of all be regarded as local practices aimed at introducing change at the local level. Then they can have a more indirect impact via processes of active dissemination of knowledge. Importantly, he insists that for these to occur, the social sciences need to put more focus both on knowledge-brokering and on participatory approaches. Knowledge-brokerage can increase the impact of social sciences, while participatory methods can increase the impact of the social sciences in a non-instrumental way.

In Chapter 4 **Steven Griggs and David Howarth** suggest that we should overcome the view that sees politics as antagonistic to expert analysis and keep the door open to collaborative approaches which capture and work with local knowledge. Similarly they argue that the role of the expert in these processes is to mediate between publics and officials in organizing spaces of deliberation and debate. Furthermore, Howarth and Griggs tell us that policy analysis cannot be divorced from the wider political, economic and social challenges that affect our contemporary globalized societies. Indeed, they claim that meaningful policy analysis must be critical and normative, speaking to pressing issues such as social inequalities, democratic exclusions and environmental degradations. Towards meeting this challenge, the authors seek to instil the work of policy analysts with an ethos of agonism. Actors in this model actively contest substantive issues as adversaries – and not simply as competitors, bargainers or enemies –

recognizing each other's right to differ and disagree. Finally, they stress that normative evaluation ought to be a basic internal element of critical explanation. With these in mind, they critically examine New Labour's community cohesion policies in the United Kingdom.

In Chapter 5 **Philippe Zittoun** also argues that when discussing the relationship between scientific analysis and policy we should go beyond issues of complementarity or contradiction. The author claims that by depoliticizing policies and forgetting to ask epistemologically what politics is (especially with respect to one of its primary elements, political discourse), policy analysis finds itself methodologically faced with an impasse. Instead, Zittoun puts the emphasis on argumentation inside policy-making and on the discursive underpinnings of policy problems and solutions. The work of the researcher in this case is to follow a policy process from its inception and then outline the coalition that is working towards the desired solution. According to the argument, the participants try discursively during this process to produce specific knowledge in order to associate a problem with a solution, an instrument with a public policy and/or legitimate participants. We should observe knowledge, Zittoun says, as a political activity which speaks pragmatically about policy, problems, or the public.

In Chapter 6 **Fred Carden** presents the findings of an evaluation study, undertaken by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), which sought to explore the factors that impede or enhance the utilization of research. The study was based on an analysis of twenty-three cases of research that were intended to influence public policy in developing nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Carden notes that influence on research was defined to mean not only actual changes in policy regimes, but also changes in the capacity of researchers and decision-makers to link research to the policy process. According to the findings, understanding the contexts and contingencies in which research was carried out is of paramount importance. In particular, the study established that the overall context (e.g. capacity of policy-making, political stability, the nature of government, economic conditions) together with the decision context (e.g. clear government demand for research, interest in specific problems, lack of leadership or resources, political lack of interest or outright hostility) are crucial factors for successful utilization. Establishing mechanisms that advance the use of research results is therefore a priority (better communication of results, relationship building at different levels, institutional building, enhancing the skills of research entrepreneurs, establishing networks of influence).

In Chapter 7 **Diane Stone** reminds us that policy-making is no longer the preserve of the nation-state and draws attention to the role of transnational networks in the process of creation and transfer of knowledge for governance. Stone identifies four distinct types of policy network: the neo-pluralist version of 'transnational advocacy networks' (TANs); neo-corporatist concepts of global public policy networks (GPPNs); the intergovernmentalist idea of 'transnational executive networks' (TENs); and the notion of knowledge networks such as epistemic communities or discourse coalitions. These concepts incorporate, in varying degrees, knowledge as a source of power and as an input to policy-making. The chapter concludes with an analysis of why knowledge (research, data, expertise, etc.) and 'experts' have become so important in the global political economy. The focus here is on networks as a contemporary mode of governance in which knowledge is disseminated. Stone finds that at an institutional level, international organizations (such as the World Bank and UN agencies) have become key in commissioning, creating, disseminating and applying knowledge, often through partnership arrangements.

In Chapter 8 **Stella Ladi** discusses the important role played by think tanks in developing policy-relevant discourses and influencing the making of policy. Think tanks, policy research institutes and private consultancy firms are in the forefront of providing policy ideas and evidence for sustaining policy change. They often act as mediators between society and governments or between governments and international organizations in order to promote institutional and policy change. Hence, Ladi aims to unpack the role of think tanks by asking two key questions. Firstly, what is the role of think tanks during public policy shifts? A discursive institutionalist approach is used to answer this question. Secondly, is knowledge used in an instrumental or in a symbolic way? In order to answer this question, the author links the literature on knowledge and policy learning with discursive institutionalism. Examples of foreign policy shifts in the United States and in Europe are discussed in order to illustrate the theoretical discussion.

In Chapter 9 **Nikos Kastrinos** discusses the attempts of the European Union to elaborate research and policy strategies that better correspond to modern challenges. The chapter traces the evolution of the research–policy nexus constructed around successive EU programmes in the social sciences and humanities. It provides an overview of the history of those programmes in the social sciences and humanities (SHS), highlighting the implicit and explicit models of science–policy interaction used and examining the way these have been changing through time. Of particular importance in

this evolution has been the overall research policy style of the European Union, which has favored particular ways of organizing research–policy interactions. Kastrinos emphasizes the importance of knowledge-absorbing capacities for policy-making organizations.

Finally, in Chapter 10 **Carlos R. S. Milani** makes the point that research for policy is not so much about providing answers or evidence as about changing the way questions are understood, thus critically building the contours and contents of social problems. For Milani it is possible to have bad evidence-based policy-making if the evidence used is biased, flawed or incomplete. Hence, the author finds that the aspiration to universal applicability on the part of evidence-based policy-making seems problematic. The accumulation of scientific evidence that, nevertheless, does not address conditions of unequal distribution, misrecognition or disempowerment will not necessarily lead to deeper social transformations. The chapter offers a critical review of some research–policy programmes established by major international organizations and attempts to examine in more detail how these influence national contexts by considering the role played by USAID in Brazil in the field of public policies concerning violence against children and adolescents.

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Chapter 1
MAKING SOCIAL SCIENCE MATTER

Bent Flyvbjerg

INTRODUCTION

If we want to empower and re-enchant social scientific research, we need to do three things. First, we must drop all pretence, however indirect, at emulating the success of the natural sciences in producing cumulative and predictive theory, for their approach simply does not work in any of the social sciences. (For the full argument see Flyvbjerg, 2001.) Second, we must address problems that matter to groups in the local, national and global communities in which we live, and we must do it in ways that matter; we must focus on issues of context, values and power, as advocated by great social scientists from Aristotle and Machiavelli to Max Weber and Pierre Bourdieu. Finally, we must effectively and dialogically communicate the results of our research to our fellow citizens, the 'public', and carefully listen to their feedback. If we do this – focus on specific values and interests in the context of particular power relations – we may successfully transform social scientific research into an activity performed in public for publics, sometimes to clarify, sometimes to intervene, sometimes to generate new perspectives, and always to serve as eyes and ears in ongoing efforts to understand the present and to deliberate about the future. We may, in short, arrive at social research that matters.

What I describe below as 'phronetic social science research' is an attempt to arrive at such social science. I would like to emphasize at the outset, however, that this effort should be considered as one among many possible,

as a first approximation that will undoubtedly require further theoretical and methodological refinement, just as it will need to be developed through further practical employment in actual social studies. Despite such qualifications, I hope the reader will agree that given what is at stake – social research – the attempt at reforming such research is indeed worthwhile.

WHAT IS PHRONETIC SOCIAL SCIENCE?

Phronetic social research is an approach to the study of organizations based on a contemporary interpretation of the classical Greek concept *phronesis*. Following this approach, phronetic social scientists study society and social organization with an emphasis on values and power. In this chapter I will first clarify what phronesis and phronetic social research is. Second, I will attempt to tease out the methodological implications of this research approach (Flyvbjerg, 1998).

Aristotle is the philosopher of *phronesis par excellence*. In Aristotle's words, *phronesis* is an intellectual virtue that is 'reasoned, and capable of action with regard to things that are good or bad for man' (Aristotle, 1976, ss. 1140a24–b12, 1144b33–1145a11). *Phronesis* concerns values, and goes beyond analytical, scientific knowledge (*episteme*) and technical knowledge or know-how (*techne*). It involves judgements and decisions made in the manner of a virtuoso social actor. I will argue that *phronesis* is commonly involved in practices of society, and therefore that any attempts to reduce social research to *episteme* or *techne,* or to comprehend them in those terms, are misguided.

Aristotle was explicit in his regard of *phronesis* as the most important of the three intellectual virtues: *episteme, techne* and *phronesis*. *Phronesis* is most important because it is that activity by which instrumental rationality is balanced by value-rationality, to use the terms of German sociologist Max Weber; and because, according to Aristotle and Weber, such balancing is crucial to the viability of any social unit, from the family to the state. A curious fact can be observed, however. Whereas *episteme* is found in the modern words 'epistemology' and 'epistemic', and *techne* in 'technology' and 'technical', it is indicative of the degree to which scientific and instrumental rationality dominate modern thinking and language that we no longer have a word for the one intellectual virtue, *phronesis*, that Aristotle and other founders of the Western tradition saw as a necessary condition of successful social organization and as the most important prerequisite to such organization.

ARISTOTLE ON EPISTEME, TECHNE AND PHRONESIS

The term 'epistemic science' derives from the intellectual virtue that Aristotle calls *episteme*, and which is generally translated as 'science' or 'scientific knowledge'.[5] Aristotle defines *episteme* in this manner:

> [S]cientific knowledge is a demonstrative state, (i.e., a state of mind capable of demonstrating what it knows) … i.e., a person has scientific knowledge when his belief is conditioned in a certain way, and the first principles are known to him; because if they are not better known to him than the conclusion drawn from them, he will have knowledge only incidentally – this may serve as a description of scientific knowledge.
>
> *(Aristotle, 1976, ss. 1139b18–36)*

Episteme concerns universals, and the production of knowledge that is invariable in time and space and achieved with the aid of analytical rationality. *Episteme* corresponds to the modern scientific ideal as expressed in the natural sciences. In Socrates and Plato, and subsequently in the Enlightenment tradition, this scientific ideal became dominant. The ideal has come close to being the only legitimate view of what constitutes genuine science, such that the social sciences, which are not and probably never can be scientific in the epistemic sense, have found themselves compelled to attempt to legitimate themselves in terms of this Enlightenment ideal. (For the full argument see Flyvbjerg, 2001.)

Whereas *episteme* resembles our ideal modern scientific project, *techne* and *phronesis* denote two contrasting roles of intellectual work. *Techne* can be translated into English as 'art' in the sense of 'craft'; a craftsperson is also an artisan. For Aristotle, both *techne* and *phronesis* are connected with the concept of truth, as is *episteme.* Aristotle says the following regarding *techne*:

> [S]ince (e.g.) building is an art [*techne*] and is essentially a reasoned productive state, and since there is no art that is not a state of this kind, and no state of this kind that is not an art, it follows that art is the same as a productive state that is truly reasoned. Every art is concerned with

5 It is not possible here to provide a full account of Aristotle's considerations about the intellectual virtues of *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. Instead I have focused on the bare essentials, based on a reading of the original texts. A complete account would further elaborate the relations between *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*, and the relationship of all three to *empeiria*. It would also expand on the relationship of phronetic judgements to rules, on what it means to succeed or to fail in the exercise of *phronesis*, and on the conditions that must be fulfilled if *phronesis* is to be acquired. For further discussion see Dreyfus and Dreyfus (in Flytvbjerg, 1991, pp. 101ff). See also MacIntyre (1984), Bernstein (1985), Heller (1990), Lord and O'Connor (1991) and Taylor (1995).

> bringing something into being, and the practice of an art is the study of how to bring into being something that is capable either of being or of not being …. For it is not with things that are or come to be of necessity that art is concerned [this is the domain of *episteme*] nor with natural objects (because these have their origin in themselves) …. Art … operate[s] in the sphere of the variable.
>
> *(Aristotle, 1976, ss. 1140a1–23)*

Techne is thus craft and art, and as an activity it is concrete, variable and context-dependent. The objective of *techne* is the application of technical knowledge and skills according to a pragmatic instrumental rationality, what Michel Foucault calls 'a practical rationality governed by a conscious goal' (1984*b*, p. 255). Social science practised in this way would, for example, be a type of consulting aimed at running organizations or other parts of society better by means of instrumental rationality, where 'better' is defined in terms of the values and goals of those who employ the consultants, sometimes in negotiation with the latter.

Whereas *episteme* concerns theoretical know-why and *techne* denotes technical know-how, *phronesis* emphasizes practical knowledge and practical ethics. *Phronesis* is often translated as 'prudence' or 'practical common sense'. Let us again examine what Aristotle has to say:

> We may grasp the nature of prudence [*phronesis*] if we consider what sort of people we call prudent. Well, it is thought to be the mark of a prudent man to be able to deliberate rightly about what is good and advantageous …. But nobody deliberates about things that are invariable …. So … prudence cannot be a science or art; not science [*episteme*] because what can be done is a variable (it may be done in different ways, or not done at all), and not art [*techne*] because action and production are generically different. For production aims at an end other than itself; but this is impossible in the case of action, because the end is merely doing *well*. What remains, then, is that it is a true state, reasoned and capable of action with regard to things that are good or bad for man …. We consider that this quality belongs to those who understand the management of households or states.
>
> *(Aristotle, 1976, ss. 1140a24–b12)*

Please note that the word 'management' is not mine, but that of the original English translator of Aristotle's text. The person possessing practical

wisdom (*phronimos*) has knowledge of how to manage in each particular circumstance that can never be equated with or reduced to knowledge of general truths about managing. *Phronesis* is a sense or a tacit skill for doing the ethically practical rather than a kind of science. For Plato, rational humans are moved by the cosmic order; for Aristotle they are moved by a sense of the proper order among the ends we pursue. This sense cannot be articulated in terms of theoretical axioms, but is grasped by *phronesis* (Taylor, 1989, pp. 125, 148).

One might get the impression in Aristotle's original description of *phronesis* that the choices it involves in concrete management are always good. This is not necessarily the case. Choices must be deemed good or bad in relation to certain values and interests in order for good and bad to have meaning. Phronetic social science is concerned with deliberation about values and interests.

In sum, the three intellectual virtues – *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis* – can be characterized as follows:

- *Episteme*/scientific knowledge: universal, invariable, context independent. Based on general analytical rationality. The original concept is known today by the terms 'epistemology' and 'epistemic'. Social science practised as *episteme* is concerned with uncovering universal truths about society and social organization.

- *Techne* craft/art: pragmatic, variable, context-dependent. Oriented towards production. Based on practical instrumental rationality governed by a conscious goal. The original concept appears today in terms such as 'technique', 'technical' and 'technology'. Social science practised as *techne* is consulting aimed at running society or social organizations better by means of instrumental rationality, where 'better' is defined in terms of the values and goals of those who employ the consultants, sometimes in negotiation with the latter.

- *Phronesis*/ethics: deliberation about values with reference to praxis. Pragmatic, variable, context-dependent. Oriented toward action. Based on practical value and rationality. The original concept has no analogous contemporary term. Social science practised as *phronesis* is concerned with deliberation about (including questioning of) values and interests.

THE PRIORITY OF THE PARTICULAR

Phronesis concerns the analysis of values – 'things that are good or bad for people' – as a point of departure for managed action. *Phronesis* is that intellectual activity most relevant to praxis. It focuses on what is variable, on what cannot be encapsulated by universal rules, on specific cases. It requires an interaction between the general and the concrete; it requires consideration, judgement and choice. (On the relationship between judgement and *phronesis* see Ruderman, 1997.) More than anything else, *phronesis* requires *experience.*

About the importance of specific experience Aristotle says:

> [P]rudence [*phronesis*] is not concerned with universals only; it must also take cognizance of particulars, because it is concerned with conduct, and conduct has its sphere in particular circumstances. That is why some people who do not possess theoretical knowledge are more effective in action (especially if they are experienced) than others who do possess it. For example, suppose that someone knows that light flesh foods are digestible and wholesome, but does not know what kinds are light; he will be less likely to produce health than one who knows that chicken is wholesome. But prudence is practical, and therefore it must have both kinds of knowledge, or especially the latter.
>
> *(Aristotle, 1976, ss. 1141b8–27)*

Here, again, Aristotle is stressing that in practical management (in this case the management of health, which was a central concern for the ancient Greeks), knowledge of the rules ('light flesh foods are digestible and wholesome') is inferior to knowledge of the real cases ('chicken is wholesome'). Some of the best management schools, such as Harvard Business School, have understood the importance of cases over rules, and emphasize case-based and practical teaching. Such management schools may be called Aristotelian, whereas schools stressing theory and rules may be called Platonic.

Some interpretations of Aristotle's intellectual virtues leave doubt as to whether *phronesis* and *techne* are distinct categories, or whether *phronesis* is just a higher form of *techne* or know-how.[6] Aristotle is clear on this point, however. Even if both *phronesis* and *techne* involve skill and judgement,

6 For such an interpretation, with an unclear distinction between *phronesis* and *techne*, see Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1990). See also my discussion of this issue with the Dreyfus brothers in Flyvbjerg (1991, pp. 102–7).

one type of intellectual virtue cannot be reduced to the other; *phronesis* is about value judgement, not about producing things.

Similarly, in other parts of the literature one finds attempts at conflating *phronesis* and *episteme* in the sense of making *phronesis* epistemic. But insofar as *phronesis* operates via a practical rationality based on judgement and experience, it can only be made scientific in an epistemic sense through the development of a theory of judgement and experience. In fact Alessandro Ferrara has called for the 'elaboration of a theory of judgment' as one of 'the unaccomplished tasks of critical theory' (Ferrara, 1989, p. 319). In line with Jürgen Habermas, Ferrara says that a theory of judgement is necessary in order to avoid contextualism, although he also notes that such a theory 'unfortunately is not yet in sight' (Ferrara, 1989, p. 316; see also Ferrara, 1999). What Ferrara apparently does not consider is that a theory of judgement and experience is not in sight because judgement and experience cannot be brought into a theoretical formula. Aristotle warns us directly against the type of reductionism that conflates *phronesis* and *episteme*.

With his thoughts on the intellectual virtues, Aristotle emphasizes properties of intellectual work that are central to the production of knowledge in the study of social organizations and other social phenomena. The particular and the situationally dependent are emphasized over the universal and over rules. The concrete and the practical are emphasized over the theoretical. It is what Martha Nussbaum calls the 'priority of the particular' in Aristotle's thinking (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 66; see also Devereux, 1986). Aristotle practises what he preaches by providing a specific example of his argument, light flesh foods versus chicken. He understands the 'power of example'. The example concerns the management of human health and has as its point of departure something both concrete and fundamental concerning human functioning. Both aspects are typical of many Classical philosophers.

We will return to these points later. At this stage, we simply conclude that despite their importance, the concrete, the practical and the ethical have been neglected by modern science. Today, one would be open to ridicule if one sought to support an argument using an example like that of Aristotle's chicken. The sciences are supposed to concern themselves precisely with the explication of universals, and even if it is wrong, the conventional wisdom is that one cannot generalize from a particular case (regarding ways of generalizing from a single case, see Flyvbjerg, 2004). Moreover, the ultimate goal of scientific activity is supposedly the production of theory. Aristotle

is here clearly anti-Socratic and anti-Platonic. And if modern theoretical science is built upon any body of thought, it is that of Socrates and Plato. We are dealing with a profound disagreement here.

Below, we will look at specific examples of phronetic social scientific research. More generally, in contemporary social science Pierre Bourdieu's 'fieldwork in philosophy' and Robert Bellah's 'social science as public philosophy' are examples of such intellectual pursuits that involve elements of *phronesis* (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 28; Bellah et al., 1985, especially the Methodological Appendix). Bourdieu explicitly recognizes Aristotle as the originator of the *habitus* concept, which is so centrally placed in Bourdieu's work, and sees the practical knowledge that *habitus* procures as being analogous to Aristotle's *phronesis* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 128). In philosophy Richard Bernstein's and Stephen Toulmin's 'practical philosophy' and Richard Rorty's 'philosophical pragmatism' are also phronetic in their orientation, as are Michel Foucault's 'genealogies' (Bernstein, 1985, p. 40; Toulmin, 1988, p. 337; Rorty, 1991; 1995, pp. 94–5). As pointed out by Rorty, 'philosophy' in this interpretation is precisely what a culture becomes capable of when it ceases to define itself in terms of explicit rules, and becomes sufficiently leisured and civilized to rely on inarticulate know-how, to 'substitute phronesis for codification' (Rorty, 1991, p. 25). Aristotle found that every well-functioning organization and society was dependent on the effective functioning of all three intellectual virtues. At the same time, however, Aristotle emphasized the crucial importance of *phronesis*, 'for the possession of the single virtue of prudence will carry with it the possession of them all' (Aristotle, 1976, ss. 1144b33–1145all).[7] *Phronesis* is most important, from an Aristotelian point of view, because it is the intellectual virtue that may ensure the ethical employment of science (*episteme*) and technology (*techne*). Because *phronesis* today is marginalized in the intellectual scheme of things, scientific and technological development take place without the ethical checks and balances that Aristotle saw as all-important. This is a major problem in its own right.

7 For Aristotle, man [sic] has a double identity. For the 'human person', that is, man in politics and ethics, *phronesis* is the most important intellectual virtue. Insofar as man can transcend the purely human, contemplation assumes the highest place (Aristotle, 1976, ss. 1145a6ff., 1177a12ff.).

SOCIAL RESEARCH AND 'REAL' SCIENCE

Regardless of the lack of a term for *phronesis* in our modern vocabulary, the principal objective for social research with a phronetic approach is to perform analyses and derive interpretations of the status of values and interests in societies or social organizations aimed at social change. The point of departure for classical phronetic research can be summarized in the following three value-rational questions:

- Where are we going?
- Is this development desirable?
- What, if anything, should we do about it?

The 'we' here consists of those researchers asking the questions and those who share the concerns of the researchers, including people in the social organization under study. Later, when I have discussed the implications of power for *phronesis*, I will add a fourth question:

- Who gains and who loses, and by which mechanisms of power?

Social scientists who ask and provide answers to these questions use their studies not merely as a mirror for social organizations to reflect on their values, but also as the nose, eyes and ears of social organizations in order to sense where things may be going next and what, if anything, to do about it. The questions are asked with the realization that there is no general and unified 'we' in relation to which the questions can be given a final, objective answer. What is a 'gain' and a 'loss' often depends on the perspective taken, and one person's gain may be another's loss. Phronetic sociologists are highly aware of the importance of perspective and see no neutral ground, no 'view from nowhere', for their work.

It should be stressed that no one has enough wisdom and experience to give complete answers to the four questions, whatever those answers might be. Such a wisdom and experience should not be expected from social scientists, who are on average no more astute or ethical than anyone else. What should be expected, however, are attempts from phronetic researchers to develop their partial answers to the questions. Such answers would be input to the ongoing dialogue about the problems, possibilities and risks that societies or social organizations face, and how things might be done differently.

A first step in achieving this kind of perspective in social science is for researchers to explicate the different roles of research as *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. Today's researchers seldom clarify which of these three

roles they are practising. The entire enterprise is simply called 'research' or 'science', even though we are dealing with quite different activities. It is often the case that these activities are rationalized as *episteme*, even though they are actually *techne* or *phronesis*. As argued previously, it is not in their role of *episteme* that one can argue for the value of the social sciences. In the domain in which the natural sciences have been strongest – the production of theories that can explain and accurately predict – the social sciences have been weakest. Nevertheless, by emphasizing the three roles, and especially by reintroducing *phronesis*, we see there are other possibilities for the social sciences. The oft-seen image of impotent social sciences versus potent natural sciences derives from their being compared in terms of their epistemic qualities. Yet such a comparison is misleading, for the two types of science have their respective strengths and weaknesses along fundamentally different dimensions. As mentioned previously, the social sciences, in their role as *phronesis*, are strongest where the natural sciences are weakest (Schram and Caterino, 2006).

It is also as *phronesis* that the social sciences can provide a counterweight to tendencies toward relativism and nihilism. The importance of *phronesis* renders the attempts of social science to become 'real' theoretical science doubly unfortunate. Such efforts draw attention and resources away from those areas where they could make an impact and into areas where they do not obtain, never have obtained and probably never will obtain any significance as genuinely normal and predictive sciences.

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES FOR PHRONETIC SOCIAL SCIENCE

What, then, might a set of methodological guidelines for phronetic science look like? This question will be the focus of the remainder of this chapter. I would like to stress immediately that the methodological guidelines summarized below should not be seen as imperatives; at most they are cautionary indicators of direction. Let me also mention that undoubtedly there are ways of practising phronetic social research other than those outlined here. The most important issue is not the individual methodology involved, even if methodological questions may have some significance. It is more important to get the result right – to arrive at social science that effectively deals with deliberation, judgement and praxis in relation to the four value-rational questions mentioned above, rather than being stranded with social science that vainly attempts to emulate the natural sciences.

As mentioned earlier, few scholars seem to have reflected explicitly on the comparative strengths and weaknesses of research practised as either *episteme*, *techne* or *phronesis*. Even fewer are actually conducting research on the basis of such reflection, and fewer still have articulated the methodological considerations and guidelines for phronetic-based research. In fact, it seems that researchers doing phronesis-like work have a sound instinct for proceeding with their research and are not involving themselves in methodology. Nonetheless, given the interpretation of the actual and potential role of social science, as outlined above, it is essential for the development of such research that methodological guidelines be elaborated.

The main point of departure for explicating methodological guidelines for phronetic research is a reading of Aristotle and Michel Foucault (Flyvbjerg, 2001, ch. 8) supplemented with readings of other thinkers – mainly Pierre Bourdieu, Clifford Geertz, Alasdair MacIntyre and Richard Rorty – who emphasize phronetic before epistemic knowledge in the study of societies and social organization, despite important differences in other domains.[8]

Focusing on values

By definition, phronetic social scientists focus on values and, especially, evaluative judgements; for example, by taking their point of departure in the classic value-rational questions 'Where are we going?', 'Is it desirable?' and 'What should be done?' The objective is to balance instrumental rationality with value-rationality and increase the capacity of a variety of human actors to think and act in value-rational terms. Asking value-rational questions does not imply a belief in linearity and continuous progress. The phronetic social scientist knows enough about power to understand that social progress is often complex, ephemeral and hard-won, and that setbacks are an inevitable part of social life. I return to the issue of power below.

Focusing on values, phronetic social scientists are forced to face questions of foundationalism versus relativism – that is, the view that there are central values that can be rationally and universally grounded versus the view that one set of values is as good as another. Phronetic social scientists reject both of these 'isms' and replace them with contextualism or situational ethics. Distancing themselves from foundationalism does

8 It should be mentioned that MacIntyre's Aristotle is substantially more Platonic than the Aristotle depicted by the others, and more Platonic than the interpretation given here. MacIntyre explicitly understands Aristotle 'as engaged in trying to complete Plato's work, and to correct it precisely insofar as that was necessary in order to complete it'. See MacIntyre (1988, p. 94; 1990).

not leave phronetic sociologists normless, however. They take their point of departure in their attitude to the situation in the social organization and society being studied. They seek to ensure that such an attitude is not based on idiosyncratic morality or personal preferences, but on a common view among a specific reference group to which the social researchers refer. For phronetic researchers, the socially and historically conditioned context – and not the universal grounding that is desired but not yet achieved by certain scholars – constitutes the most effective bulwark against relativism and nihilism. Phronetic social scientists realize that our sociality and history is the only foundation we have, the only solid ground under our feet; and that this socio-historical foundation is fully adequate for our work as social scientists.

As regards validity, phronetic social science is based on interpretation and is open for testing in relation to other interpretations and other research. But one interpretation is not as good as any other, which would be the case for relativism. Every interpretation must be built upon claims of validity, and the procedures ensuring validity are as demanding for phronetic social research as for any other activity in the social sciences. Phronetic social scientists also oppose the view that any one among a number of interpretations lacks value because it is 'merely' an interpretation. As emphasized by Alexander Nehamas, the key point is the establishment of a better option, where 'better' is defined according to sets of validity claims (Nehamas, 1985, p. 63). If a new interpretation appears to better explain a given phenomenon, that new interpretation will replace the old one – until it, too, is replaced by a new and yet better interpretation. This is typically a continuing process, not one that terminates with the 'right answer'. Such is the procedure that a community of social scientists would follow in working together to put certain interpretations of social life ahead of others (see also the section on 'dialogue' below). The procedure does not describe an interpretive or relativistic approach. Rather, it sets forth the basic ground rules for any social inquiry, inasmuch as social science and philosophy have not yet identified criteria by which an ultimate interpretation and a final grounding of values and facts can be made.

Placing power at the core of the analysis

Aristotle, the philosopher of *phronesis par excellence*, never elaborated his conception of *phronesis* to include explicit considerations of power. Hans-Georg Gadamer's authoritative conception of *phronesis* also overlooks issues of power (1975). Yet, as Richard Bernstein points out, if we are to think

about what can be done to the problems, possibilities and risks of our time, we must advance from the original conception of *phronesis* to one explicitly including power (1989, p. 217). Unfortunately, Bernstein himself has not integrated his work on *phronesis* with issues of power. Phronetic social inquiry, however, can only be complete if it deals with issues of power. I have therefore made an attempt to develop the classic concept of *phronesis* to a more contemporary one, which accounts for power (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

Besides focusing on the three value-rational questions mentioned above, which are the classical Aristotelian questions, a contemporary reading of *phronesis* also poses questions about power and outcomes: 'Who gains and who loses?', 'Through what kinds of power relations?', 'What possibilities are available to change existing power relations?', 'Is it desirable to do so?' and 'What are the power relations among those who ask the questions?' Phronetic social scientists pose these questions with the intention of avoiding the voluntarism and idealism typical of so much ethical thinking. The main question is not only the Weberian 'Who governs?', as posed by Robert Dahl and most other students of power. It is also the Nietzschean question 'What "governmental rationalities" are at work when those who govern govern?' (see also Clegg, 1989, 1997; Hardy and Clegg, 1996). With these questions and with the focus on value-rationality, phronetic social scientists relate explicitly to a primary context of values and power. Combining the best of a Nietzschean-Foucauldian interpretation of power with the best of a Weberian-Dahlian one, the analysis of power is guided by a conception of power that can be characterized by six features:

- Power is seen as productive and positive, and not only as restrictive and negative.
- Power is viewed as a dense net of omnipresent relations, and not only as being localized in 'centres', organizations and institutions, or as an entity one can 'possess'.
- The concept of power is seen as ultradynamic; power is not merely something one appropriates, it is also something one reappropriates and exercises in a constant back-and-forth movement within the relationships of strength, tactics and strategies inside of which one exists.
- Knowledge and power, truth and power, rationality and power are analytically inseparable from each other; power produces knowledge, and knowledge produces power.

- The central question is how power is exercised, and not merely who has power, and why they have it; the focus is on process in addition to structure.
- Power is studied with a point of departure in small questions, 'flat and empirical', not only, nor even primarily, with a point of departure in 'big questions' (Foucault, 1982, p. 217).

Analyses of social power following this format cannot be equated with a general analytics of every possible power relation in society or social organizations. Other approaches and other interpretations are possible. They can, however, serve as a possible and productive point of departure for dealing with questions of power in doing phronesis.

Getting close to reality

Donald Campbell, Charles Lindblom and others have noted that the development of social research is inhibited by the fact that researchers tend to work with problems in which the answer to the question 'If you are wrong about this, who will notice?' is usually 'Nobody' (Campbell, 1986, pp. 128–9; see also Lindblom and Cohen, 1979, p. 84; Lindblom, 1990). Mary Timney Bailey calls the outcome of such research '"so what" results' (Bailey, 1992, p. 50). Phronetic scientists seek to transcend this problem of relevance by anchoring their research in the context studied, and thereby ensuring what Gadamer called a hermeneutic 'fusion of horizons'. This applies to both contemporary and historical social studies. For contemporary studies researchers get close to the social organization, phenomenon or group that they study during data collection, and remain close during the phases of data analysis, feedback and publication of results. Combined with the above-mentioned focus on relations of values and power, this strategy typically creates interest in the research by parties outside the research community. These parties will test and evaluate the research in various ways. Phronetic social scientists will consciously expose themselves to positive and negative reactions from their surroundings, and are likely to derive benefit from the learning effect, which is built into this strategy. In this way, the phronetic researcher becomes a part of the phenomenon studied without necessarily 'going native' or the project becoming simple action research. Action researchers and anthropologists who have gone native typically identify with the people they are studying; they adopt the perspective and goals of those studied and use research results in an effort to achieve these goals. This is not necessarily the case for phronetic social scientists, who at all times,

in the service of truth, retain the classic academic freedom to problematize and be critical of what they see.

Phronetic scientists performing historical studies conduct much of their work in those locales where the relevant historical materials are placed, and they typically probe deeply into archives, annals and individual documents. To the attentive researcher, archives will reveal knowledge whose visible body 'is neither theoretical or scientific discourse nor literature, but a regular, daily practice' (Foucault, 1969, pp. 4–5; here quoted from Eribon, 1991, p. 215). In historical studies, as in contemporary ones, the objective is to get close to reality. *Wirkliche Historie* (real history), says Foucault, 'shortens its vision to those things nearest to it' (1984*a*, p. 89). C. Roland Christensen, arguably one of the fathers of the case method at Harvard University, expresses a similar attitude about his research by invoking Henry Miller to describe the approach taken by many case researchers:

> My whole work has come to resemble a terrain of which I have made a thorough, geodetic survey, not from a desk with pen and ruler, but by touch, by getting down on all fours, on my stomach, and crawling over the ground inch by inch, and this over an endless period of time in all conditions of weather.
>
> *(Miller, 1941, p. 27)*

Emphasizing the simple things

Phronetic researchers begin their work by phenomenologically asking 'little questions' and focusing on what Clifford Geertz, with a term borrowed by Gilbert Ryle, calls 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973, p. 6; 1983). This procedure may often seem tedious and trivial. Nietzsche and Foucault emphasize that it requires 'patience and a knowledge of details', and it depends on a 'vast accumulation of source material'. Geertz explicates the dilemma involved in skipping minutiae. The problem with an approach that extracts the general from the particular and then sets the particular aside as detail, illustration, background or qualification, is, as Geertz says, that 'it leaves us helpless in the face of the very difference we need to explore …. [it] does indeed simplify matters. It is less certain that it clarifies them' (Geertz, 1995*a*, p. 40; see also Geertz, 1995*b*). Nietzsche, who advocates 'patience and seriousness in the smallest things', (1968*a*, p. 182, §59), expresses a similar, though more radical, point regarding the importance of detail when he says that '[a]ll the problems of politics, of social organization, and of education

have been falsified through and through … because one learned to despise "little" things, which means the basic concerns of life itself' (Nietzsche, 1969*a*, p. 256, §10).

The focus on minutiae, which directly opposes much conventional wisdom about the need to focus on 'important problems' and 'big questions', has its background in the fundamental phenomenological experience of small questions often leading to big answers. In this sense, phronetic organization research is decentred in its approach, taking its point of departure in organizational micropractices, searching for 'the Great' within 'the Small' and vice versa. 'God is in the detail', the proverb says. 'So is the Devil', the phronetic researcher would add, doing work that is at the same time as detailed and as general as possible.

Looking at practice before discourse

Through words and concepts we are continually tempted to think of things as being simpler than they are, says Nietzsche: 'There is a philosophical mythology concealed in *language*' (original emphasis) (1968*a*, p. 191, app. C). Michel Serres puts the matter even more succinctly, saying that 'language has a disgust for things'. Phronetic social scientists attempt to get beyond this problem. Thus, social practice or what people do in social life is seen as more fundamental than either discourse or theory – what people say. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's phrase from *Faust*, '*Am Anfang war die Tat*' ('In the beginning was the deed'), could be the motto for phronetic research. It is echoed by Foucault, who says that 'discourse is not life'; regular, daily practice is life.[9] Phronetic social research does not accept the maxim that there is nothing outside the text or outside discourse. Such an approach is too easy, giving its practitioners limitless sovereignty by allowing them to restate the text indefinitely (Foucault, 1979, p. 27). Textual analysis must be disciplined by analysis of practices. Here, again, the position is not relativism but contextualism. The context of practices disciplines interpretation.

Phronetic social science focuses on practical activity and practical knowledge in everyday situations in society. It may mean, but is certainly not limited to, a focus on known sociological, ethnographic and historical phenomena such as 'everyday life' and 'everyday people', with their focus on the so-called 'common'. What it always means, however, is a focus on

9 After Wittgenstein had abandoned any possibility of constructing a philosophical theory, he suggested that Goethe's phrase from Faust might serve as a motto for the whole of his later philosophy. See Monk (1990, pp. 305–6). The Foucault quote is from Foucault (1991, p. 72). On the primacy of practices in Foucault's work, see also Foucault (1981, p. 5) and Foucault quoted in Eribon (1991, pp. 214–16).

the actual daily practices – common or highly specialized or rarefied – which constitute a given social field of interest, regardless of whether these practices constitute a stock exchange, a grassroots organization, a neighbourhood, a multinational corporation, an emergency ward or a local school board.

At the outset, social practices are recorded and described simply as events. 'The question which I ask', says Foucault, 'is not about codes but about events …. I try to answer this question without referring to the consciousness … the will … intention' (Foucault, 1991, p. 59; 1981, pp. 6–7). The phronetic social scientist records what happened 'on such a day, in such a place, in such circumstances' (Foucault, 1972, p. 15; here quoted from Miller, 1993, p. 191). In *The Will to Power*, in describing his 'principles of a new evaluation', Nietzsche similarly says that when evaluating human action one should 'take doing *something*, the "aim," the "intention," the "purpose," back into the deed after having artificially removed all this and thus emptied the deed' (emphasis in original) (1968*b*, p. 356, §675). Events and phenomena are presented together with their connections with other events and phenomena (Abbott, 1992). Discontinuities and changes in the meaning of concepts and discourses are documented. The hermeneutic horizon is isolated and its arbitrariness elaborated. At first, the researcher takes no position regarding the truth-value and significance ascribed by participants to the social practices studied. No practice is seen as more valuable than another. The horizon of meaning is initially that of the single social practice. The researcher then attempts to understand the roles played by single practices studied in the total system of, for instance, social and contextual relations. If it is established, for example, that a certain social practice is seen as rational according to its self-understanding – that is, by those practising it, but not when viewed in the context of other horizons of meaning – the researcher then asks what role this 'dubious' rationality plays in a further context, historically, organizationally and politically, and what the consequences might be.

In addition to the Nietzschean removal of the doer from the deed, the focus on social practices as events also involves a self-removal on the part of the social researchers to allow them to disinterestedly inspect the *wirkliche Historie* of societies and social organizations. This distancing enables the researcher to master a subject matter even when it is hideous and when there is a 'brutality of fact' involved in the approach. This approach may, in turn, offend people who mistake the researcher's willingness to uncover and face the morally unacceptable for immorality. There may also be intensity and

optimism, however, in facing even the pessimistic and depressing sides of power and human action in social organizations. The description of practices as events endures and gains its strength from detecting the forces that make life in the social organization work. And if the researcher uncovers a social reality that is ugly or even terrifying when judged by the moral standards which, we like to believe, apply in many modern social organizations, this reality may also demonstrate something deeply human that may have to be faced squarely by people in the social organization, by researchers and by the general public, if this reality is to be changed. Nietzsche acutely named this approach to research 'the Gay Science', and he called those practising the approach 'free spirits', describing them as 'curious to a vice, investigators to the point of cruelty, with uninhibited fingers for the unfathomable, with teeth and stomachs for the most indigestible … collectors from morning till late, misers of our riches and our crammed drawers' (1966, p. 55). We need more 'free spirits' in social science and this depiction of what they would be like may serve as a description of phronetic social scientists.

Studying cases and contexts

We have seen that Aristotle explicitly identifies knowledge of 'particular circumstances' as a main ingredient of *phronesis* (1976, ss. 1141b8–1141b27) Foucault similarly worked according to the dictum 'never lose sight of reference to a concrete example' (1969, p. 7, quoted in Eribon, 1991, p. 216). Phronetic research thus benefits from focusing on case studies, precedents and exemplars. *Phronesis* functions on the basis of practical rationality and judgement. As I have argued elsewhere, practical rationality and judgement evolve and operate primarily by virtue of in-depth case experiences (Flyvbjerg, 1989; see also MacIntyre, 1977). Practical rationality, therefore, is best understood through cases – whether experienced or narrated – just as judgement is best cultivated and communicated via the exposition of cases. The significance of this point can hardly be overstated, which is why Richard Rorty, in responding to Max Weber's thesis regarding the modern 'disenchantment of the world', invokes John Dewey to say, 'The way to re-enchant the world … is to stick to the concrete' (Rorty, 1985, p. 173).

Context is important to case studies in society and social organizations. What has been called the 'primacy of context' follows from the observation that in the history of science, human action has shown itself to be irreducible to predefined elements and rules unconnected to interpretation (Rabinow and Sullivan, 1987, p. 8; Henderson, 1994). Therefore, it has been impossible to derive praxis from first principles and theory. Praxis has always been

contingent on context-dependent judgement, on situational ethics. It would require a major transformation of current philosophy and science if this view were to change, and such a transformation does not seem to be on the horizon. What Pierre Bourdieu calls the 'feel for the game' (a.k.a. *Fingerspitzengefühl*) is central to all human action of any complexity, including social action, and it enables an infinite number of 'moves' to be made, adapted to the infinite number of possible situations, which no rule-maker, however complex the rule, can foresee (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 9). Therefore, the judgement that is central to *phronesis* and praxis is always context-dependent. The minutiae, practices and concrete cases which lie at the heart of phronetic social science must be seen in their proper contexts; both the small, local context, which gives phenomena their immediate meaning, and the larger, international and global context, in which phenomena can be appreciated for their general and conceptual significance (Andler, 1998; Calhoun, 1994; Engel, 1999; Fenno, 1986; Shannon, 1990, pp. 157–66). Given the role of context in phronetic social science, insofar as such research is practised as applied ethics, it is situational ethics. The focus is on *Sittlichkeit* (ethics) rather than on *Moralitat* (morality).

Asking how? Doing narrative

Phronetic social research focuses on the dynamic question 'How?' in addition to the more structural 'Why?' It is concerned with both *Verstehen* (understanding) and *Erklärung* (explanation). Outcomes of social phenomena are investigated and interpreted in relation to social processes. In the study of relationships of power in social organizations, we already emphasized with Foucault the how-question, 'the little question … flat and empirical', as being particularly important. Foucault stressed that our understanding will suffer if we do not start our analyses with a 'How?' Asking 'How?' and conducting narrative analysis are closely interlinked activities. Earlier we saw that a central question for *phronesis* is 'What should we do?' To this Alasdair MacIntyre answers, 'I can only answer the question "What am I to do?" if I can answer the prior question "Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?"' (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 216). Thus, Nietzsche and Foucault see history as being fundamental to social science and philosophy, and criticize social scientists and philosophers for their lack of 'historical sense' (Nietzsche, 1968*c*, p. 35, §1). History is central to phronetic social science in both senses of the word – that is, *both* as a narrative containing specific actors and events, in what Clifford Geertz calls a story with a scientific plot, *and* as the recording of a historical development

(Geertz, 1988, p. 114; see also Geertz, 1995*c*). Narratology, understood as the question of 'how best to get an honest story honestly told', is more important than epistemology and ontology (Geertz, 1988, p. 9; van Maanen, 1988; Czarniawska, 1997, 1998).

Several observers have noted that narrative is an ancient method, and perhaps our most fundamental form for making sense of experience (Novak, 1975, p. 175; Mattingly, 1991, p. 237; also Arendt, 1958; MacIntyre, 1984; Ricoeur, 1984; Carr, 1986; Bal, 1997; Rasmussen, 1995; Abbott, 1992). To MacIntyre, the human being is a 'story-telling animal', and the notion of a history is as fundamental a notion as is the notion of an action (MacIntyre, 1984, pp. 214–16). In a similar vein, Cheryl Mattingly points out that narratives not only give meaningful form to our experiences, they also provide us with a forward glance, helping us to anticipate situations even before we encounter them, allowing us to envision alternative futures (1991, p. 237). Narrative inquiries into social organizations do not – indeed, cannot – start from explicit theoretical assumptions. Instead, they begin with an interest in a particular social phenomenon that is best understood narratively. Narrative inquiries then develop descriptions and interpretations of the phenomenon from the perspective of participants, stakeholders, researchers and others. In historical social analysis, both event and conjuncture are crucial, just as practices are studied in the context of several centuries, akin to what Fernand Braudel calls *longue durée*. The century-long view is employed in order to allow for the influence on current social practices of traditions with long historical roots, an influence that is often substantially more significant than is assumed in mainstream social research.[10]

MOVING BEYOND AGENCY AND STRUCTURE

In an attempt to transcend the dualisms of agency/structure, hermeneutics/structuralism and voluntarism/determinism, phronetic social scientists focus on both actors and structures, and on the relationship between the two.[11] Social actors and their practices are analysed in relation to the structures of

10 For examples of the influence on current organizational practices of tradition with long historical roots, see Putnam et al. (1993) and Flyvbjerg (1998).

11 For a discussion of the problems incurred in moving beyond these dualisms, see Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982), and Thomas McCarthy's considerations on hermeneutics and structural analysis in his introduction to Jürgen Habermas's *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1 (1984, pp. xxvi–xxvii). Other works of interest on this problem, which in my view is one of the more challenging in phronetic organization research, are Giddens (1982), Seung (1982) and Schmidt (1985).

the social organization in question. And structures are analysed in terms of agency – not for the two to stand in a dualistic, external relationship, but so structures can be part of, can be internalized in, actors, and so actors can be part of, can be internalized in, structures. Understanding from 'within' the social organization and from 'without' are both accorded emphasis, which is what Bourdieu, in adapting the Aristotelian and Thomist concept of 'habitus' – a highly relevant concept for phronetic research – calls 'the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality' (1977, p. 72). Elsewhere, Bourdieu explicitly states that the use of the notion of habitus can be understood as a way of escaping the choice between 'a structuralism without a subject and the philosophy of the subject' (1990, p. 10).

As anyone who has tried it can testify, it is a demanding task to account for the structural influences that shape the development of a given social phenomenon while simultaneously crafting a clear, penetrating narrative or microanalysis of that phenomenon (Vaughan, 1992, p. 183). As Diane Vaughan has said, theorizing about actors and structures remains bifurcated (1992). Researchers generally tend towards either macro-level or micro-level explanations, ignoring the critical connections. Empirical work follows the same pattern. Instead of social research that attempts to link macro-level factors and actors' choices in a specific social phenomenon, scholars tend to dichotomize. Structural analyses and studies of actors each receive their share of attention, but in separate projects, by separate researchers. Those who join structure and actor in empirical work most often do so by theoretical inference: data at one level of analysis are coupled with theoretical speculation about the other. Although issues of actor and structure combine with particular emphasis in social organizations and institutions, classic social science research methodology is less developed for studying social organizations and institutions than for studying individuals and aggregate patterns (Bellah et al., 1991, p. 302). Social science carries the burden of this fact. Therefore, many researchers may not be convinced that there is an escape from the duality of structural and individual analysis. They may believe there is no middle ground, for the very recalcitrance of the problem seems to attest to its intractableness.

There is mounting evidence, however, that the actor/structure connection is not an insurmountable problem. In fact, it may not be a problem at all, says Vaughan, but simply an artefact of data availability and graduate training (1992, p. 182). And we now have excellent examples from other areas of the social sciences showing us how to integrate and move beyond the simple dichotomy of actors and structures. Clifford Geertz's

classic description of the Balinese cockfight progressively incorporates practices, institutions and symbols from the larger Balinese social and cultural world in order to help the reader understand the seemingly localized event of the cockfight (1973, 1977). Robert Putnam and his associates similarly combine individual and structural analysis – as well as contemporary history and the history of the *longue durée* – in their attempt to explain the performance of modern democratic institutions in Italy (Putnam et al., 1993). James Ferguson demonstrates how local, intentional development plans in Lesotho interact with larger, unacknowledged structures to produce unintended effects that are instrumental to the organization of 'development' and development agencies (1990). Michael Herzfeld throws new light on bureaucratic organization by studying what appear to be peculiar administrative practices in relation to structural explanations of the nation-state (1992). And Stella Tillyard works from the basis of personal histories and family dynamics to incorporate the larger socioeconomic and political scene of the entire Hanoverian age (1994). Like these scholars, phronetic social scientists deliberately seek information that will answer questions about the intermeshing of actors and structures in actual settings, in ways that dissolve any rigid and preconceived conceptual distinction between the two (Collins, 1980; Giddens, 1984; Coleman, 1985; Bourdieu, 1988; Fine, 1988; Harrison, 1989; Rosen, 1989; Eribon, 1991, pp. 102–04; Sewell, 1992).

Dialoguing with a polyphony of voices

Phronetic social science is dialogical in the sense that it incorporates, and, if successful, is itself incorporated into, a polyphony of voices, with no one voice, including that of the researcher, claiming final authority. The goal of phronetic social science is to produce input to the ongoing dialogue and praxis in relation to social organizations and social life, rather than to generate ultimate, unequivocally verified knowledge about the nature of social organizations and social life. This goal accords with Aristotle's maxim that in questions of praxis, one ought to trust more in the public sphere than in science (Bellah, 1993). Dialogue, however, is not limited to the relationship between researchers and the people they study in the field. The relevant dialogue for a particular piece of research typically involves more than these two parties – in principle anyone interested in and affected by the subject under study. Such parties may be dialoguing independently of researchers until the latter make a successful attempt at entering into the dialogue with their research. In other instances, there may be no ongoing

dialogue initially, the dialogue being sparked by the work of phronetic researchers. In *Habits of the Heart* Robert Bellah and his co-authors expressed their hope that 'the reader will test what we say against his or her own experience, will argue with us when what we say does not fit, and, best of all, will join the public discussion by offering interpretations superior to ours that can then receive further discussion' (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 307). This hope is as fine an expression of the phronetic dialogical attitude as we will find for a specific piece of research. *Habits of the Heart* was ultimately successful in achieving its aims of entering into and intensifying debate in the United States about American values.[12]

Thus, phronetic social science explicitly sees itself as not having a privileged position from which the final truth can be told and further discussion arrested. We cannot think of an 'eye turned in no particular direction', as Nietzsche says. 'There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective "knowing;" and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity," be' (original emphasis) (1969*b*, p. 119, §3.12). Hence, 'objectivity' in phronetic social science is not 'contemplation without interest' but employment of 'a *variety* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge' (Nietzsche, 1969*b*, original emphasis).

The significance of any given interpretation in a dialogue will depend on the extent to which the validity claims of the interpreter are accepted, and this acceptance typically occurs in competition with other validity claims and other interpretations. The discourses in which the results of phronetic social science are used have, in this sense, no special status, but are subordinated to the same conditions as any other dialogical discourse. If and when the arguments of researchers carry special weight it would likely derive not from researchers having access to a special type of validity claim, but from researchers having spent more time on, and being better trained in, establishing validity than have other social actors. We are talking about a difference in degree, not in kind. To the phronetic researcher, this is the reality of social science, although some social researchers act as if validity claims can and should be given final grounding. The burden of proof is on them. By substituting *phronesis* for *episteme*, phronetic researchers avoid this burden, impossible as it seems to lift.

12 For an interpretation of *Habits of the Heart* as phronetic social science, see Flyvbjerg (2001, pp. 62–65).

Some people may fear that the dialogue at the centre of phronetic social science, rather than evolving into the desired polyphony of voices, will all too easily degenerate into a cacophony, in which the loudest will carry the day. In phronetic social science, the means of prevention is no different from that of other research: only to the extent that the validity claims of phronetic scientists are accepted will the results of their research be accepted in the dialogue. Phronetic scientists thus recognize a human privilege and a basic condition: meaningful dialogue in context. 'Dialogue' comes from the Greek *dialogos*, where *dia* means 'between' and *logos* means 'reason'. In contrast to the analytical and instrumental rationality that lies at the cores of both *episteme* and *techne*, the practical rationality of *phronesis* is based on a socially conditioned, intersubjective 'between-reason'.

EXAMPLES OF PHRONETIC SOCIAL RESEARCH

To summarize, the result of phronetic social science is a pragmatically governed interpretation of the studied social practices. The interpretation does not require the researcher to agree with the actors' everyday understanding; nor does it require the discovery of some deep, inner meaning of the practices. Phronetic research is in this way interpretive, but it is neither everyday nor deep hermeneutics. Phronetic social science is also not about, nor does it try to develop, theory or universal method. Thus, phronetic social science is an analytical project, but not a theoretical or methodological one.

The examples provided below serve as brief representations of a body of social research that contains elements of Aristotelian–Foucauldian *phronesis* as interpreted above. The examples are related primarily to organizational research, as this field has been of particular interest to me. However, examples could also be extracted from many other regions of the social sciences. It must also be stressed again, however, that phronetic social science may be practised in ways other than those described here, as long as they effectively deal with deliberation, judgement and praxis in relation to values and power, and as long as they answer the four value-rational questions mentioned above. In the organization of the firm and of accounting, the work of Peter Miller must be mentioned (1994, pp. 239–64). In the organization of science and technology, there is the work of Bruno Latour and Paul Rabinow (Latour, 1996, 1999; Rabinow, 1996, 1999). And in the organization of government, there is Mitchell Dean's work (1999). The important work of Stewart Clegg has already been mentioned.

Examples also exist from more specialized fields of research such as the organization of consumption (Miller and Rose, 1997, pp. 1–36), insurance and risk (Ewald, 1986, 1996), space and architecture (Rabinow, 1989; Crush, 1994, pp. 301–24), policing (Donzelot, 1979; Harcourt, 2001), poverty and welfare (Dean, 1991; Procacci, 1993), sexual politics (Bartky, 1990; Minson, 1993) and psychology (Rose, 1985, 1996). My own attempts at developing phronetic social research have been aimed at the organization of democracy and its institutions, public and private (Flyvbjerg, 1998, 2001; Flyvbjerg et al., 2003; see also Dean, 1999, pp. 3–5; Flyvbjerg, 2001, pp. 162–65).

One task of social research, practised on the basis of the methodological guidelines presented here, is to provide concrete examples and detailed narratives of the ways in which power and values work in social organizations and with what consequences, and to suggest how power and values could be changed to work with other consequences. Insofar as social situations become clear, they are clarified by detailed stories of who is doing what to whom. Such clarification is a principal concern for phronetic social research and provides the main link to praxis.

Phronetic social science explores current practices and historic circumstances to find avenues to praxis. The task of phronetic social science is to clarify and deliberate about the problems, possibilities and risks that different social organizations face, and to outline how things could be done differently – all in full knowledge that we cannot find ultimate answers to these questions, or even agree on a single version of what the questions are.

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Chapter 2

POLICY PROBLEMS AND DEMOCRATIC POLITICS: INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALITY RECONSIDERED

Douglas Torgerson

> This book first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought – *our* thought …. This passage quotes a 'certain Chinese encyclopedia' in which it is written that 'animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (1) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies'. In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*.
>
> *Michel Foucault, The Order of Things*

INTRODUCTION

With its historical emergence, modernity advanced a discourse about itself that announced the age as the pinnacle of human achievement. This was a technological achievement: human rationality, through scientific investigation into the causes of things, was deemed to have found a way of acquiring the knowledge needed to systematically determine the means for attaining virtually whatever human beings wanted. During the modern period, from the early seventeenth century through the twentieth, rationality came increasingly to be understood in instrumental terms as supplying the means by which humanity would fulfill its destiny of progress. By the nineteenth century, the development of human cognitive power was widely seen as the key to historical progress in the sense of an industrialist project, through which rationality was gaining its quintessential expression.

The promotion of industrialism was a complex task that more and more required the development and application of sophisticated technological knowledge. This task was considered the province of experts,

and by the mid-twentieth century the project of industrialism had largely come to involve an explicit technocratic enterprise in which instrumental rationality was seen to offer the means necessary to solve complex policy problems. Indeed, despite the advent of democratic ideals, the larger population was typically portrayed in technocratic discourse as being too irrational and emotional to have any direct role in addressing such problems. Only experts were thought capable of the kind of pure rationality or cogitation that these problems demanded. Especially as the progress of industrialism came to generate its own risks and dysfunctions, however, the technocratic orientation came under a kind of criticism that threw reliance on detached rationality into question, raising the possibility not only that it was insufficient to properly address complexity but also that – left to its own devices – it was a major hindrance. The criticism suggested that policy problems could not adequately be addressed by cogitation alone but required reliance as well upon processes of human interaction. This focus on interaction directed attention away from a charmed circle of experts, opening a door to democratic politics that the technocratic orientation was inclined to close.

In particular, Laurence H. Tribe's probing examination of 'policy discourse' in the early 1970s (1972, p. 98 n. 92; cf. 1971, 1973) influenced the later emergence of a critical approach that threw into question the technocratic character of the policy orientation in the social sciences, challenging its democratic legitimacy.[13] Central to Tribe's critique was a focus on what he called 'the limits of instrumental rationality' (1973): the limits of a mode of inquiry, that is to say, that seeks solely to determine the means to achieve already determined ends. His critique followed (Tribe, 1973, p. 618) upon the famous distinction that Max Weber made in distinguishing between an instrumental rationality concerned with the efficacy of conduct as means, *Zweckrationalität*, and *Wertrationalität*, a value rationality consciously focused on the substantive quality of the conduct itself. Although Weber was interested in understanding through these ideal types the 'rationality', or coherent orientation, of different modes of human conduct, the distinction was also based upon an epistemological contrast between the factual and the evaluative. In that regard, questions of means are construed as ultimately being reducible to matters of fact while

13 Although Tribe uses the term 'policy discourse' only once, and then in a footnote (1972, p. 98 n. 92), he nonetheless explicitly indicates the influence of Foucault (1970) and focuses repeatedly on problems of discourse. The critical approach now informs the journal *Critical Policy Studies* (see Fischer et al., 2009). For an account of the critical orientation as it was emerging in the 1980s, see Torgerson (1986).

values are seen to occupy an entirely separate realm involving norms and emotions. What Tribe, in effect, criticized about policy discourse was its orientation to a strictly *zweckrational* mode of conduct.

On the basis of his critique of technocratic policy discourse, Tribe went on to propose in broad outline the possibility of a different form of policy discourse, one involving a reorientation of inquiry and a reevaluation of rationality. He particularly focused on the role of values, seeking to overcome an objectivist fixation that he saw as misleading and distorting not only the policy field, but more generally the prevailing intellectual tendencies of modern, complex societies. Both his critique and his proposal, indeed, reflected an emerging intellectual climate of the time that was concerned to challenge a prevailing objectivism that saw itself free of values. He was at least indirectly influenced by Max Horkheimer's critique of instrumental rationality as the dominant intellectual orientation of advanced industrial civilization. By the terms of Horkheimer's critique, a focus on means, to the exclusion of an evaluation and reevaluation of ends, guided a form of rationality that amounted, however paradoxically, to a form of irrationality – a reductionist 'quest for certainty' that, seeking to cut 'intellectual needs down to pocket size' (Horkheimer, 1974*b*, p. 167; cf. Horkheimer, 1974*a*), blocked itself methodologically from the critical reflexivity and scope of attention necessary to give an account of itself within its cultural and historical context.[14]

The critical approach to policy studies that Tribe's critique helped inspire has made the question of values a key concern (e.g. Fischer et al., 2009). In examining the limits of instrumental rationality and proposing an alternative orientation to inquiry, Tribe was concerned, moreover, to particularly demonstrate how the prevailing form of policy discourse tended to promote inadequate conceptualizations of policy problems. His recommendation was to place emphasis not on gaining unequivocal results through analysis, but on the significance of the process of inquiry, including the importance of engaging a multiplicity of differing perspectives on a problematic situation.

The point of Tribe's critique of instrumental rationality in policy discourse was not simply to expose its methodological limitations. He was also concerned to address the rationalistic bias of a larger cultural

14 Tribe is clearly aware of Leiss (1974), which includes an extensive treatment of Horkheimer's work. For Horkheimer, as well as for his Frankfurt School colleague Theodor W. Adorno, the 'logic of identity' (Horkheimer, 1974*b*, p. 167) constituted a key concern in the assessment not only of instrumental rationality but of rationality generally. Also note Tribe's discussion (1973, p. 634) of Habermas's (1971) distinction between instrumental and interactive orientations.

and historical context in which the rationality of experts was celebrated in contrast to a larger society that, thought to be thoroughly beset by ignorance and irrationality, lacked the capacity to address the scope and complexity of modern problems. In explicitly criticizing the 'policy sciences', Tribe drew particular attention to the limitations of the decision-making techniques, informed by economic and managerial modes of analysis, that emerged on the scene in the period following the Second World War. This advent of the policy sciences, as Tribe understood them, can be counted as the culmination of developments going back to the early emergence of modernity in the seventeenth century – developments that continued both with the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and with the Positivism that accompanied the rapid industrialization of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the time Tribe mounted his critique, a 'technocratic project' had clearly taken form in advanced industrial society (Fischer, 1990). What Tribe's critique helped to show was that this project, despite its claim to rationality, was actually irrational insofar as it lacked the capacity – methodologically – for a critically self-reflexive understanding of itself, its limitations, and its cultural and historical context.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, IBM funded a Harvard Program on Technology and Society, under the direction of Emmanuel G. Mesthene (1965), whose approach well exemplified the technocratic project. Technological progress had brought with it such complexity and such a requirement for expert knowledge that modern government itself needed to become a 'technical process':

> In a populous, modern, industrialized, and knowledge-oriented society, that process consists increasingly of adumbrating alternative policy options and calculating their probable consequences. It is clearly a job for experts and for all the sophisticated information-handling and management techniques that can be brought to bear on it.
>
> *(Mesthene, 1970, pp. 80–81)*

Mesthene, previously associated with the RAND Corporation, thus saw increasing reliance upon 'the use of technological devices and scientific techniques' as part of the 'imperatives of modern decision making' (Mesthene, 1970, p. 79). From such a technocratic perspective, an expansion of active democratic politics was certainly not perceived as a need.

Employing a technocratic idiom, policy discourse in this vein recurrently alludes to the overarching image, as Charles E. Lindblom once put it (1968, p. 4), of 'one governing mind' – to an authority that is impartial,

beneficent and supremely rational. Disillusioned with the brave new decision techniques, indeed, one former proponent came to speak of the naiveté of his earlier position, offering a clear account of the image guiding the discourse: 'advocates of … new technocratic solutions talk and write as if they were trying to persuade an all-powerful, all-wise, all-loving dictator' (Hartle, 1978, p. 95). This discourse, in other words, projects the image of an 'administrative mind' that, implicitly godlike, reinforces the claim of technocratic discourse to rationality and cultural authority (see Torgerson, 1990).

Tribe's critique of policy discourse focuses upon its pronounced technocratic features. Yet there were other tendencies at the time that he did not examine, even though he indicated some awareness of them. One of these tendencies was manifest in the work of Harold D. Lasswell. Although it was Lasswell who advanced the term 'policy sciences', his approach diverged sharply – despite the connotations of that term – from the preoccupation with decision techniques that was the focus of Tribe's concern. Indeed, Lasswell's entire approach was explicitly premised on a critical, self-reflexive orientation to the context of inquiry (see Torgerson, 1985, 2007*b*). Lindblom's famous 'science of "muddling through"' (1959), moreover, marked an approach clearly opposed to the prevailing rationalism of the technocratic posture. These approaches, though at odds with a technocratic orientation, nonetheless stopped short of the critical approach to policy studies that, since the early 1980s, has increasingly placed an accent on discourse and has tended to align itself with the enhancement of an active democratic politics (see Torgerson, 1995; Fischer, 2003).

In seeking an alternative to the prevailing fixation on instrumental rationality, Tribe drew explicit attention to James G. March's call in the early 1970s for a 'technology of foolishness' (Tribe, 1973, pp. 638–39). The part that 'foolishness' potentially plays on behalf of rational inquiry not only becomes evident with the innovative practices of creative problem-solving, but also suggests the greater cultural significance that Mikhail Bakhtin (1968) attributed to the 'carnivalesque' in the context of a rationalistic culture. Tribe's focus on process also coincided, moreover, with an orientation to inquiry that, first arising with John Dewey's process approach to problem-solving, was accented in the policy literature by Lindblom and was reformulated by Aaron Wildavsky with his focus on an opposition of 'cogitation versus interaction' (1979, p. 404).[15] By emphasizing

15 Wildavsky's notion of interaction does not make the conceptual distinctions, now common in the wake of developments in deliberative theory, between communicative and strategic action (Habermas) or between arguing and bargaining (Elster) (see Saretski, 2009). Rather than

the significance of interaction in a domain preoccupied with cogitation, Wildavsky further advocated the development of 'citizens as analysts' (1979, ch. 11). With this move, he in effect closed the distance between 'policy' and 'politics', words that – although etymologically linked – often appear as opposites, or as representing separate worlds, one of purely objective rationality in contrast to one of irrational passion and conflict (cf. Torgerson, 2007*a*).

Tribe's intervention raises the prospect that democratic politics is significant for inquiry and practice in a manner unimaginable by the terms of technocratic policy discourse. Indeed, as a direct challenge to the limitations of such discourse, democratic politics appears significant not only to the identification and definition of policy problems, but also to the coherence and effectiveness of inquiry. Here we can recognize a dynamic of power and insight (see Torgerson, 1996), which becomes particularly evident in regard to the role of environmental activism in identifying and defining policy problems. This dynamic can be illustrated by the case of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline – the first major project to fall under the terms of the US National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – with respect both to issues surrounding the construction of the pipeline and to the way new issues have emerged in connection with its continuing operation. These issues have, indeed, gone beyond matters specific to the pipeline to involve larger developments in the role of environmental activism in the identification and definition of environmental problems, including the emergence of concerns about climate change.

In March 1972, the US Department of the Interior released *The Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Proposed Trans-Alaska Pipeline* both to the President's Council on Environmental Quality and to the public. The report provoked a coalition of citizen groups and federal legislators to call for public hearings, but the Interior Department refused. A senior official at the time – undersecretary William T. Pecora – stated his view that public hearings would be 'a circus' that would 'interfere with a more thoughtful and rational analysis of this complex document' (quoted in Coates, 1993, p. 229). The undersecretary wanted to contain deliberation within an administrative sphere devoted to rationality – within a realm of serious, hard-headed, expert analysis that would exclude the voices of citizens opposed to the project. As the case of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline illustrates, however, the administrative conventions of instrumental

focusing on such distinctions, Wildavsky proceeds in terms of the mixed forms and motives of interaction that characterize policy processes.

rationality were not enough for a coherent approach in assessing the project. It turns out that such an assessment called for something else, something seemingly the opposite of rationality – something of a circus or, indeed, a carnival. The apparent rationality of the established administrative institutions of both state and economy needed the challenge of unconventional perspectives and insights even to succeed in their own aim of constructing a functional pipeline. These perspectives and insights, however, also contained the potential – unwelcome to pipeline proponents – of challenging the project more fundamentally by redefining the context and terms of the problem.

THE LIMITS OF INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALITY

Francis Bacon in the early seventeenth century staked a claim for the 'authority of mind' (1960, p. 7), going on to sketch a scientific and technological Utopia where human beings would be empowered to achieve 'all things possible' (Bacon, 1937, p. 480). The tremendous expansion of technological control over natural processes since then has borne witness to the extraordinary power of instrumental rationality in advancing the project of 'the domination of nature' as a collective human project (Leiss, 1974). The expansion of human civilization and its growing complexity, however, made it increasingly clear – as Bacon had intimated with the House of Solomon in his *New Atlantis* – that this project required more than human knowledge, or 'mind', which alone had no capacity to actually exert control over nature. Also needed were institutions capable of organizing and directing human effort toward that end. With industrialization in the nineteenth century and the accompanying expansion of bureaucratic organization in both state and economy, Max Weber could look back over the emergence of modernity as a time of increasing rationalization. Against this backdrop, we can view the historical emergence of industrialism as an enterprise confident in the capacity of organized human rationality to effect control over both society and nature. Increasingly an article of faith since the time of Bacon, this confidence underpinned the technocratic project and could still be seriously reasserted, just prior to the time of Tribe's critique, with the claim that – ecological complexities notwithstanding – 'the not very distant future' held the promise of a 'complete description' and 'total control' of nature (Murphy, 1967, p. 11; cf. Torgerson, 2009).

In Weber's account of the rationalization of the modern culture, old notions of 'mysterious incalculable forces' give way to the central conviction

that 'one can, in principle, master all things by calculation' (Weber, 1958*a*, p. 139). Instrumental rationality, by determining the means required to produce stipulated results, is the tool a rationalized world uses to achieve its mastery. What is involved here, however, is not just any manner of attaining ends. Crucially, in a modern cultural context, instrumental rationality is 'formal', ignoring anything that might 'escape calculation' (Weber, 1978, vol. 1, p. 975), that cannot be 'expressed in numerical, calculable terms' (vol. 2, p. 85). Weber thus presents a formalized, instrumental rationality as part of his famous image of a disenchanted world – a world of 'specialists without spirit' inhabiting the 'iron cage' of an industrial 'cosmos' (Weber, 1958*b*, pp. 180–81). Central to this cosmos, moreover, is an administrative sphere, constituted by the bureaucracies of both state and economy – of both big government and great corporations – that serve as necessary instruments in the advance of industrialization. What Weber draws attention to, of course, is not really a cosmos, but a potent cultural image that tacitly guides and restricts respectable patterns of discourse. His account of bureaucratic organization captures and reinforces this image, underscoring a pattern of expectations that pictures administrative organization as an effective tool in a world dominated by instrumental rationality. Weber regarded modern bureaucracy as technically superior to all other organizational forms, and his portrayal of bureaucratic organization can thus be read as a corollary to the conviction that all things can be mastered through calculation: this conviction comes to depend upon an assured image of organizational effectiveness.

Tribe's critique emerged in the context of an intensification and expansion of the rationalistic tendencies that Weber had identified early in the twentieth century. Defining 'the domain of instrumental rationality' as '*the selection of efficacious means to previously given ends*' (Tribe, 1973, pp. 617–18, original italics), Tribe argued that its 'limits' had been reached (1973, p. 652). Reasoning about means alone was not sufficient, he maintained, and a questioning of values and ends thus loomed large on the agenda of inquiry. The whole orientation of the literature on rational decision-making betrayed, in his view, a fundamental misunderstanding about the nature of choice and its relationship to values and ends:

> the whole point of personal or social choice in many situations is not to implement a given system of values in light of the perceived facts, but rather to define, and sometimes to deliberately reshape, the values – and hence the identity – of the individual or community that is engaged in

> the process of choosing. The decision-maker, in short, often chooses not merely how to achieve his ends, but what they are and who he is to become.
>
> *(Tribe, 1972, p. 99)*

Tribe's position here echoed concerns – voiced by Horkheimer among others – regarding the irrational rationality of simply determining the most effective and efficient means to achieve ends that were themselves not subjected to questioning. However, as we shall see, the point of Tribe's critique involved more than the matter of values and ends. Even on its own grounds of efficacy, the instrumental rationality practised in policy discourse was insufficient because it depended upon an oversimplified representation of the world while neglecting the significance for inquiry of process. As he proposed 'developing certain modes of thought and action that lie outside the domain of instrumental rationality' (1973, pp. 617–18), Tribe was thus concerned not only to question values and ends but also to find ways to more effectively address policy problems. In his view, prevailing policy discourse – although priding itself on its ability to rationally determine the best means to achieve ends – actually exhibited shortcomings, indeed irrationality, because of its tendency 'to partition and warp reality in certain patterned ways, generating a … system of blind spots and distortions' (1972, p. 106).

The limits of instrumental rationality become evident, according to Tribe, in its propensity to oversimplify in the face of complexity – the very thing, notably, that it is supposed to be able to handle. Guided by an interest in controlling outcomes, instrumental rationality undermines itself through a reductionism that tends to foster a misunderstanding of problematic situations by reducing 'complex structures to an unstructured set of components' (Tribe, 1972, p. 87). According to Tribe, the dominant tendency is 'to engage … in reduction whenever possible, with the result not only that 'soft' variables tend to be ignored or understated but also that *entire problems tend to be reduced to terms that misstate their underlying structure and ignore the "global" features that give them their total character*' (1973, p. 627, original italics). Seeking precise and unequivocal results, such reductionism adheres to a more general fixation of instrumentalist thought – the aspiration to an 'objectivist ideal' (Tribe, 1972, p. 95). According to Tribe, however, the objectivism and reductionism of instrumentalist policy discourse are also reinforced by the practical exigencies of the policy

process, where it is important for policy analysts to maintain an image of rationality in order for their advice to have credibility:

> analysis is often intended not only to aid the decision-maker in choosing a course of action, but also to help him *in persuading others* of the justifiability and wisdom of his choice. The usefulness of analysis in such advocacy is drastically reduced whenever it does not at least *appear* to point objectively and unambiguously toward a particular alternative.
>
> *(Tribe, 1973, p. 627, original italics)*

Although Tribe does not seek to portray analysis simply as 'a weapon for the disguised advancement of narrow interests' (1973, p. 623), he does indicate that the orientation of instrumental rationality, by virtue of its very reductionism, lacks the reflexivity needed to take account coherently of itself and its context. The focus on 'end-results' endemic to instrumental rationality (Tribe, 1972, p. 80 n. 28) deflects attention from context and process, so that 'the persisting tendency … is to overlook the significance of procedure *as such*, treating a process of choice or coordination as nothing more than a machine for generating outcomes' (1972, p. 83 n. 42, original italics).

With his critique of the prevailing tendencies of policy discourse, Tribe sets the task of 'transcending instrumental modes of thought' (1973, p. 619). It is significant, in this regard, that he recognizes policy discourse as *discourse*, a particular deployment of language rather than some neutral analytic mechanism. Tribe describes the inclination towards depersonalization and quantification as a kind of 'ritual' (1971) that deploys 'antiseptic terminology' with a consequence of 'anesthetizing moral feeling' (1972, p. 97). Although he clearly recognizes the rhetorical significance of this ritualistic gesture as a persuasive device, he maintains that it cannot be explained simply as an 'Orwellian' corruption of language aimed at deception. The apparently neutral rhetoric is, rather, an artifact of the objectivist ideal itself: 'To facilitate detached thought and impersonal deliberation, what more plausible path could there be than to employ a bloodless idiom, one as drained as possible of all emotion?' (Tribe, 1972, p. 98).

Although Tribe here focuses on how particular deployments of language can undercut moral concern and deflect attention from ethical issues, he also stresses that there is an 'elemental fallacy' in the objectivist methodological orientation that underpins prevailing policy discourse.

The fallacy resides in the very presupposition that 'identifying and naming categories can in fact be wholly neutral' (Tribe, 1972, p. 98). Policy discourse for Tribe involves a particular 'language', which 'imposes its own categories and paradigms on the world of experience' (1972, p. 76). Tribe, indeed, draws substantially in this context upon the now-famous opening to *The Order of Things* (quoted at the outset of this chapter) in which Foucault (1970, p. xv) tells how a passage from Jorge Luis Borges not only provoked his laughter but also showed how certain possibilities are unthinkable. Although values are no doubt implicated in the unthinkable, that is not all. What 'Foucault's unthinkable' demonstrates, according to Tribe, is that 'perspectives and possibilities' are 'hidden if not entirely obscured' by the 'distinctive approach to stating and solving problems' characteristic of a mode of thinking (Tribe, 1972, p. 76). He argues that the 'unthinkable' thus demonstrates 'the paradoxical lack of neutrality that results from deliberately seeking to frame "objective" categories for policy discourse' (1972, p. 98 n. 92). Policy discourse, in other words, serves 'to structure our world' in a way that leaves 'gaps' and fosters 'distortions' while inhibiting other ways of perceiving and understanding it (1972, p. 76).

Citing William Leiss's book *The Domination of Nature*, Tribe locates his critique of policy discourse in a larger cultural and historical context. He suggests that the prevalent objectivist 'tendency to conceive the natural order' as being 'value-free' cannot be understood as a cultural phenomenon simply by tracing it to positivist epistemology. He draws attention, rather, to the values implicit in a prior 'decision' made by human beings in the course of historical development: 'the decision to maximize, through a science bent to this purpose' the scope of human 'power' over the natural environment (Tribe, 1973, p. 637 n. 75). By Tribe's suggestion, the objectivist form taken by policy discourse is neither a necessary result of pure reason nor a historical accident, but part of a larger pattern of historical development oriented to the project of dominating nature. In a manner recalling Weber, indeed, Tribe offers the tentative suggestion that policy discourse has emerged – along with instrumentalist tendencies in the social sciences and philosophy – as an all but necessary manifestation of 'the modern technocratic state' (1972, p. 106). The limitations that Tribe perceives in policy discourse thus appear particularly problematic in the context of a larger pattern of historical development, one devoted to the domination of nature through an instrumental rationality deployed by administrative organizations. The question we thus confront is whether the difficulties arising from this historical pattern of industrialism – now especially evident

with the experience of previously unexpected environmental problems – can be adequately understood and addressed through the same instrumentalist modes of thought and organization that gave rise to the difficulties in the first place.

In seeking to overcome the 'congenital tunnel vision' (Tribe, 1972, p. 104) of technocratic policy discourse and instrumentalist modes of thought generally, Tribe focuses on the way language is used, recommending 'a reduced aversion to frankly evocative terminology' (1972, p. 107) and explicit attention to the role of values. His point, however, is not to arbitrarily invoke a new set of values. As can be seen from the attention he gives to the cultural and historical context, his initial point of reference, rather, is to expose unquestioned, implicit values obscured by a false objectivism. Focused on achieving explicitly stated goals that have been determined and fixed from the outset, instrumental rationality betrays limitations that indicate the need for a 'capacity' to identify and express 'tacit assumptions' while 'exploring alternatives not envisioned by the decision-maker at all' (1972, p. 103). Recognizing a point of commonality between his own approach and March's call for a 'technology of foolishness', Tribe proposes that clear attention be placed on 'the fluidity of goals' (1973, p. 638) and, more generally, that there be 'greater emphasis on process' (1972, p. 107). He calls for 'a subtler, more holistic, and more complex style of problem-solving … involving several iterations between problem-formulation and problem-solution and … the development of several distinct 'perspectives' on a given problem' (1972, p. 107). Such a process-oriented approach to problem-solving is clearly one, to recall the contrast posed by Wildavsky, that could not be limited to 'cogitation' but would also involve 'interaction' among a plurality of actors. Tribe, indeed, recognizes that his invocation of the importance of process brings his conception close to the notion of competing interest groups in Lindblom's process account of pluralist democracy. However, Tribe displays no sanguine acceptance of prevailing institutions and alignments of power in advanced industrial society. In his view, Lindblom's notion that 'partisan mutual adjustment' gives rise to an 'intelligence of democracy' too readily assumes the guarantee of a kind of 'invisible hand' (Tribe, 1972, p. 104; p. 104 n. 109). Rejecting such an assumption, Tribe anticipates a more thoroughly critical approach.[16]

16 A more critical accent is evident in Lindblom's later work (e.g. 1990).

TECHNOCRATIC DISCOURSE AND THE TECHNOLOGY OF FOOLISHNESS

Originally published in the early post-war period, Herbert A. Simon's *Administrative Behavior* stands as a technocratic landmark, promoting instrumental rationality at a time when the project of industrialism seemed poised to enter a new, triumphant phase. Seeking to develop a comprehensive science of administration, Simon not only focused analysis on the instrumental problem of determining efficacious means, but conceived administrative organizations themselves as instruments necessary for achieving rationality in the attainment of collective goals. The centrepiece of Simon's organizational theory was from the outset a concept of 'bounded rationality', meant to point the way toward greater organizational effectiveness by clearly recognizing the limitations of human cognitive capacities. Indeed, his approach to enhancing organizational capabilities depends – however paradoxically – on an implicit recognition of the incapacity of administrative organizations to deal effectively with challenges posed by a 'devious' complexity. It is necessary, Simon claims (1976, p. 82), to assume that one 'can isolate from the rest of the world a closed system containing only a limited number of variables and a limited range of consequences'. He goes on to offer an anecdote, apparently in a humorous vein, to illustrate the kind of complexity that has to be ignored:

> There is a story to the effect that a statistician once found a very high correlation between the number of old maids and the size of the clover crop in different English counties. After puzzling over this relation for some time, he was able to trace what appeared to him to be the causal chain. Old maids, it appeared, kept cats; and cats ate mice. Field mice, however, were natural enemies of bumble-bees, and these latter were, in turn, the chief agents in fertilizing the flowers of the clover plants. The implication, of course, is that the British Parliament should never legislate on the subject of marriage bonuses without first evaluating the effect upon the clover crop of reducing the spinster population.
>
> *(Simon, 1976, p. 82)*

The moral of the story, for Simon (p. 82), is that the kinds of 'devious consequences' it illustrates simply have to be 'ignored' in practice. The dated assumptions we find in Simon now stand out as obvious, thanks to the advent of not only feminism, but also environmentalism. Indeed, it is basic to the challenge posed by environmentalism that devious consequences

constitute dysfunctions so central to the whole project of industrialism that they must not be ignored.

In *Organizations*, co-authored with James G. March, we find Simon giving particular attention to language in order to make clear how instrumental rationality in an organizational context is necessarily bounded in a particular way. From March and Simon's account (1958, pp. 164–65), we can indeed see how the technocratic idiom typical of policy discourse is not just ornamental trapping or mere pretence. The administrative world is one where any other discursive posture would be incongruous, if not simply unimaginable. This world exhibits what March and Simon describe as 'uncertainty absorption':

> The technical vocabulary and classification schemes in an organization provide a set of concepts that can be used in analyzing and communicating about its problems. Anything that is easily described and discussed in terms of these concepts can be communicated readily in the organization: anything that does not fit the system of concepts is communicated only with difficulty. Hence the world tends to be perceived by the organization members in terms of the particular concepts that are reflected in the organization vocabulary.
>
> *(March and Simon, 1958, pp. 164–65)*

Although the focus here is on the single formal organization, uncertainty absorption can also be understood in broader terms. The project of industrialism, advanced through a world of technical experts and administrative organizations, absorbed uncertainties in such a way that complexity involving 'devious' consequences would not appear as a problem. As Simon suggested, such complexity could not ultimately be a problem because, if it were, the necessarily bounded instrumental rationality of administrative organizations would be undermined – and with it, by implication, the whole project of industrialism.

For his part, however, March did not remain sanguine in the face of complexity. Looking to problems emerging in administrative organizations, he came to the view that narrowly rationalistic patterns of thought and expression had the capacity of so overwhelming creative potentials as to become dysfunctional. In issuing his 1971 call for a 'technology of foolishness', March (1989*b*) indicated a need for spaces within the administrative sphere where unconventional insights would be not only tolerated, but actively encouraged. He did not mean his call as a challenge to

the administrative sphere – much less to the larger project of industrialism – but as a means of reforming administration from within and thereby making it more effective. Calling for a technology of foolishness, nonetheless, implicitly reveals that instrumental rationality within the administrative sphere involves a paradox: a need both for disciplined behaviour and for creativity capable of escaping the bounds of that discipline.

The difficulty March identified when he first indicated a need for a technology of foolishness has been addressed in later approaches to policy and administration. Prominent here, for example, have been proposals to play with the images and metaphors that guide organizations (Morgan, 1986) and for professional practices to become more reflective (Schön, 1983). There have been proposals, moreover, to deliberately stage interchanges of opposing perspectives in order to make explicit the kinds of assumptions that tend to tacitly guide analysis (Mason and Mitroff, 1981; Mitroff and Mason, 1981). Overall, the key suggestion has been for a more creative approach, as summed up in the now clichéd phrase 'thinking outside the box', and as promoted by exercises in creative problem-solving.[17] Just as March's invocation of foolishness implicitly recalls the tradition of the fool, the jester and the clown, such an approach typically involves a suspension of tragic seriousness and a turn toward the comic. Yet such a turn is no simple matter. Overturning convention, as we shall see, is constrained not only by incidental inhibitions, but also by alignments of power.

Edward de Bono, a leading figure in creative problem-solving, has identified the 'reversal method' as a key technique. According to de Bono, the trick is to identify and reverse a dominant relationship in the way a problem has been defined (1977, pp. 125–26): 'In the reversal method one takes things as they are and then turns them round, inside out, upside down, back to front. Then one sees what happens. It is a provocative rearrangement.' Here, as de Bono suggests, we are liable to encounter a kind of foolishness: 'In some cases reversal may seem utterly ridiculous. This does not matter. It is just as useful to practice being ridiculous as to practice reversal' (1977, p. 129).

March's call for a technology of foolishness and de Bono's call for the ridiculousness of the reversal method both explicitly undercut the characteristically serious tone of instrumental rationality in a way that

17 The phrase 'thinking outside the box', which became current in the 1980s, likely comes from the famous nine-dot puzzle. See James Adams's account of the puzzle – and the many solutions to it – in the film *Creative Problem Solving: How to Get Better Ideas* (Del Mar, Calif., CMR Productions and McGraw-Hill Films, 1979). Also see Adams (1986, pp. 24–33).

suggests the comic. More specifically, indeed, both serve to recall the carnivalesque, as conceived in Mikhail Bakhtin's literary and linguistic theory. Bakhtin's main point of reference, historically, was the way the medieval world and language of officialdom – of civil and church authorities – was regularly challenged by another, by the popular world and language of carnival. The official idiom had no independent meaning, but was constituted in its tension with carnivalesque inversions and reversals that tended to bring officialdom down to earth through the 'festive laughter' of carnival (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 118).

For Bakhtin, the characteristic seriousness of rational discourse carries with it the risk of undercutting its own rationality. This is because rationality, by virtue of its opposition to 'all intolerant dogmatism', must remain reflexively cognizant of its own limitations – and must be prepared to laugh at itself: 'Laughter purifies from dogmatism, from the intolerant and the petrified …. Laughter does not permit seriousness to atrophy …' (1968, pp. 121–23). By itself, the voice of reason is an authoritarian monologue that closes off dialogue. Yet Bakhtin maintains that a strictly rational discourse is actually impossible because there can be no uniform language. Discourse is inherently dialogical, in his view, such that the appearance of a single voice of authority exerts, at the intersection of the different voices constituting meaning, a suppression of dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 275, 288).

The carnivalesque remains in the modern world, by Bakhtin's account, as a cultural residue of medieval practices in which comic festivals and rituals presented a mocking, reverse image to the dour world of civil and ecclesiastical officialdom. Carnival festivities possessed their own peculiar language and logic, Bakhtin maintains, in a passage that strikingly resonates with de Bono's account of reversal:

> All the symbols of the carnival idiom are filled … with the sense of the gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities. We find here a characteristic logic, the peculiar logic of the 'inside out' (à *l'envers*), of the 'turnabout', of continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings.
>
> *(Bakhtin, 1968, p. 11)*

Creative problem-solving de Bono style thus implicitly appeals to a carnivalesque language and logic, offering comic gestures that re-enact the logic of reversal that Bakhtin locates in the medieval context of ritualized,

popular challenges to the piety of officialdom. Today, the technocratic tone of policy discourse similarly evokes a pious mood, resisting comic impulses that might, as it were, turn instrumental rationality on its head.

DEMOCRATIC POLITICS: POWER AND INSIGHT IN THE CASE OF THE TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE

The promotion of a technology of foolishness within the administrative sphere bears witness to the excessive narrowness of instrumental rationality – excessive, that is, on its own terms. Disciplined analysis and behaviour are insufficient. Far from encouraging creative insights, such discipline routinely obscures problems and opportunities that might otherwise become obvious. Disciplined instrumental rationality, expressed through technocratic discourse, does not challenge the mode of uncertainty absorption that places the project of industrialism beyond question – that, indeed, makes any such questioning appear irrational.

Although March emphasized the need for a technology of foolishness in administrative organizations, he added (1989*a*, p. 181) that foolishness should remain serious and responsible. He wanted to nurture creative insight by reducing normal constraints, but he also did not want insight to get out of control. There is an ambivalence, indeed, that attends creative insight: it can aid established alignments of power while, at the same time, threatening them with a dangerous power. Uncertainty absorption functions, as a matter of routine, to serve and protect prevailing power alignments. Another way of putting this is to say that uncertainty absorption involves a 'mobilization of bias' (Schattscheinder, 1975, p. 69) – it is part, that is, of established power. Insight capable of throwing a pattern of uncertainty absorption into question is thus part of a larger dynamic of power and insight. This is not to say that insight on its own possesses a power capable of effectively challenging and unsettling established power relations. Nonetheless, insight can foster an opportunity for change by exposing tacit assumptions, allowing for a critique of what has been taken for granted, and perhaps provoking redefinitions of problems. Still, everything depends on the specific interplay of forces in a given context.

To concretely examine the dynamic of power and insight – and its implications for problem definition[18] – let us return to the case of the Trans-

18 Problem definition is conceived here not in contradistinction to problem construction, but as a particular form of construction that carries a potential for redefinition (see Torgerson, 1996; cf. Bacchi, 1999).

Alaska Pipeline. This case arose in the context of the first notable policy success of the environmental movement, US environmental legislation of the early 1970s. The centrepiece was NEPA, which President Richard M. Nixon, temporarily assuming the mantle of environmentalist, ceremoniously signed into law on the first day of the new decade.

The law required federal agencies to prepare environmental impact statements for projects under their jurisdiction. From a critical perspective, a problem with environmental impact assessment is that it can become just another technocratic exercise, thereby distorting analysis while perhaps masking or legitimizing the power alignments behind project proposals (see Torgerson, 1980). Yet if the assessment of environmental impact is a routine requirement, it can also act as a 'worm in the brain' (Bartlett, 2005, p. 48), a nagging insistence that attention be focused on concerns that otherwise would likely be ignored or glossed over. This potential arises especially when opponents of a project can draw attention to inadequacies in the plans of the proponent.

The Trans-Alaska Pipeline, designed to bring Prudhoe Bay oil south to the Port of Valdez, was the first major project to fall under the requirements of the new legislation. In the course of the controversy, opponents were able to initiate legal action challenging the adequacy of the environmental impact statements prepared for the project, which were thin to say the least (Anderson, 1973). The consequent delay in approval was considerable, and the pipeline was finally built only after Congress enacted special permission, blocking further court action by opponents under NEPA. Congressional authorization came amid industry alarms of an impending energy crisis, together with the oil embargo of the Organization of Oil Exporting Countries (OPEC) (Berry, 1975, pp. 103–07).

Yet what the delay helped bring to light were the foibles of the pipeline engineers as they ventured into unknown terrain. Eventually, the difficulties became too obvious to ignore or deny. They were later publicly acknowledged by an oil industry executive, ARCO president Thornton F. Bradshaw, during a US Senate hearing: 'Early in the game environmentalists blocked us for very good reasons indeed …. We did not know how to make an environmentally safe line. They helped us. We learned a great deal from them' (quoted in Coates, 1993, pp. 237–38).

Early in the controversy, however, harsh criticism against pipeline opponents typically invoked the kind of faith that had long been central to the project of industrialism. During public hearings regarding the draft environmental impact statement of the Interior Department in 1971, for

example, Fairbanks mayor Julian G. Rice used the words of William R. Wood, president of the University of Alaska, to portray those opposing the pipeline as being 'anti-God, anti-Man, anti-Mind'. Those opposing the pipeline were against God because they were 'Opposed to God's call in Genesis to subdue the earth'. They were against Man because they were 'Opposed to human status as the highest order of earthly being'. They were against Mind because they were 'Opposed to rationality in favor of mere emotion' (quoted in Coates, 1993, p. 203). Combining cosmic faith – in both a divine plan and the privileged status of humankind – with a call to rise above emotion in the name of rationality, the words of President Wood brought simultaneously to bear a range of objections to environmentalist criticism. Branded both impious and irrational, such criticism was to be dismissed out of hand. The call for rationality, if not cosmic faith, is one that Undersecretary Pecora would later repeat, but only after a crucial flaw in the initial design of the pipeline had been recognized.

It turned out that there was a mundane difficulty with the plan that no invocation of a divine order or call for rationality could fix. The difficulty was so obvious that a technology of foolishness, or even a considered appraisal of opposing perspectives, might well have made it obvious earlier, to the benefit of the pipeline proponents themselves. Although some federal officials had become aware of the problem, it was not resolved in the draft impact statement of early 1971. The industry's strategy was to defend its plan by stressing the technical competence and past success of its experts, while insisting that the pipeline project in Alaska was just like many other projects that had been completed successfully by the industry (Coates, 1993, p. 192).

What was the difficulty? A federal official, looking back about a decade later, observed that the industry 'simply planned to dig a ditch from one end of Alaska to the other and bury the pipeline in it'. The problem with that plan, according to the official (quoted in Coates, 1993, p. 183), could be summed up in a single word: 'permafrost'. It turned out that it was not a good idea to bury the pipeline in permafrost because the pumped oil, being hot, would melt it, thereby undermining the structural support the hard, frozen ground gave to the pipeline. What Alyeska, the oil industry consortium, initially called for was nonetheless precisely a hot oil pipeline buried largely in permafrost. The person at Alyeska responsible for dealing with permafrost was a soils expert, Elden Johnson, who looked back twenty-five years later at the experience of designing the pipeline: 'Everyone thought it would be pretty straightforward …. But we were doing

something for the very first time. It was like going to the moon: you don't know what you're going to encounter.' After he arrived in Alaska, Johnson went out to explore part of the pipeline route: 'I picked up this piece of rock … and put it in my truck. Ten minutes later, it was nothing but a pool of mud.' 'That', he said, 'was my first permafrost experience. Here I was thinking I knew all about it, but I had never seen it in action. It was the dawn of permafrost engineering for me' (Johnson, quoted in Campbell, 2002). The Interior Department did not confront the problem of melting permafrost in its draft impact statement, and the plan was changed only after critics at public hearings stressed the problem by drawing attention to the 1970 Lachenbruch Report, a study by a federal official warning that thawed permafrost could rupture the line. The report had effectively been ignored. At last, in its 1972 final impact statement, the Interior Department called for much of the line to be elevated above ground (Coates, 1993, pp. 227, 231). It was then that Undersecretary Pecora said that it was time for rationality, not a circus (Coates, 1993, p. 220). It was not the instrumental rationality of the administrative sphere, however, but democratic politics that led to the recognition and correction of a fundamental mistake in the original plans.

We might note that recognition of the mistake brought an instance of reversal, however perhaps trivial, in the way the engineering project was understood by the experts responsible for it. The straightforward problem of building a pipeline underground came to be redefined as the different problem, requiring engineering innovations, of building approximately half of the pipeline elevated above the ground. This small reversal, although of great import to the pipeline consortium and its engineers, was one that of course remained within the established definition of the larger energy problem. The dynamic of power and insight was effectively contained within this context. Yet this does not mean that potentials for carnivalesque reversal in problem definition necessarily ended there. In this case, as well as others, the nascent environmental activism of the time sought to place other potential reversals on the public agenda, though with little success. What established alignments of power resisted in this case were, as we shall see, insights suggesting the potential for a decisive move toward a general redefinition of the energy problem – a shift from an emphasis on increasing supply to a focus instead on the management of demand.

It might be noted in passing that, although a fiasco was avoided by elevating part of the pipeline, the line did nonetheless come to play a role in another fiasco. The pipeline did not follow an all-land route, as had been

recommended by some in anticipation of the kind of disaster that was later to unfold (Coates, 1993, p. 231). Rather, the pipeline terminated at the port of Valdez, where the oil would be shipped to market via ocean tankers. In the spring of 1989, the worst oil spill in the history of North America occurred when the tanker *Exxon Valdez* collided with a well-mapped reef in Alaskan waters.[19] Yet, in more recent years, there has been still another twist in the adventures of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

Concern has again been raised about the pipeline's structural integrity, with the focus this time on the part that was elevated above ground to avoid the problem of melting the permafrost. The concern is again that melting permafrost will undermine structural support for the line, but this time the cause of the melting is very different (Weller, 2000; Cullen, 2005; Cockerham, 2001; Rozell, 2001; Bellisle, 2001; Murphy, 2001; Alaska Forum, 2001; McBeath, 2003; US Arctic Research Commission Permafrost Task Force, 2003; Romanovsky, 2009; Morris, 2009). Alaska has been experiencing such an increasingly warmer climate over the past few decades that it has come to be regarded as a hot spot of global climate change. There is now a prospect, due to the warmer climate, that large areas of permafrost will melt, destabilizing the vertical supports on which the elevated part of the pipeline depends. If the warming trends continue, it may become necessary to re-engineer and rebuild a significant portion of the line. There is controversy over how significant a problem the melting permafrost might become (Cockerham, 2001). Independent experts and watchdog environmental critics point to the possibility of an engineering problem of nightmarish proportions. In contrast, Alyeska and its government regulator, the Joint Pipeline Office, indicate that the problems would be manageable and could be dealt with over time because any thawing would proceed gradually.[20] Critics respond with concern, nonetheless, that the large potential costs of remedial action pose a risk and that Alyeska's response to the problem will not prove sufficient.

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19 The oil spill resulting from the 20 April 2010 blow-out on British Petroleum's *Deepwater Horizon* drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico eclipsed the record set by the *Exxon Valdez*.

20 Although both the ownership and the names of the corporations involved have been modified somewhat over the years, the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company has been controlled since its inception in 1970 by some of the major petroleum companies, most prominently British Petroleum and Exxon-Mobil, in conjunction with a number of other companies in the petroleum sector, all of which together constitute the collective ownership of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (Alyeska, 2009; Campbell, 2002). The Joint Pipeline Office is the federal-state, inter-agency regulator led by the US Department of Interior and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

The ignorance of pipeline engineers about the significance of permafrost led to an initial design that would have resulted in an engineering fiasco if it had not been for the insights advanced through the efforts of environmental activists, who took up opportunities to engage in democratic politics. It seems remarkable that permafrost would many years later again emerge as a significant problem for the pipeline. Elevating the line rather than burying it avoided the initial problem of its melting the permafrost that surrounded it, but this solution depended on the assumption that the permafrost was indeed, for all practical purposes, permanent. Concerns about global climate change, and its particular intensity in Arctic regions, not only throw that assumption into question, but now make it obvious that the pipeline was planned without taking into account the problem of climate change.

Would attention to this problem even have been possible at that time? The short answer to that question is yes. In retrospect, we can see that deliberate moves were made by the US federal government that, in effect, did away with the political opportunities that might have encouraged attention to the problem. Clearly, such attention was not possible on the terms of the kind of 'thoughtful and rational analysis' that Undersecretary Pecora advocated in opposition to a 'circus' – within a context, that is, which discouraged and absorbed uncertainty about the advisability of the project. That context, indeed, illustrates a general tendency that Giandomenico Majone has identified among experts advancing project proposals: to assume that the project will fulfil its promises and that 'it will have no negative consequences that could reduce the attractiveness of its practical implementation' (1989, pp. 5–6). As project proponents in the case of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline laid claim to their own rationality and expertise, they either explicitly stated or clearly implied that opponents were irrational and incompetent. By allowing recourse to the courts, NEPA had opened a door to democratic politics, providing environmental activists with the opportunity for an 'obstructive potential' (Offe, 1972) that pipeline proponents could not ignore. After much resistance by industry and government officials, they finally came to accept that the environmentalist critique had drawn attention to a crucial flaw – the failure to confront the problem of permafrost – in the initial design of the pipeline. Despite this important contribution from environmental activists – which they had advanced in the course of earlier public hearings – the Interior Department, as we have seen, refused calls in 1972 for additional public hearings on *The Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Proposed Trans-Alaska Pipeline*. Amid the crisis

atmosphere of the 1973 OPEC oil embargo, moreover, congressional authorization for the pipeline blocked any further court challenges under NEPA. Taken together, these two federal government moves effectively closed off opportunities for further intervention by environmental activists through democratic politics.

Since at least the time of the controversy surrounding the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) in the early 1960s, environmentalism had been developing as a coherent and significant perspective in public affairs. This development continued during the late 1960s as environmental activism not only took its place among other forms of social activism that were arising in the period, but also gained dramatic recognition in 1970 with the enactment of NEPA and with the first Earth Day in the spring of that year. Central to environmentalism was a concern to somehow limit and redirect the project of industrialism, and this concern manifested itself in the case of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline controversy by environmentalist calls for another approach to energy policy, one that would place substantially greater reliance upon conservation and the development of alternative sources of energy (Manning, 1974). The Interior Department's refusal to hold a public discussion of its final environmental impact statement combined with the congressional exemption of the pipeline from further court action to rule out serious consideration of the environmentalist approach. Nonetheless, a general reorientation of energy strategy had been the central focus of work undertaken by physicist Amory B. Lovins since 1971 in his capacity as the British representative of the Friends of the Earth. His various early publications on developing an environmentalist energy strategy were issued in 1975 in the form of the book *World Energy Strategies*, followed the next year by his influential *Foreign Affairs* article, 'Energy strategy: the road not taken' (1976), which summarized his position by introducing the contrast between 'hard' and 'soft' energy paths. The hard path was the conventional approach to energy strategy, which focused on expanding sources of supply, principally through hydrocarbon and nuclear megaprojects. The Trans-Alaska Pipeline was a particular megaproject that manifested the direction of the hard path. The soft path, by contrast, included new sources of energy, principally renewable forms, but the key to the strategy involved a reversal from a focus on increasing supply to what Lovins called – in a departure from the connotations of the term 'conservation' – increasing the 'efficiency' of energy use: when you have a barrel that is leaking oil, you can either try to keep up with the rate of loss by pouring more oil into the barrel or you can fix the hole. Lovins recommended fixing what he deemed an extremely

large hole, and proceeded to offer detailed proposals about how to manage energy demand (e.g. 1977).

In the course of his work, Lovins repeatedly voiced concern about the prospect of climate change if the hard path were maintained, citing among other sources the major 1971 study *Inadvertent Climate Modification* (Wilson et al., 1971), which involved an international research team more than forty strong under the auspices of MIT and the Swedish science and engineering academies. Although stressing uncertainties, this study already spoke in terms – quite familiar today – of the 'growing urgency of taking action before some devastating forces are set in motion' in an irreversible manner. This danger included the 'real possibility of a global temperature increase' some four decades hence because of rising levels of humanly produced carbon dioxide and heat – with the consequence of 'a dramatic reduction or even elimination of arctic sea ice' that would initiate a positive feedback mechanism tending to increase the temperature further because of diminished 'global albedo', or reflective capacity (Wilson et al., 1971, pp. 27, 17, 78; cf. Lovins, 1975, p. 112 n. 19). Lovins went on to speak explicitly in his *Foreign Affairs* article of 'virtually unavoidable' atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide 'early' in the twenty-first century that would give rise 'then or soon thereafter' to 'substantial and perhaps irreversible changes in global climate' (1976, p. 67). Despite their claims to rationality and expertise, pipeline proponents in industry and government gave no attention to this possibility and certainly did not take it into account in the promotion or design of the pipeline. If federal government moves in 1972 and 1973 had not eliminated opportunities for democratic politics in the form of either public hearings or court action, there would then have been a prospect for the issue of climate change to have become a matter of public deliberation.

In retrospect, we can see that the construction of the pipeline in Alaska was part of a larger pattern of energy development and that an alternative orientation was emerging at the time, informed by a significant insight into the energy problem. That insight, central to Lovins's soft path, involved a reversal in the way the energy problem was defined. To be pursued seriously – and thereby tested – the soft path would have required both potent political commitment and significant financial investment, sustained over a substantial period. As it happened, Lovins became quite influential after the publication of his *Foreign Affairs* article in 1976, and some initiatives were begun on elements of his soft path strategy, with President Jimmy Carter going so far as to install solar collectors on the

White House. When Ronald Reagan later entered the White House, however, the elements of the hard path were emphatically reaffirmed, and the solar collectors were removed, eventually to become what Carter had feared – a museum piece (Green, 2009).

As Lovins in the 1970s had framed the prospect of climate change, the hard path was a key part of the problem, and the soft path was key to the solution. During the decades since then, the prospect of climate change has increasingly come to be perceived not as a speculative possibility, but as an immediate crisis. In regard to Alaska and other northern regions, indeed, the concern has arisen that dramatically increasing temperatures have begun to melt permafrost to such an extent that the melting could release greenhouse gases – particularly methane – in quantities sufficient to substantially exacerbate the problem of global climate change.

With the credence given to the problem of climate change under the early presidency of Barack Obama, there have been 'initiatives intended to steer the economy toward something more like Amory Lovins's soft path' (Green, 2009). These initiatives have involved government investment and private sector innovations – especially as in Silicon Valley – to advance developments in both renewable energy and energy efficiency. Although the specific innovations may now be more sophisticated, there is nothing new about the basic insight behind these developments. It emerged several decades ago with the advent of environmental activism.[21] Power and insight tend to be coupled in a dynamic relationship, and neither seems sufficient by itself to achieve coherent and effective policy change in circumstances of devious complexity.

CONCLUSION

Even though Lasswell had quite clearly conceived the 'policy sciences' as a critical enterprise, Tribe's use of that term to name the target of his critique was no mere matter of terminological confusion. The technocratic connotations of the term are clear enough. Lasswell's promotion of the policy sciences amounted, indeed, to a particularly sophisticated reformulation and elaboration of the well-established idea that modern society, with its advancing technology and increasing complexity, faced a growing need to be governed on the basis of expert knowledge. Although his explicit call, as

21 For a concise history and assessment (sympathetic yet also critical) of the soft energy path orientation, together with a suggestion of the potential applicability of a soft path approach to water and other natural resources, see Holtz and Brooks (2009).

early as 1948, was for the development of 'the policy sciences of democracy' (1976, p. 118), Lasswell's approach unavoidably served to exacerbate a long-standing tension in liberal democratic thought between the requirements of rationality and the emotional demands of the public.

On this view of the public, a democratic society can actually threaten democracy by undermining the rationality needed to govern in the face of the complex challenges posed by the progress of modern society. Responding in this vein to the emergence of new social movements in the 1960s and early 1970s, a controversial report sponsored by the Trilateral Commission announced a 'crisis of democracy' – democracy was itself threatened by too much democracy because emerging social demands were overloading the capacity of the democratic system (Crozier et al., 1975). Democratic politics, according to this view, had created a 'democratic distemper' (Huntington, 1975, p. 106), entailing irrational consequences. What this position took for granted, however, was the belief that the complex problems arising with the industrialist project could effectively be managed through the rationality of experts. By explicitly calling for an approach involving multiple perspectives, Tribe did not reject the rationality of experts, but he did establish the basis for the view – later taken up by the critical orientation in policy studies – that democratic politics might not be so much the problem as part of the solution.

When Charles E. Lindblom objected to the image of 'one governing mind' (1968, p. 4) in the policy literature, he explicitly associated this image with Lasswell's approach to the policy sciences. What Lindblom missed about Lasswell, however, was the critical character of his approach. 'Do we not … discover among social scientists some unwillingness to give prominence to hypotheses that may be widely interpreted as inconsistent with prevailing ideology?' By posing that rhetorical question, Lasswell (1961, p. 112) repeated a concern that he had posed when first publicly calling for the policy sciences of democracy: there was a need 'to remove the ideological blinders from our eyes' in order to diminish irrational constraints on inquiry (Lasswell, 1976, p. 220). As early as 1955, indeed, he clearly perceived a problem in the emerging policy orientation that Tribe would later address: 'Running through much of the modern work that is being done on the decision process', Lasswell indicated, 'is the desire to abolish discretion on the part of the chooser and to substitute an automatic machine-like routine' (1955, p. 387). 'In effect', he went on with particular reference to game theoretic models, 'the player becomes a computing machine operating with 'built-in' rules in order to maximize built-in preferences' (p. 387). There was

a prevailing 'preference for automation', against which Lasswell advocated a 'preference for creativity' (p. 389).

Tribe's critique of the limitations of instrumental rationality, by exposing 'blind spots and distortions' in policy discourse (1972, p. 106), similarly involves a critique of ideology. He criticizes the simplistic character of objectivism not only at an epistemological level, but also in terms of cultural and political conventions that constrain inquiry:

> the users of policy-analytic techniques are under constant pressure to reduce the many dimensions of each problem to some common measure in terms of which 'objective' comparison seems possible – even when this means squeezing out 'soft' but crucial information merely because it seems difficult to quantify or otherwise render commensurable with the 'hard' data in the problem.
>
> *(Tribe, 1973, p. 627)*

In effect, he draws attention to a 'mobilization of bias' (Schattscheinder, 1975, p. 69), a concept that Bachrach and Baratz (1970) deployed in their famous demonstration that there is a subtle 'face of power' whereby policy proposals are defeated not because they have been considered and rejected, but because they have been blocked by ideological and procedural barriers from being taken seriously in the first place. The controversy surrounding the proposal for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline offers a case in point. The environmentalist proposal to place substantially greater reliance upon energy conservation and alternative sources was not seriously entertained as an alternative to the pipeline (Manning, 1974), and procedural moves to both avoid public discussion and end further court action had the effect of blocking consideration of the emerging environmentalist proposal – actively being developed by Lovins during the period – for a thorough redefinition of the energy problem. By invoking 'Foucault's unthinkable' in the context of Borges's exotic fable, however, Tribe also makes a move that not only recalls the carnivalesque, but gestures beyond ideology critique toward a perhaps broader cultural range of discursive constraints.

A mobilization of bias tends, in any case, to block insights that are at odds with the prevailing pattern of uncertainty absorption. Similarly, policy discourse oriented by instrumental rationality tends to exclude challenges to the conventional terms by which a policy problem is identified and defined. No doubt, there is an enhanced potential for the prevailing mode of uncertainty absorption to be challenged if a technology of foolishness is invoked. Yet even the deliberate promotion of a technology of foolishness

to foster creativity is liable to remain within an established framework of acceptability. This is because the difficulty involves not just intellectual constraints. No mere play with reversal, de Bono style – or, in Bakhtin's terms, no mere appeal to the carnivalesque – is likely to mount a serious challenge to the prevailing context of power relations that, together with vested interests and perspectives, has given rise to the way the problem is construed. Such a challenge involves a political connection, the intervention of democratic politics in a dynamic of power and insight.

The administrative mind may sometimes accept exercises in creative problem-solving, but it represents a standpoint that does not value multiple interests and perspectives. It is orientated by an ethos of control while multiple interests and perspectives involve politics and the risk of things getting out of control. Even insights needed for the coherent functioning of the established order are liable to be suspect – as we saw in the case of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline controversy – if they tend to challenge prevailing power alignments or the presuppositions of industrialism. Attempts to grapple with complexity as simply a problem of rationality, an intellectual challenge to be handled through analysis and insight, encounter the limits of 'cogitation', as Wildavsky has indicated, suggesting a need for 'interaction'. An effective challenge to the dominance of a single framework requires not just an insightful intellectual exercise, but a process actively engaging multiple perspectives on a problematic situation.[22] Such interaction, however, potentially opens the door to democratic politics.

To speak of democratic politics is to raise the question of the public and the role it might have in addressing policy problems. Maarten Hajer has proposed an approach to the question of the public that draws attention to an emerging 'multiplicity of *publics*' (2009, p. 43, original italics):

> There is not one coherent public …. How people engage in politics depends on the forms and designs of political practices …. The public is not 'out there' waiting to be heard, it is constantly formed by the way in which it is allowed into, or forces itself into, the political process.
>
> *(Hajer, 2009, p. 43)*

22 Attempts to comprehensively map complex problems in systems-theoretic terms may appear as an analytic way out of the difficulty. As Dryzek (1987*a*) has argued, however, such efforts not only face extraordinary research challenges, but also are constrained both by a need to limit their scope to a determinate domain (over which control might be effected) and by restrictions in perspective necessary for a 'system' to be conceived in the first place. Also see Morgan (1982) and Gibson (1992).

Hajer here largely echoes the notion, as advanced by Nancy Fraser (1992) and Michael Warner (2002) in response to Habermas (1989), of a plurality of emerging 'public spheres' or, as Ian Angus (2002) has put it, 'emergent publics' (cf. Torgerson, 2007*a*, 2010). Conceived as arising from a range of new social movements, emergent publics contrast sharply with the conventional notion of an uninformed and generally quiescent mass public that was presupposed and even explicitly encouraged by those concerned that democratic demands posed a threat to democracy (e.g. Huntington, 1975). Such publics – as is evident, for example, in the case of the 'green public sphere' (see e.g. Torgerson, 1999) – are distinguished, rather, by vigorous debate and the development of an institutional capacity to address policy problems in terms that challenge the way they are typically identified and defined in the administrative sphere.

Instrumental rationality, by Tribe's account, indicates a strategy of reduction and compartmentalization in addressing problems. The limitations of this approach are especially evident in addressing complexity, as is exemplified by environmental problems generally and the case of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline in particular. Nonetheless, environmental policy has generally remained centred in the institutions of an administrative sphere principally committed (in form as well as content) to the project of industrialism – given low institutional status, together with a restricted scope for problem definition, while being required to meet the expectations of positivist epistemology and the conventions of technocratic discourse. Ignoring complexity through reduction and compartmentalization means attempting to define and solve problems one at a time, an effort that typically gives rise to problem displacement (Dryzek, 1987*b*, p. 20). As an official with the US Environmental Protection Agency once noted, 'somewhere in the country, toxic metals are being removed from the air, transferred to the waste water stream, removed again via water pollution controls, converted to sludge, shipped to an incinerator and returned to the air' (quoted in Dryzek, 1987*a*, p. 429). A strategy of reduction places instrumental rationality at odds with what environmental policy especially seems to require: attention to subtle, surprising, and elusive connections in natural cycles and interdependencies. Here we encounter the complexity of a world that is not cut down to manageable size, that resists being mastered through calculation, and that often makes technocratic discourse sound ridiculous.

Combined with the advent of environmental activism, the recognition of complexity in environmental problems has provoked efforts to find ways

to overcome the limits of reduction and compartmentalization. Over the decades since the advent of environmentalism in the late 1960s, indeed, the limitations of narrowly defined problems have become inescapably obvious (see e.g. Weale, 1992). In response to these limitations, to take a prime example, the 'precautionary principle' has been proposed to reverse a fundamental assumption in policy formulation (see Cameron and Wade-Gery, 1995; Briggs, 2006; Eckersley, 2004, pp. 135–36). Instead of assuming that problems arising with the project of industrialism will – as if part of a natural course of development – necessarily have adequate solutions, the precautionary principle requires good reasons to support the view that a proposal for technological or economic development is unlikely to have deleterious consequences. What is called for, in effect, is a reversal in the conventionally established burden of proof.

Although problem displacement bears witness to complex interdependencies, there is another side to the story. When focusing on subtle, surprising, elusive connections, it is hard to restrict attention within narrow boundaries and to make the convenient – or, in Simon's view, administratively necessary – assumption that the complexities of the larger context are irrelevant. Indeed, the recognition of interdependencies suggests a potential for environmental problem redefinition (see Torgerson, 1999, pp. 71–76) that seeks to construct problems so that an effort to resolve one helps to resolve, rather than to exacerbate, others. Problem redefinition of this sort might be said to implicitly employ a technology of foolishness or the reversal method writ large. This pattern of reversal is exemplified in the approach Lovins took to redefining the energy problem. Such a redefinition ultimately points not to such relatively limited objectives as better energy conservation and greater reliance on renewable supply, but to the prospect of creating a highly energy-efficient civilization that would address multiple environmental problems at the same time. That would mean, for example, not focusing on emission controls for the internal combustion engine or even on the development of different kinds of engines, but on creating a different transportation infrastructure that would displace the centrality of the automobile, or different settlement patterns that would reduce the demand for transportation, or forms of livelihood that are not dependent on the perpetuation of the rat race (see e.g. Coughlin, 1994; Gonzalez, 2006; Torgerson, 2001). Clearly, redefining the energy problem in these terms involves not only specific policy questions, but the cultural and historical framework in which those questions are framed.

Tribe's critique of instrumental rationality in policy discourse did not simply address specific methodological issues, but also exposed how it tended to constrict practice within conventional boundaries rather than to expand the focus of attention. The style and imagery of policy discourse typically exhibit a technocratic pattern, suggesting that analysis must be serious and hard-headed – a model of rationality. It was in this context that Tribe drew attention to March's proposal for a technology of foolishness. For Tribe, a problem with March's proposal was that it insisted that such foolishness was something other and outside rationality, while Tribe suggested the prospect of an enlarged understanding of rationality (1973, pp. 638–39; cf. pp. 640, 656, n. 132). The important point, in any case, is that the invocation of foolishness, creative reversal, or the carnivalesque poses a challenge to a kind of rationalism that prevails in the administrative sphere and in the promotion of the industrialist project. Such a challenge tends to disrupt the conventional way policy problems are identified and defined, but the challenge itself will tend to be constrained by the prevailing pattern of power relationships. For policy problems to be identified and defined through a multiplicity of perspectives, an enlarged – or somehow supplemented – rationality would by itself be insufficient. Addressing policy problems in that way also depends upon the debates of emergent publics and the intervention of democratic politics in the dynamic of power and insight.

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Chapter 3

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND POLICY IMPACT: THE CASE FOR A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Luk van Langenhove

This chapter argues that the social sciences should not only seek to have an instrumental impact on society. Rather they should try to develop as much as possible 'generative powers' to advance and explore new social icons about society. In doing so, they should empower people to live their lives as 'well-informed citizens'. Social sciences should first of all be regarded as local practices aimed at introducing change at the local level. Next, there is also room for more indirect contributions to change, through the active dissemination of knowledge. For this, the social sciences need to put more focus on knowledge-brokering and participatory approaches.

The first section of the chapter discusses two classical models of knowledge transfer, the limestone model and the engineering model, and relates them to a user perspective where the user is either an expert or a citizen. The second section focuses on how knowledge brokerage could increase the impact of social sciences. Finally, the chapter presents participatory methods as tools for increasing the impact of the social sciences in a non-instrumental way.

TWO MODELS OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

One can distinguish two models of social scientific impact. The first can be called the *limestone model* of results transfer (Bulmer, 1982). In this model, the results of social science research are metaphorically pictured as

slowly permeating society, like water seeping through and slowly shaping limestone. In such a model of transfer of results, the social sciences have only an indirect and cumulative impact, and the only thing that researchers have to do is to present their findings in a readable way. As such, the transfer of scientific knowledge is regarded as open-ended and as providing only general orientations.

The second model of results transfer could be called the *engineering model*: it is problem-centred, instrumental and control-oriented (Bulmer, 1982). In this model, social scientists are compared to engineers: they have expertise, they wait for instructions ('Build a bridge') and they are capable of doing the job. If the bridge collapses, the engineer can be blamed. It is a model that lends itself well to the customer–contractor principle as applied by most funding agencies: the client wants information about something, launches a 'call for proposals', and after an evaluation of the proposals a researcher is granted a contract and can start working on the 'deliverables'. In recent years the academic community of social scientists has to a very large extent adopted the funding mechanism that their colleagues (often social scientists) from governmental agencies have imposed on them. As a result, the 'project' has become the dominant form of research organization. As noted in the Metris report, 'The ascendancy of the project as a dominant form of social science research organization, and of output-driven research more generally, is an aspect of the tendency towards even greater degrees of responsiveness, flexibility and external mobilization of research capacities' (EC, 2009, p. 30). Writing proposals has become a major activity of all social scientists who want to be successful.

Behind the engineering model also lies a strong belief in the efficiency of the social sciences and in the possibility of predicting events, which is related to the positivist and scientism approaches discussed in van Langenhove (2007). But alternative approaches are possible (see for instance Wallerstein, 1996 and van Langenhove, 2010). Not surprisingly then, in my view, the engineering model should not be the dominant model in the social sciences. To be sure, there are good examples of cases where the social sciences had a clear and direct impact on solving a problem. But this only works with clear-cut, well-defined problems, not with general multifaceted ones.

Nonetheless, the limestone model is not a sufficient alternative either as it still starts from a passive view of the role of social scientists: they just have to publish results and then wait and see how these results 'permeate' the places where they are needed, during specific time slots. Below a more

active view of doing social science research will be advocated, based upon a model of the social sciences as a societal learning process that includes public and stakeholder involvement.

Regardless of the active or passive stance one takes, the essence of the limestone model remains however that 'results' and insights from the social sciences should lead not only to direct and measurable applications but also to more diffuse insights in the hows and whys of the social *Umwelt*. This is much like the natural sciences, which have not only contributed to solving many practical problems, but also made it possible for lay people to understand many aspects of the material world they live in. In a similar way, the social sciences should contribute to the general understanding of our societies by all those who are part of them. This is what Kenneth Gergen calls the *generative power* of the social sciences: 'the capacity to challenge the guiding assumptions of the culture, to raise fundamental questions regarding contemporary social life, to foster reconsideration of that which is "taken for granted", and thereby to furnish alternatives for social actions' (1978, p. 1346). This goes back to what C. Wright Mills already saw as the major task for social science: 'making the opaque transparent, on exploring the ties linking visible biographies to invisible societal processes' (quoted by Manicas, 2003, p. 618). For Mills, social sciences needed to be targeted towards intervening for a better future by ascertaining alternatives within the limits of historical possibility (Mills, 1959).

Most social sciences do not have much generative power, but nevertheless it can be regarded as a crucial issue in the debate of how the social sciences could or should influence society. In the context of a study on the role of ideas in development policy, McNeill (2005) has traced the origins of three ideas that have influenced development policy in a powerful way in recent years. The first is the *informal sector*, a concept coined by an anthropologist in the 1970s and referring to economic activities that largely escape governmental regulation. The second is *sustainable development*, a concept coined in the 1980s that has been extremely successful in the agenda-setting of international organizations. The third is *social capital*, an old concept in the social sciences that has been actively taken up by international organizations, like for instance the World Bank, since Robert Putnam's work *Making Democracy Work* (1993). These three concepts serve as good examples of the generative power of the social sciences.

Generative power is thus about creating new insights and meanings, new social capital for action, new social organizations and so on. Another way to describe generative power is to say that it is about the potential to

stimulate what Brookfield (1987) described as the two activities necessary for critical thinking: first, identifying and challenging the *assumptions* underlying a person's beliefs and actions, and second, conceiving and exploring *alternatives* to current ways of thinking and living.

Obviously, people have some knowledge about the world in which they live together and certain beliefs about that world. Such beliefs and knowledge can be true or false, and in all cases the knowledge will be limited and fragmented. Different types of theories can be formulated in relation to the different realms of the natural and the social *Umwelt*. This stock of knowledge is theoretically available to everyone, but in practice only very limited knowledge is acquired and used by people. In other words, people have different competencies in understanding different aspects of the world. This has been nicely formulated by Schutz (1946), who differentiated three ideal types which he called the expert, the man on the street and the well-informed citizen.

The expert's knowledge is restricted to a limited field but therein it is clear and distinct. The man on the street on the contrary has a working knowledge of many fields which are not necessarily coherent with one another. His knowledge is 'a knowledge of recipes' indicating how to bring forth typical results by typical means in typical situations. 'The recipes indicate procedures which can be trusted even though they are not clearly understood' (Schutz, 1946, p. 122). Most readers of this book will only have a vague understanding of how electricity works but yet they know how to handle light switches. The same holds for many aspects of social life. Assuming that most readers will be social scientists, still there will only be a few of them who will understand the D'hondt system that is used in many elections. But this does not prevent them from understanding what democratic elections are, let alone participating in them. In other words, there is no need to become an expert in everything. We can handle most aspects of running our lives without expert knowledge.

In between both ideal-types stands the citizen who aims at being well-informed. He is not, nor does he aim to be, possessed with expert knowledge, but he does have '*reasonably founded* opinions in fields which as he knows are at least immediately of concern to him although not bearing upon his purposes at hand' (Schutz, 1946, p. 122–23). For Schutz, each of us in daily life is simultaneously an expert, a well-informed citizen and a man on the street. As a result, as Giddens noted, 'every individual can, in principle and often also in practice, appropriate expert knowledge to be applied in the context of social activities' (1994, p. 95).

USING SOCIAL SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE

Both practitioners and policy-makers need knowledge to make decisions and to act. Such knowledge can come from several sources, including personal experience. It can also be produced by social scientists. As such, the social sciences can generate information and evidence that can be used in decision-making processes. In those cases the practitioners' or policy-makers' actions and decisions become somehow grounded in social sciences. Or otherwise stated, the policy-making process becomes scientificated. This 'scientification of politics' often goes together with a 'politicization of science', and poses a number of problems that need to be studied. Among them are the intertwining of experts and politics, and the use of expert advice not only for problem resolution, but also for legitimation. In addition, the question remains to what extent the social sciences should be playing the role of an agent of change. Whatever the answer to that question, one can only observe that many researchers have not been sufficiently diligent in carrying out research that is relevant for practitioners and policy-makers who, in turn, have not always been sufficiently discerning in distinguishing bad research and unreliable findings from high-quality research. These problems have to be confronted in more imaginative ways if social science researchers, practitioners and policy-makers are to serve society more effectively. In my view, the ultimate goal of the social sciences should be to generate knowledge that can be of relevance for all those who want to change a given situation. So the social sciences should try to bring together researchers with those who play a role in the phenomena researched and with those who are in a position to make decisions about the phenomena studied. But as said before, the social sciences cannot claim to act as a change agent 'on behalf' of the rest of society: social scientists have to work together with different stakeholders from industry, governments and civil society. At the end of the day, it is they who will generate change.

In the previous section, two models of impact have been introduced: the limestone model and the engineering model. Whatever the differences between those two models of transfer, what they have in common is that they suppose a kind of linear transfer of scientific information, produced by experts and transferred to users who are non-experts. This is certainly the case for the engineering model but also holds for the limestone model, since in both models users and producers are seen as occupying separate spheres with, on the one hand, consumers deprived of knowledge, and on the other, producers of knowledge who can remedy these knowledge deficits in a direct or indirect way. We should stop thinking in such a

linear way, and consider that many consumers possess excellent and relevant knowledge, and seek producers more to test or confirm their own knowledge than to learn something new. Indeed, whatever social scientists study, it involves a positioning of themselves towards the social actors studied (cf. Harré and van Langenhove, 1998). In other words, doing social science always involves a dialogue between researchers and those or that being researched. As discussed in van Langenhove (2007), in scientism and positivist approaches to social sciences, this positioning is bracketed away. In doing so, the social world is mistakenly treated as natural. This has implications for the status of publications. Within a natural science publication, the objects under study are treated as passive agents that undergo the experimenters' manipulations. Such manipulations can have effects on the objects or substance manipulated, but the publication of an account of those manipulations can not possibly have any direct effects. In many mainstream or positivist social sciences studies, the same is implicitly postulated. Persons are treated as 'objects' and their advice on what they think about the publications is seldom asked. Actually, most subjects in for instance a psychological experiment will never read any of the publications that resulted from that experiment (van Langenhove, 1995).

This implies that there is a need for more non-linear transfers of social science knowledge. The problem is, of course, how relationships between 'producers' and 'consumers' can be organized in a non-linear way? Here we can refer to the concept of *learning organizations*. What is needed are new means of organizing scientific research in such a way that researchers, together with all the stakeholders involved in the problems under study, can engage in an individual and collective learning process. Such new organizational forms of research not only involve the handling of large amounts of data, but also require a continuous monitoring and steering of the communication processes between scientists, policy-makers and the general public. Information and communications technology (ICT) can certainly play a facilitating role in such enterprises, but it would be totally wrong to believe that technological tools will suffice. Such a view, once again, treats the people who act as decision-makers as passive 'users' of scientific information. Dealing with societal problems involves much more than scientific information: at the end of the day, choices are always ethical and political and have to be framed in the dynamics of the social interactions in which they occur (Harré and van Langenhove, 1998).

Thus, the issue of managing social science knowledge as a contribution to the resolution of societal problems is far from simple – as a matter of

fact, it too needs to be studied. New forms of managing such information within our complex democracies are needed and, once again, increasing societal learning seems to me to be the crucial challenge. This can only be achieved by paying greater attention to knowledge-brokering in social sciences. Today, the function of social science knowledge-brokerage hardly exists, as it is considered that part of the task of social scientists is to collect all relevant material and organize the dissemination of results. Maybe what is needed is a new division of labour, where social scientists are active at a local level and are assisted by knowledge-brokers who link 'local' research with globally available information. A similar argument has been advanced by Stiglitz (2000) when discussing the genesis of the World Bank's global development network. For Stiglitz, each society, through its own knowledge institutions, should take an active role in local learning processes. Certainly, today one can find a great deal of information on any subject whatsoever in books, journals and on the Web. But easy access to the Web should not make us think that social scientists can therefore easily frame their (local) work in the global context: the abundantly available information needs to be translated into local knowledge. To some extent this will in the future be possible through applying specialized 'robots' and search programs, but there will always be a considerable amount of human assessment involved in order to make sense of the 'data'. Also, whatever the results of a given local research project, they need to be actively channelled into those places where they can be of use and, in the first place, into organizational learning processes. It is not only a matter of 'downloading' available knowledge, what also counts is that knowledge is made applicable locally and that the adoption is done by the local 'doers of development' (Stiglitz, 2000, p. 31).

So one can say that there is a pressing need for social science information-brokers to enable the social sciences to continue their contribution to knowledge and decision-making. What is more, if such a knowledge-brokerage function is not rapidly integrated into social science research, the social sciences might be unable to contribute much to societal change and thus risk becoming a total epiphenomenon as the third millennium develops. That would cause problems not only for the social sciences but for society as a whole, because, as Martinotti (1999, p. 91) once noted, the absence of social sciences leaves the way clear for the contribution of 'myths, superstitions and ideologies' to the decision-making process.

PARTICIPATORY METHODS AND THE CREATION OF HYBRID FORUMS

Information-brokerage alone is not enough. There is also a need to organize the dialogical aspect of social science research practices. This demands a heterogonous participatory forum where all the groups linked to some societal issue are brought together to set common priorities concerning the objectives of a research project. In other words, research has to be conceived as joint projects between users of knowledge, founders of research and researchers. The elements for such an 'innovation' are readily available in so-called 'participative methods'. The challenge is to upgrade these methods so that they can become the core methods of any social science research project.

Participation refers to processes through which stakeholders influence and share control over certain initiatives that might affect them. It is about lowering the distinction between 'us' and 'them'. Thinking of the social sciences in such terms means that 'us', social scientists, and 'them', the rest of society, are more engaged in dialogue. Participatory methods is an umbrella term which describes interactive approaches that actively involve a range of stakeholders, ranging from decision-makers to lay persons. A participatory approach to social sciences advocates actively involving the 'public', where the relevant 'public' depends upon the topic being addressed. In most cases that will imply that the public involved is somehow a 'stakeholder' in the topic being researched (see Slocum, 2003 for a review). The interest and capability of various groups to contribute to a participatory process will depend upon the topic at hand. In addition, the (geographic) scope, budget and timing of the project will have to be taken into consideration, in order to decide the number and geographic distribution of participants. The main groups to consider involving, either to make a (more or less binding) decision or to give input to the process, include:

- **citizens** on an individual basis
- **stakeholders**, whereby citizens are represented by organizations, such as:
  - non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
  - private industry
  - interest groups (advocacy groups, clubs, etc.)

- **experts** on a particular issue
- **politicians** who will take up the outcome of the process.

The rationale for participative social sciences research can be explained against the background of two questions:

- From whose perspective is research performed?
- How can social science research influence decision-making?

The first question has to do with the values of the initiator, which are of primary importance in defining a research issue. Who determines this and on what grounds?

In the case of basic research, it will be mainly the researchers themselves who decide what to study, but in applied research it will be the body that commissions and/or pays for the research. For instance, either an isolated academic sociologist or a government can decide to initiate a research project on inter-group relations between immigrants and non-immigrants. Seldom, if ever, will the immigrants and non-immigrants be implicated in that decision, and in the majority of cases, their role in the research process will be limited to passively responding to actions. It is likely that they will never even see the results. At best, the research results might influence a development path because the results will be used in making decisions on, for example, how to improve inter-group relations in a community. At worst, nothing at all will happen with the report until a Ph.D. student quotes it in a literature review.

In participative social science research, the people involved as 'subjects' in the study will have on the contrary an active say in, first, defining research goals; second, conducting the research; third, interpreting the results; and finally, translating them into development paths. Such an approach to social science takes as its starting point a community of enquiry that uses theoretical and methodological expertise to influence the process of change. This has been labelled 'co-operative inquiry' (Heron, 1996) and is based on the belief that good social sciences research is research *with* people rather than *on* people. Cooperative inquiry is thus concerned with revisioning people's worldviews as well as transforming practices.

This participatory approach to social sciences research can be traced back to the work of the German psychologist Kurt Lewin, who coined the term 'action research'. Lewin is also credited with coining two widely known slogans, 'Nothing is as practical as a good theory' and 'The best

way to understand something is to try to change it.' In his action-research approach to social psychology, Kurt Lewin focused on social change. He conceptualized social change through a thermodynamic metaphor as a three-stage process: dismantling former structures (unfreezing), changing the structures (transition) and finally locking them back into a permanent structure (freezing).

However important the Lewinian concepts and methods are, they were to a large extent limited by the 'old paradigm'. When Lewin had to seek refuge from Nazism and immigrate to the United States he became one of the founding fathers of social psychology. However important democracy was for Lewin, his academic work echoes an approach to social science according to which the scientists are seen as experts able to 'manipulate' the behaviour of 'subjects'. As such, Lewin's action research was not very participation-oriented, but it was at that time the most advanced for linking social sciences with social problems, and was committed to using social science in tackling those problems.

The action research approach gave rise to formulations that have put much more emphasis on dialogue, participation and hermeneutics. Amongst the most important followers of Lewin, I would like to mention only one: Chris Argyris. Working as a consultant for companies and governments, Argyris has tried to link social science research with interventions aimed at producing change. In Argyris et al. (1985), this experience is translated in comprehensive theory about how to produce knowledge that can generate new actions. A crucial element for Argyris is that:

> researchers must be willing to make themselves vulnerable and to put their own reasoning and actions on the line, subjecting them to the same scrutiny to which they subject the reasoning and actions of participants. They must be able to contend with their own defensive reactions and remain open when their views and actions are called into question, often without much comparison or skill. And they must do all this while simultaneously negotiating a dilemma faced by researchers and participant alike.
>
> *(Argyris et al., 1985, p. 269)*

In the view of some academics, such a participative perspective may seem utopian since it ignores the distinction between experts and laypersons. But in studying the social realm, the distinction between the expert and the non-expert does not make a lot of sense as one has to start from Schutzian

first-order constructs.[23] Furthermore, such working methods are already common in some disciplines, for instance psychological research (Reason and Heron, 1995) and in certain practices such as management performance audits in organizations (Argyris and Schön, 1974). There is no reason not to believe that it could work for other societal issues as well.

To a large extent independent of developments in social sciences, there seems to be an increasing demand for public participation in policy-making (see for instance Joss and Durrant, 1995). On the one hand, this is because participation is considered to improve the quality of decisions (the pragmatic argument). On the other, it is because participation is viewed as necessary to render decision-making processes more democratic (a normative argument).

From a pragmatic point of view, it is indeed better to have as much knowledge, experience and expertise as possible in addressing the complex (and thus uncertain) nature of social issues and problems. The means to have institutionalized and/or informal influence on decision-making processes are unequally distributed among members of society. Therefore, access must be created for all relevant persons to contribute to solutions and planning for the future.

From a normative perspective, new problems and issues in society often pose questions for which existing social norms are inadequate or non-existent, creating social uncertainty and anxiety. In addition, the plurality of (often conflicting) norms in a society is often mixed up with interests (financial or otherwise), which are unequally represented. It is thus normatively desirable to enable a process that is as democratic as possible, in order to ensure that all values and opinions can be represented in a policy debate.

In addition to the above lines of thought, participatory processes in policy-making have been demanded to address problems such as lack of trust among the public for governance institutions and perceptions of weak legitimacy. The public perceives many initiatives as being imposed in a top-down fashion. In order to increase public support for and understanding of programmes, the public can be directly involved in planning and implementing them.

23 Alfred Schutz has introduced the distinction between first and second-order knowledge about the social world: the former is what people use as knowledge, the latter what social scientists produce as knowledge. For Schutz, second-order knowledge always has to incorporate the pre-existing first-order knowledge (Schutz, 1946, 1953).

Involvement in participatory processes also builds capacity among the public. It does so by educating the public as well as by creating networks of relevant persons who can continue to address policy issues as they develop. However, it is not only the public that needs to learn. All decision-makers can best learn how to improve their services and products by receiving direct feedback from the 'users'. Rather than first making and then fixing, it is most efficient to involve the end-users in the initial design and planning.

Furthermore, a participatory approach to policy-making is seen as a way of building social cohesion. It is a useful process to achieve consensus when differences in opinion, and even conflicts, need to be resolved. When this approach is taken up early in the process, participants can share their perspectives, values and reasoning on an emerging issue as these develop and mature. When opinions have already been polarized, some methods are particularly useful at mediating between interest groups to achieve consensus, or at least arrive at a common decision after all perspectives have been expressed. At a minimum, these processes achieve mutual understanding, and all voices can be heard.

All of the above arguments in favour of a participatory approach apply *mutatis mutandis* also to the social sciences. Following a concept used by Callon, I would like to propose that we develop as far as possible hybrid forums to frame social science research processes in change processes. A hybrid forum can be described as a public place where different groups meet to discuss certain controversies. They are forums because different groups can mobilize to debate certain policy choices that engage the collectivity. They are hybrid because the groups and their spokespeople are heterogeneous: they can be technical experts, politicians, stakeholders, NGOs or just lay people who feel concerned. They are also hybrid because the questions and problems addressed can be very diverse (Callon et al. 2001).

Callon et al. (2001) argue that hybrid forums are a good tool to discuss technological problems in such a way that it can help to act in today's world of uncertainty. There is no reason why hybrid forums should be limited to technological issues.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has argued so far for a non-linear approach to the relationship between social sciences and policy-making. For this, a focus upon knowledge-brokerage was advocated together with an emphasis on participatory

methods. Both have been presented as necessary instruments to raise impact. By way of conclusion, I now want to relate this to a discussion of what 'impact' on social science this can possibly mean.

In the context of the social scientific area of *technology assessment*, an interesting typology of impact has been proposed by Hennen et al. (2004, pp. 61–77), which in my view is of interest for the discussion of pathways for both the humanities and social science knowledge in general. The core of this typology involves a distinction between three dimensions of impact that technology assessment can have:

- impact in the sense of raising knowledge on issues among policy-makers in public debate
- impact in the sense of forming opinions/attitudes of actors involved in policy-making and the debate
- impact in the sense of initializing actions taken by policy-makers or other actors.

These three dimensions might be read as an application continuum leading from 'raising knowledge' to 'forming attitudes/opinions' to 'initializing actions'. Another way to phrase this is to think of this continuum as moving from traditional academic research through instrumental research to expert or consulting knowledge.

Hennen et al. (2004) have furthermore linked their three dimensions to the different issues that technology assessment projects usually deal with:

- information on the technological and scientific aspects of the issue that is at stake
- knowledge on the societal aspects of the issue (that is, on the relevant actors and their interests and values as well as the possible social conflicts that can evolve around the technology under consideration)
- the policy aspects of the problems and developing policy options.

Combining the impact dimension with the issue dimension produces a matrix that covers different types of impact. With regard to technology assessment, Hennen et al. (2004, p. 63) discerned nine types of impact of technology assessment that they used to classify twenty-one existing varieties of technology assessment practices. By way of illustration, this matrix is reproduced as Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1 Varieties of technology assessment practices

Impact dimension	I. Raising knowledge	II. Forming attitudes/ opinions	III. Initializing actions
Issue dimension			
Technological/ scientific aspects	Scientific assessment a) Technical options assessed and made visible b) Comprehensive overview on consequences given	Agenda-setting f) Setting the agenda in the political debate g) Stimulating public debate h) Introducing visions or scenarios	Deframing of debate o) New action plan or initiative, further scrutinize the problem at stake p) New orientation in policies established
Societal aspects	Social mapping c) Structure of conflicts made transparent	Mediation i) Self-reflecting among actors j) Blockade-running k) Bridge-building	New decision-making processes q) New ways of governance introduced r) Initiative to intensify public debate taken
Policy aspects	Policy analysis d) Policy objectives explored e) Existing policies assessed	Restructuring the policy debate l) Comprehensiveness in policies increased m) Policies evaluated through debate n) Democratic legitimization perceived	Decision taken s) Policy alternatives filtered t) Innovations implemented u) New legislation is passed

Source: Hennen et al. (2004, p. 63).

A similar approach can be developed for the social sciences in general. The basic idea is that any social scientific activity should aim at having three kinds of effects:

- generating new knowledge
- forming attitudes and opinions
- initializing actions.

Raising knowledge is obviously the core business of the social sciences. This implies that the social realm is considered as understandable and that people can expand their knowledge about it. The history of the social sciences is full of examples where more or better knowledge on a certain topic has been

generated. And yes, even fully fledged positivist and scientism-oriented research has contributed to generating more knowledge. But this is not to say that such knowledge is of high relevance.

Raising knowledge is not enough. It is equally a task of the social sciences to contribute to what we could call the forming of attitudes and opinions. Several possibilities exist, such as contributing to the agenda-setting in political debates, the actual stimulating of public debate and the introduction of new visions and future-oriented scenarios. Another field of action in this respect is the stimulation of self-reflection among actors in a given situation. Initializing actions is the third avenue for the social sciences. Following the old Feuerbachean thesis, repeated by Marx, the social sciences need to be bold enough to present plans of actions, new orientations and policy alternatives in as many fields as possible.

The social sciences need to be brought into the public sphere by promoting research that brings together researchers, those who play a role in the phenomena being studied and those who are in a position to make decisions about the phenomena being studied. Only in such a way will the social sciences be able to contribute to changing the world – rather than merely interpreting it.

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Chapter 4
POLICY EXPERTISE AND CRITICAL EVALUATION

Steven Griggs and David Howarth

Contestation and debate about the role of expertise in the policy process is nothing new (Fischer, 2000). On the one hand, the complexities of social change in post-industrial societies, the uncertain risks of new technologies and the allegedly limited capacity of the public to make consistent judgements have repeatedly been deemed to warrant the recourse to value-free expertise and scientific evidence as a necessary foundation for the decisions of politicians and policy-makers. On the other hand, the framing of policy as the privileged domain of expertise, as well as the narrow definitions of what counts as knowledge and evidence, have led to persistent accusations of the depoliticization of decision-making and the anti-democratic power of unelected technocrats to shape policy agendas with little or no public oversight. Yet, as Torgerson (1986) so rightly points out, this whole enduring saga of claims and counter-claims over expertise and knowledge in the policy process runs the risk of developing an unhelpful and unrealistic antagonism of expertise and politics. Either expertise abolishes politics as we seek to divorce objective facts from questions of values, or politics comes to dominate expertise, such that the role of expertise is reduced solely to that of persuading others to accept as legitimate decisions already taken in the interests of the existing political order.

This chapter seeks to contribute to the ongoing debates over how we might move beyond this alleged antagonism of expertise and politics in the policy process. Important inroads have already paved the way for such

interventions. Post-positivist accounts of policy-making have stressed the impossibility of divorcing facts from values in policy inquiry, recognizing that science 'like all human knowledge, is grounded in and shaped by the normative suppositions and social meanings of the world it explores' (Fischer, 1993, p. 167). These reappraisals of the dominant foundations of the discourse of science have opened up new spaces for different forms of knowledge in the policy process, fostering support for the pursuit of participatory collaborative approaches that capture and work with local knowledge. In many instances, such moves have been accompanied by a turn towards *phronesis* which, as Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 56) argues, reorients policy inquiry towards the search for 'practical knowledge' and 'practical ethics' rather than the ideal of a predictive science (*episteme*) that promises greater social and technical control of the world (*techne*). As such, the role and status of the expert-policy analyst becomes realigned, reconfigured towards the collaborative practices of what Fischer (1993, p. 183) calls an 'interpretive mediator', what Forester (1999) alternatively identifies as a 'deliberative practitioner', and what Schwandt (1997, p. 79) defines as the practices of 'partners in an ethically informed, reasoned conversation about essentially contested concepts like welfare, health care, education, justice, work life and so forth'.

These interventions, part of a broad post-positivist turn in policy sciences, are welcome. They rearticulate the role of the policy expert as a 'specialised citizen' (Fischer, 1993, p. 183) and legitimate new forms of knowledge that can and ought to inform the process of democratic policy-making. Most importantly, through problematizing the role of expertise in the policy process, they set out new approaches for addressing practical problems such that policy analysis cannot be divorced from the wider political, economic and social challenges affecting our contemporary globalized society. Indeed, we would argue that meaningful policy analysis must be critical and normative, speaking to pressing issues such as social inequalities, democratic exclusions and environmental degradations. Unfortunately, it is this 'leap into the arms of the normative' that is 'precisely the political embrace from which evidence-based policy is trying to escape' (Pawson, 2006, p. 19).

However, these attempts to reconfigure the role of the policy expert raise new interconnected challenges for the generation of relevant policy knowledge. Not least, they demand new skills and capabilities, or new expertise in policy, from practitioners and indeed policy analysts. First, as Nowotny (2003) claims, once we quite rightly begin to legitimate new

forms of knowledge, the primary task of the policy expert is that of building bridges between different categories of knowledge, experience and expertise. At the same time, these same knowledge bases have to be exposed to different forms of testing and resistance. How then are such 'bridges' to be constructed? How are policy experts to maintain spaces of collaborative inquiry and dialogue while at the same time allowing for the evaluation and ultimate rejection of some claims to knowledge? Put alternatively, and borrowing again from Nowotny (2003, p. 155), how are policy experts working with 'jostling publics' to construct the public spaces in which this regime of pluralistic expertise will be constituted?

Second, we agree that critical interpretations also require a passage through the conflicting self-interpretations (and thus values) of the social actors we study, even if they are not reducible to these contextualized self-interpretations. However, at the same time, we must avoid delimiting our inquiry to surfacing the different contextualized self-interpretations of those engaged in the formulation and implementation of a particular programme or policy. Failure to do so runs the risk of offering no explicit critical engagement as 'their contextualised self-interpretations "hover" too close to the practices they seek to elucidate' (Geertz, 1973, p. 26, cited in Glynos and Howarth, 2007, p. 64). In fact, returning to our first challenge, such risks cannot be divorced from how the policy analyst seeks to construct the policy spaces in which different 'jostling publics' engage. The insistence on the possibilities of reaching deliberative consensus between different forms of expertise may well only reinforce the lack of attention to the political dimension of the constitution of meanings and the exclusion of particular forms of knowledge (see for example Schwandt's optimism that 'different interpretations can be adjudicated by appealing to transcendental conditions of ideal speech communities': 1997, p. 80).

In order to meet this twin challenge, we seek to instil policy research and the work of policy analysts and practitioners with an ethos of agonism (see Connolly, 1991, 1995; Mouffe, 2000*a*, 2000*b*, 2005; Tully, 1999). This is not to refute the value of deliberation and dialogue in the policy process, but rather to infuse such practices with a particular ethos. In this model, actors in the policy process actively and passionately contest substantive issues as adversaries – and not simply as competitors, bargainers or enemies – recognizing each other's right to differ and disagree. Such an agonistic ethos of respect for difference thus focuses attention upon the channelling of conflicts and oppositions rather than their eradication through negotiation and dialogue. While it does not eliminate antagonism, we suggest that we

can envisage agonistic 'we/they' relations where adversaries recognize the legitimacy of their opponents. The art of democratic policy-making is thus in many ways to transform antagonism into agonism. As such, we suggest that such an agonistic ethos should offer a yardstick with which to evaluate and justify putative democratic practices and processes, as well as informing the practices and engagement with others of the policy analyst.

Equally, we stress the importance of normative evaluation as an internal element of critical explanation. Here building on Connolly, we stress that critique involves the projection of contingent and contestable ideals and norms into our problematizations and objects of study. As such, we highlight both ethical and normative aspects of critique, arguing that critique and normative evaluation are the products of the exploratory interplay between the counter-logics that emerge in particular contexts, and the contestable values and principles we necessarily bring with us to our concrete investigation. As discourse theorists, we are thus firmly opposed to positivist and purely descriptivist approaches to political theory and social science. But we also eschew an over-hasty and over-reaching normativism that too quickly prescribes an a priori set of norms and principles with which to evaluate and then reorder existing institutions, policies and practices. More concretely, the practice of critique is predicated on the centrality of political and fantasmatic logics, for their discernment enables us to highlight the contingency and undecidability of particular social relations and structures. The political is evident in those conjunctures when social relations are formed and challenged by the exercise of power, and where exclusions and foreclosures occur. Political logics thus enable the researcher to explore and potentially reactivate historical moments of political institution, thus disclosing the possibility of resistance against specific forms of domination. The ideological is evident in those fantasmatic narratives that function to conceal contingency and naturalize relations of domination.

With these commitments in mind, this chapter offers a critical examination of the British New Labour Party's engagement with the policy of community cohesion and neighbourhood working. In contemporary policy circles, dissent from the rhetoric of neighbourhood participation and citizen empowerment is rare (Irvin and Stanbury, 2004). Participation remains a 'good thing', having been repeatedly articulated over time as 'the solution' to an ever-increasing chain of complex policy issues from social exclusion and improved service delivery, through to sustainable change and enhanced social capital, and on to civil renewal and increased democratic

legitimacy (ODPM, 2005, p. 9). The New Labour government manifesto for neighbourhoods that was *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter* describes neighbourhood initiatives such as Sure Start and New Deal for Communities as 'nurseries for democratic participation' and argues that 'with action at the neighbourhood level people everywhere can make a significant difference to the quality of our country's public services… [where]… local people can play their part in creating sustainable communities where it is good to live and work' (ODPM, 2005, p. 2). Indeed, in 2006, David Miliband, the United Kingdom's then minister of communities and local government, advocated the devolution of responsibilities down to local communities as a means of addressing the 'power gap' in British society, declaring that 'greater citizen and neighbourhood involvement plays an important role in helping to tackle disadvantage and empowering people and places that have had the least power within our society' (2006, p. 5).

However, despite such assertions, we question how far it is possible for New Labour's prioritization of neighbourhoods and community cohesion to promote common interests and a sense of shared collective identity within neighbourhoods while at the same time accommodating difference and diversity (Jones, 2003; Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004). Indeed, following the disturbances in 2001 in towns such as Bradford, Oldham and Burnley, the Cantle Report on community cohesion argued that area-based initiatives 'in many cases … reinforced the separation of communities' (Home Office, 2001, p. 10). Targeted initiatives had arguably 'meant that it has been possible for rivalries and jealousies to fester with all sections of the community feeling that they have fared less well than others' (Home Office, 2001, p. 25). Cantle pointed to 'the limited experience in promoting cultural interchange and in projects and services which emphasize similarities and common interests' (LGA, 2006, p. 12). The rewards of neighbourhood governance might not therefore automatically materialize in the form of empowered citizens. Rather, recourse to neighbourhoods potentially fuels tensions across communities and undermines the government's related policy drive towards the building of community cohesion.

In assessing such potential limits to neighbourhood working, we explore the limits of New Labour's articulation of the myth of 'cohesive communities' (Home Office, 2005*b*). We argue that the agenda of community cohesion failed to recognize fully the exclusionary processes that drive the recognition of mutual agendas and the construction of collective neighbourhood identities. In asserting the primacy of the political,

we privilege the constitutive role of strife in neighbourhood politics, arguing against the desire to insulate politics from value pluralism and contradictions (Hillier, 2003; Pløger, 2004). This recognition of the constitutive role of strife in neighbourhood politics draws upon the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and their propositions for radical democracy. Indeed, following our discussion above, we adopt the theory of 'agonistic pluralism' as our yardstick with which to evaluate and justify putative democratic practices and processes in neighbourhoods. However, while recognizing the importance of constructing an agonistic ethos in neighbourhoods, we raise the prospect that the tensions of agonistic democracy are best negotiated through a populist form of politics that constructs equivalential linkages between dispersed social demands, while articulating the particularity of each struggle in a more universal discourse (Laclau, 2005).

Our analysis begins by problematizing the accommodation of conflict and consensus in 'cohesive communities'. We then investigate the pursuit of an ethos of agonism as a means of constructing a 'competitive consensus' within neighbourhoods, before examining populist politics as a means of navigating the tensions within spaces of agonistic pluralism. We conclude with a critical assessment of how agonistic pluralism and populism reframe the politics of neighbourhoods and 'cohesive communities', and by investigating the potential relationships between agonism and populism.

PROBLEMATIZING COMMUNITY COHESION

Let us begin by deconstructing the discourse of community cohesion. We aim to demonstrate a number of internal contradictions that punctuate this discourse and the very construction of 'cohesive communities'. To do so, we first draw upon rhetorical statements articulated within the public domain in government policy commitments and guidance for practitioners. We then go on to establish the limits to the building of 'cohesive communities' through articulating the primacy of the political in our account of identity-formation.

The rhetoric of community cohesion: 'Together we can'[24]

In the rhetoric of community cohesion, 'cohesive communities' are defined in opposition to the spectre of local communities that are riven by 'polarisation' (Home Office, 2002, p. 9) and 'fractures … which may lead to conflict' (LGA,

24 Led by the Home Office Civil Renewal Unit, *Together We Can* is the New Labour action plan 'to get citizens and public bodies working together to make life better.' Regeneration and Cohesion

2004, p. 4) and where individuals pursue 'parallel lives' that 'often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges' (Home Office, 2001, p. 9). As such, community cohesion operates as a generative metaphor (Schön, 1993) in which conflict and division across communities become the 'problem' which articulates its own 'solution', that of an over-riding commitment of the Home Office towards 'building a strong civil society where people of all races and backgrounds are valued, and participate on equal terms' (www.homeoffice.gov.uk). The Local Government Association (LGA) (2006, p. 6) goes as far as to suggest that 'a divided neighbourhood, with no sense of place or belonging, in which one or more sections of the community are disaffected and constantly in dispute with each other, is unlikely to attract people to live or work and, still less, attract capital investment'. Thus 'community cohesion' comes to function as a myth that offers the prospect of some form of unified society, to render visible, cover over and mediate a number of dislocations across and within neighbourhoods – dislocations to do with the inequalities of race and ethnicity, class, age, faith – and also fears of crime and antisocial behaviour, and economic failure (see Box 4.1). It symbolizes a challenge for all individuals and for all communities which 'lies at the centre of what makes a strong, vibrant and safe community … whether we live in the heart of a big city or in a leafy village (Home Office, 2005*a*, p. 4).

BOX 4.1 Community cohesion as a popular demand

'Britain needs to be a country in which people from all backgrounds join one another in creating leading edge companies, improving neighbourhoods, participating in democratic decision-making and exchanging ideas in every field of work, from arts and culture to science and business. Without this basic sense of common identity and commitment to participation, not only are these opportunities missed but, at worst, fear and conflict can develop.'

(Home Office, 2005b, p. 42)

The definition of 'cohesive communities' throughout policy guidance makes explicit the appeal to a 'common vision', a 'sense of belonging' and the appreciation of diversity across communities and access to similar life opportunities for those from different backgrounds (see Box 4.2). Community cohesion, it is argued, 'can only grow when society as a whole

is one of the four strands identified within the plan. See communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/civil/together-we-can

recognises that individuals have the right to equality (of treatment, of access to services, etc.) and respects and appreciates the diverse nature of our communities' (Home Office, 2005*a*, p. 3). In its guidance to local authorities, the LGA declares that 'unity through diversity should be the theme – the message must be that cultural pluralism and integration are not incompatible' (LGA, 2002, p. 13). The creation of cohesive communities is thus defined as the forging of 'trust and respect for local diversity, and nurturing a sense of belonging and confidence in local people' (LGA, 2004, p. 4). Repeated appeals are made to the production of 'harmony' and 'common values' whereby cohesive communities 'defines the ability of communities to function and grow in harmony together rather than in conflict'. In the policy guidance, *Building Community Cohesion into Area Based Initiatives*, the whole thrust of community cohesion becomes equated to this production of harmony whereby neighbourhood schemes should 'ensure that communities are able to live and work harmoniously together. This harmony is summed up by the official term "community cohesion"' (Community Cohesion Unit, 2004, p. 5).

BOX 4.2 The defining qualities of a cohesive community

'The broad working definition is that a cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities;
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and in neighbourhoods.'

(LGA, 2002, p. 6)

In this production of harmony, the rhetoric of community cohesion seeks to marry or reconcile individual self-determination and personal autonomy with notions of duty and obligation (Blunkett, 2003). It refuses to reduce society to little more than the provision of 'good individual life opportunities' (Home Office, 2005*b*, p. 20). Rather, it identifies an innate need within individuals for 'a sense of common belonging and identity, forged through shared participation in education, work and social activities, and through mutual understanding of cultural difference' (Home Office, 2005*b*, p. 20). For the former home secretary, David Blunkett, who appeals

to the 'polis of Ancient Greece' and the demands of active citizenship, community provides us with common values in support of the production of social goods such as basic social order and 'decent behaviour' (Blunkett, 2003, pp. 14–15; see also Bastow and Martin, 2003). In fact, he extends the logic of active citizenship such that:

> for a community to enjoy order and civility, in which young people and adults fulfill their mutual obligations, requires community 'ownership' of those duties. Free and equal citizens can accept duties and obligations not simply because they exist, as traditions, but because they are the expression of the life of a democratic community to which all contribute, and which all have helped shape.
>
> *(Blunkett, 2003, pp. 14–15)*

As such, the aforementioned unity and diversity in 'cohesive communities' becomes entwined with the recognition of duties and obligation with 'people playing their part' and 'showing respect to others' (Home Office, 2005*b*, p. 20; LGA, 2004, p. 7).

The New Labour policy of 'community cohesion' thereby articulates what can be described as a civic republican discourse,[25] which brings together concerns over inclusion and personal autonomy with appeals to respect and duty. In so doing, it offers up the myth of 'cohesive communities' as a means of both rendering visible and mediating a number of dislocations across neighbourhoods. Yet New Labour's commitment to the construction of 'cohesive communities' also brings with it a number of tensions and contradictions which we need to problematize further. How far is it possible to bind together appeals to diversity with the obligations of respect and duty? Is community cohesion the most appropriate strategy, both politically and normatively, to response to apparent dislocations across neighbourhoods? For an approach that would contest the appropriateness, and demonstrate the limits, of such a strategy, we now turn to agonistic pluralism.

AGONISTIC PLURALISM

Our starting point here is to consider first how agonistic pluralists conceive of the politics of neighbourhood governance and the construction of collective neighbourhood identities. Such social and cultural identities

25 A signifier employed by the former home secretary, David Blunkett, in his 2003 CSV Edith Kahn Memorial Lecture on civil renewal. See Blunkett (2003).

are to be interpreted as political and relational discursive constructs. First, they are not given or objective entities, but are constantly produced and re-produced through social and political practices (Barnes et al 2003). Second, neighbourhood identities are defined in opposition to an 'other', for example the shared 'enemy' of a neighbouring community or stigmatized social group (Hillier, 2003). In this conception, politics thus involves acts of power and the construction of antagonisms by actors engaged in hegemonic struggles. The latter involve the drawing of political frontiers that divide 'insiders' and 'outsiders' through the definition of a 'core opposition' between 'friend' and 'enemy' (Howarth, 2000; Howarth and Torfing, 2005). In so doing, actors seek to cover over the differences that exist between themselves and others while differentiating the neighbourhood from something other than itself through acts of exclusion and the production of a 'constitutive outside' (Staten, 1984). Strife is thus constitutive of social relations.

Against this backdrop of the logic of hegemony, neighbourhoods are best viewed as privileged spaces or 'sites' within social orders, which are always marked by the political exclusions that forge them, and the ongoing political practices that they contain. The constitution of neighbourhood identities is thus akin to a process of spatialization, which involves the political articulation and sedimentation of differential actors and demands into a space of representation. This space of representation – in this case a neighbourhood – will be organized around a set of particular social logics, which structure the practices of decision-making at different 'sites' of social orders (Howarth, 2006). It will, however, be subject, not only to contingent events or crises, but also to challenges from those excluded forces. Indeed, the character and the outcome of participation in neighbourhood arenas will be contingent upon the capacity of neighbourhood actors to reconfigure and transform collective identities, articulating new campaigns and new means of representation and signifiers to hold neighbourhood networks together (Griggs and Howarth, 2004).

Five primary implications follow from this approach. First, there will be inescapable limits to the capacity of neighbourhood actors to establish 'cohesive communities', as all neighbourhood identities will be predicated acts of exclusion. Indeed, the rhetoric of community cohesion constructs its own 'other' in that the Home Office in its pursuit of building cohesive communities 'takes a stand against racism and extremists who promote hatred' and seeks to ensure that those 'extremists who promote hatred are marginalised' (2005*b*, pp. 5, 13). More significantly, it argues

that 'fundamentally, national cohesion rests on an inclusive sense of Britishness' (2005*b*, p. 20). This appeal to 'Britishness' then serves to qualify and further legitimize the limits of community cohesion as 'our respect for freedom means that no one set of cultural values should be privileged more than another. With the exception of the values of respect for others and the rule of law, including tolerance and mutual obligations between citizens, which we consider are essential elements of Britishness' (2005*b*, p. 42). And, when these latter conditions are not present in neighbourhoods, intervention against 'offenders' becomes legitimate: 'this cannot be a leap of faith. We need to be explicit that we care about social justice, and show that there are inequalities that we will not tolerate' (Blunkett, 2003, p. 21).

Second, not all participation in neighbourhood forums will promote the 'cultural interchange' or 'bridge-building' inherent in the rhetoric of community cohesion. Community cohesion guidance is peppered with appeals to 'opportunities for cross-cultural contact … and bridge-building', 'honest and open dialogue' and the generation of 'shared visions' (see Box 4.3). Practitioners in area-based initiatives are encouraged to strengthen community engagement, foster participation in decision-making and the creation of social community networks. Such appeals draw implicitly upon the value of interaction in what Amin terms 'micro-publics' such as schools and youth centres, where 'prosaic negotiations' are compulsory and where interaction and dialogue in collective arenas can 'disrupt easy labelling of the stranger as enemy and initiate new attachments' (Amin, 2002, p. 12, cited in Somerville, 2005, p. 131). However, as we argued above, the capacity of any participation exercise to engender new collective identities will be contingent upon the ability of neighbourhood actors to draw equivalences with other actors and will be context-dependent. As East's work on difference within urban communities points out, 'trust, reciprocity, shared norms and civic engagement may all be found in abundance within urban neighbourhoods, but channelled within mutually excluding groups' (East, 2002, p. 170).

BOX 4.3 The practice of cohesive communities

- Offer 'the maximum opportunity for contact between different racial, ethnic, faith, cultural, age and social groups' (Community Cohesion Unit, 2004, pp. 19–21).
- 'make it clear … that diversity in your area is valued' (LGA, 2002, p. 13).
- 'Take care not to give the (false) impression that the needs of other disadvantaged communities are not being recognised' (Community Cohesion Unit, 2004, p. 11).
- 'Themed programmes that encompass a number of neighbouring communities can be used to bring different communities together' (Community Cohesion Unit, 2004, p. 14).
- Visions should be 'challenging, inspirational and inclusive, grounded in deep respect for our common humanity and recognition of our shared responsibility for the future of our society' (LGA, 2002, p. 13).

Third, any appeal to, or act of, consensus will be an act of power, thereby rendering obsolete attempts to eradicate antagonism through communicative action and dialogue. Deliberative models of decision-making posit that community stakeholders, through the exchange of argument and 'reasonable' dialogue, will transform their preferences and reach a public agreement based upon the normative rationality and impartiality of a particular decision (Gutman and Thompson, 2004; Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). However, agonistic pluralists militate against attempts to resolve conflict through the engineering of a rational consensus through 'reasonable' and 'open' dialogue. This concern does not emanate from either the recognition of the conflictual background social conditions that hamper deliberation (Forester, 1999; Fung, 2005) or the bracketing-out from debate of the very issues that are said to fuel community discord (Rawls, 1993). Rather, it stems from the ontological primacy of the political, which dictates that there can be 'no rational moral consensus by means of free discussion' (Mouffe, 2000*a*, p. 13; 2005, p. 14). In fact, rhetorical appeals to consensus can, if they take on a moral character, further legitimize exclusion and amplify antagonisms across neighbourhoods (Mouffe, 2005).

Fourth, there can be no 'neutral' terrain in which to play out conflicts within neighbourhoods. Thus, aggregative models recognize the plurality of interests in neighbourhoods and seek to fashion bargains between coalitions of local residents in neighbourhoods upon the basis of the instrumental

calculations of individual rational actors. Typically, such models operating within neighbourhoods rest their claims to legitimacy on appeals to majority rule and the 'fairness' of its institutional rules and procedures such as 'one person one vote'. However, the agreement over procedural rules in such arenas will be the outcome of hegemonic struggles and exclusionary acts of power.

Finally, there can be no elimination of passion or the affective dimension of politics from the dynamics of neighbourhood participation. Agonistic pluralists counter any reduction of actors to self-interested rational agents whose interests are given; individuals cannot be reduced to agents 'without a history' (Hirschman, 1982, p. 85). Rather, as argued above, interests and group identities will be discursive political constructs, which are contextually and historically embedded. Strategies and tactics will be dependent upon such group identities. The commitment of actors to particular values will thus 'be a matter of identity and historical contingency rather than rationality' (Hillier, 2003, p. 39). Episodes of interactive policy-making within neighbourhoods will indeed reveal 'informal, rowdy and turbulent forms of political communication' in which the affective dimension of politics and the potential dislocation of group identities are never far from the surface (Van Stokkom, 2005). Politics as such cannot be reduced to rules or laws or appeals to rational consensus (Hillier, 2003, p. 41). Indeed, the re-production of neighbourhood identities rests upon their capacity to provide actors with a form of Lacanian *jouissance* (enjoyment) (Stravrakakis, cited in Mouffe, 2005, p. 27; see also Stavrakakis, 2005).

Overall, therefore, agonistic pluralism problematizes the construction of 'cohesive communities' in that the primacy of the political dictates that there will always be a 'constitutive outside'. Conflict is thus not a breakdown of consensus to be mobilized out of neighbourhoods. It is constitutive of neighbourhood identities (Pløger, 2004). This is not to dismiss the importance of constructing agreements or rather chains of equivalence between competing demands across neighbourhoods. However, it is to challenge the 'idealization that consensus-formation and the public good are rational entities' and to consider patterns of exclusion and lines of antagonism ever 'mindful of the impossibility of their elimination' (Hillier, 2003, p. 54). As such, 'community cohesion' and 'harmony' become a fantasy, or in Lacanian terms, the impossible Real of utopian dreams with community cohesion strategies articulating the 'elusive make belief' that substitutes for the Real and symbolizes the lack that separates reality from the Real (Hillier, 2003, pp. 49, 55). We now go on to argue that in offering

the prospect of 'competitive consensus' and recognizing the affective dimension of politics, the practices of agonistic pluralism and the politics of populism offer an alternative orientation to this fantasy of community cohesion and consensus-formation.

TOWARDS AN AGONISTIC ETHOS

Within the approach of agonistic pluralism, the primary democratic challenge facing neighbourhood governance becomes how to play out and constantly re-produce the inherent antagonisms of collective identification while accommodating difference across neighbourhoods and not descending into vilifying 'others' in order to reinforce existing identities. As Wenman (2003, p. 171) points out, Connolly accepts that this potential descent into vilification is never far removed from the processes of identification: 'actors best tolerate their existential condition if 'they can find some agent who is responsible for suffering, an agent who can become the repository of resentment' (1993, p. 153, cited in Wenman, 2003, p. 171). Peaceful co-existence thus depends upon the pursuit of an ethos of 'agonistic respect' that 'folds forbearance into the inevitable element of conflict between alternative identities' which is characteristic of the agonistic struggles for self-making (Connolly, 1993, p. 190, cited in Wenman, 2003, p. 171). However, such an ethos of agonistic respect depends for its dissemination not upon its embodiment within institutional frameworks or arrangements, but on the self-modification strategies of individuals learning how to foster openness towards the 'other', although Connolly is keen to point out that this ethos goes beyond the liberal notion of passive tolerance (Wenman, 2003, p. 172).

In contrast to the work of Connolly, Mouffe places the emphasis upon agonism as the construction of a 'shared symbolic order' or common symbolic space, which establishes the boundaries of a 'community', but allows for the expression of pluralism. In so doing, Mouffe establishes the distinction between antagonism and agonism, defining democratic politics in the arenas of neighbourhood governance as the art of 'defusing the potential antagonism that exists in social relations' (Mouffe, 2005, p. 19). This challenge is not to be addressed through the eradication of the political frontiers between 'insiders' or 'outsiders', but through the construction in neighbourhoods of 'tamed' relations of antagonism; in other words, agonism (Mouffe, 2005, p. 19). With the possibility of agonism, antagonisms do not therefore necessarily have to take the form of the division between

'us' and 'them', or distinctions between 'friends' and 'enemies', where the existence of the 'other' threatens the identity of the 'we' (2005, pp. 20–21).

While it does not eliminate antagonism by reducing conflictual actors to 'competitors whose interests can be dealt with through mere negotiation, or reconciled through deliberation' (Mouffe, 2005, p. 20), it is possible to envisage agonistic 'we/they' relations where adversaries recognize the legitimacy of their opponents: 'They are adversaries, not enemies. This means that, while in conflict, they see themselves as belonging to the same political association, as sharing a common symbolic space within which the conflict takes place' (Mouffe, 2005, p. 20). This sharing of a common symbolic space does not fully eradicate the exclusionary dynamics of politics or the necessity of a 'constitutive outside'. Agonistic citizens have to agree to play by the 'rules of the game', which are proper to the common symbolic space within which they operate. These rules, in the context of radical democracy, should inform what Mouffe terms a '"competitive consensus": consensus on the ethico-political values on liberty and equality for all, dissent about their interpretation' (2005, p. 121). Not all demands will thus be considered as legitimate, and those who challenge fundamental democratic institutions will be discriminated against. However, the drawing of these boundaries will be political, and as such they will always be open to contestation by those forces seeking to overthrow them and reconstruct the space of 'normal politics'.

As such, the agonistic litmus test for neighbourhood governance is the examination and evaluation of the extent of inclusion and exclusion within specific neighbourhoods and the form of antagonism that structures such patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Thus on a normative level, from a democratic point of view, an ideal form of neighbourhood governance is one in which there are both a maximum inclusion of different groups and interests, compatible with functional decision-making, and at the same time the conditions and space for effective challenge and contestation within such networks. The construction of such an agonistic space will derive in part from what we might term two democratizing agonistic strategies leading to the construction of 'others' as adversaries. First, actors will be required to engage in the pursuit of self-modification strategies, as in the agonistic ethos of Connolly. Second, they will be required to engage in the hegemonic construction of neighbourhoods as common symbolic spaces open to the demands of 'competitive consensus'. As Wenman (2003) argues, these are not incompatible democratizing strategies as to reinforce the conditions of agonistic pluralism, the micro-political practices of self-making have to be

articulated in a wider ethico-political framework. In short, the two strategies mutually reinforce one another.

In conclusion, the existence of a radical agonistic pluralism in neighbourhoods offers the opportunity for a plurality of passionate subjects and demands to exercise voice, and to be heard, in the arenas of neighbourhood governance. However, it makes no claims to eradicate exclusion and accommodate all forms of difference, recognizing that the hegemonic construction of any form of ethico-political common space depends upon the creation of a 'constitutive outside'. This raises questions as to the plight of those groups and demands that are excluded, those who remain antagonists rather than adversaries. Is there not a risk that agonistic pluralists somewhat hastily confine such demands to a political cul-de-sac where such 'others' have little choice but to mount a challenge to hegemonic institutions? If this is the case, how are we to reach out to those who do reject our common values? And, what about those demands that are persistently excluded? To address these questions and such deficiencies of agonistic pluralism, we now turn to the politics of populism.

THE LOGIC OF POPULISM

We often speak of something being 'populist' when it is perceived to be popular by a large majority of a country's population. A politician's 'populist gesture' – a call to stop fox-hunting, for example, or a policy designed to 'get tough on criminals' – is usually taken to be a pejorative description of a politician's speech or decision that appeals to the more base instincts of the mass of a country's populus. However, while there is often a good deal of slippage between the ethnographic and theoretical usages of the term, it is important not to confuse our ordinary common-sense meanings of the word with a precise theoretical concept. We draw upon Ernesto Laclau's (2005) efforts to construct a rigorous theory of populism, which centres on the construction of equivalential linkages between dispersed social demands. The logic of linking demands together into an equivalential chain involves the production of 'empty signifiers' – signifiers such as 'flourishing neighbourhoods' or 'vibrant villages'[26] – with which subjects can identify. As empty signifiers are forms of representation that are progressively emptied

26 These signifiers are drawn from the arena of neighbourhood governance in Birmingham. Their emergence and articulation within this context is currently being studied by Stephen Jeffares, a doctoral research student in the Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham. For further information, see Jeffares (2004).

of ideological and semantic content as new demands and identities are attached to them, they serve as points of symbolic identification for a range of different groups and subjects with divergent identities and interests.

In this conception, a populist form of politics is not to be confused with a specific ideological *content* – a rhetorical appeal to 'the people' for instance – or with certain *types* of movements or organizations, such as the People's Party in the United States. Instead, it is understood as a political *dimension* of social relations. More fully, if politics refers to the production, reproduction and transformation of social relations – the simultaneous and ongoing process of instituting and contesting the social – then populism names that specific dimension which contests social relations by dividing society, or at least various sites of it, into opposed camps in the ongoing struggle for hegemony. A populist politics involves the construction of a collective agency – 'the people' for instance – that can establish a political frontier by creating antagonistic relations between subjects. 'The people' in this sense is thus a theoretical, rather than purely ethnographic, concept which captures any attempt to construct an equivalence between dispersed social demands.

Our picture of populism thus consists of three basic features. First, the articulators of a populist discourse appeal to a collective subject such as 'the people' or 'the community' as the privileged subject of interpellation. In other words, they seek to construct and naturalize a certain meaning of 'the people' or its functional equivalent, using such appeals as the main way of forging political identities and thereby recruiting subjects. Second, populist discourses involve the drawing of political frontiers, which, if successful, pit 'the people' against a defined enemy or adversary, whether the latter take the form of a 'power elite', the government or vested interests. Third, the establishment of this political boundary, which divides the people from its 'other', is grounded on the creation of equivalential relations between particular demands, which are then linked together in a more universalistic, populist discourse. This means that populist discourses invariably speak in the name of 'the people', 'the nation' or 'the community', and their rhetoric seeks to galvanize a common set of values, beliefs and symbols, which can advance the interests of such collective subjects. This also suggests that the identity and political orientation of the demands that constitute a populist movement depend upon the hegemonic practices that function to confer meaning in a specific historical context (Howarth and Torfing, 2005).

Five implications follow from this approach. First, not all 'populist appeals' constitute a populist politics. While a discourse may

invoke populist rhetoric, this by itself does not constitute a populist politics. For example, John Major's 'back to basics' campaign in the United Kingdom during the mid-1990s might be said to have comprised a set of populist appeals and gestures, but it did not constitute a populist politics that was able to divide the social by instituting a new political frontier. Instead, Major's rhetoric represented the attempt by a weak and failing government to shore up a neo-Thatcherite hegemony with a new, more moderate and appealing discourse. As against our conception of populist politics, Major's discourse was a form of transformist politics designed to negate, domesticate and displace challenges and demands in order to maintain the status quo.

Second, populist forms of politics are not restricted to discourses that have recourse to the name of 'the people', as a wide range of subjects can be appealed to in order to constitute a populist struggle. In this view, populism is not tied to a particular social actor – the working class, the peasantry, new middle classes and so on – but involves the linking together of different subject positions by the construction of a novel common identity. Nor, third, is a populist form of politics necessarily confined to demands at the level of the 'nation-state', as populist struggles may be carried out at the local, regional and even global levels. Indeed, even at these different levels of analysis, populist struggles may occur in different spaces or sites of struggle.

A fourth and crucial consequence of our approach is to clarify the distinction between populist and non-populist forms of politics. In our view, populism refers to the *degree* of division and contestation brought about by a political mobilization or practice. In other words, to put it in quantitative terms, the greater the *number* of demands articulated into an equivalential chain, coupled with the *salience* of each demand, the greater the degree of populism. On the other hand, the failure to articulate different demands – or indeed the struggle to disarticulate equivalential demands – is a feature of a more non-populist, or what might be termed an 'institutionally bound' form of politics. Instead of a politics based on the priority of a logic of equivalence, the latter is characterized by the primacy of a logic of difference, in which demands are articulated and negotiated in a piecemeal fashion, rather than as part and parcel of a wider set of struggles. And while populist politics serves to split different social spaces into opposed camps, more institutionally bound politics tends to operate within the existing rules of the political game. More formally, populism and non-populism are best viewed as two poles of a spectrum – both of which are understood as regulative ideals, which in practice are never fully actualized – where

non-populism involves no equivalence or the disarticulation of equivalence, and populism the precise inverse.

The final implication of our approach concerns the relationship between populist politics and the outcomes of such practices. At the outset, it is important to stress that a populist form of politics does not guarantee significantly different political effects. For example, the production of equivalential effects linking together diverse demands, identities and interests in a populist discourse does not guarantee the realization of these demands in specific policy outcomes. There is 'many a slip twixt cup and lip', so to speak. But what then are the criteria to assess whether populist forms of political struggle result in significantly different outcomes? It is here that the category of hegemony is useful. In our framework, we shall define the achievement of hegemony as the production of 'common sense' in a particular site or sphere of the social, or indeed in society as a whole. In Gramsci's terms, this involves the winning of 'intellectual and moral leadership' in society, and not just the achievement of political power (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 57–58). This does not mean that all sectors in all spheres of the social need actively to consent to a particular set of values and beliefs. Instead, it involves 'the winning of a strategic measure of popular support' in a particular domain, though the accomplishment of such a new historic project is never finished and settled, but always contingent and revisable (Hall, 1988, p. 7). These changes in the production of common sense, which determines what is normal and acceptable, bear a relationship to specific policy outcomes, as they constitute a necessary though not sufficient condition – an ideological context so to speak – for the proposal and implementation of legislation, such as giving the go-ahead for the building of a new mosque in a neighbourhood, or indeed for blocking such proposals.

REVISITING AGONISTIC PLURALISM AND POPULISM

As we have suggested, our understanding of the practice of critical evaluation is internally connected to the logics of characterization and explanation, though the latter must acknowledge the radical contingency of social processes, as well as the contestability of the interpretations that arise. This in turn makes it possible to stress the primacy of political practices in the construction and reproduction of various social forms, as well as the role of ideologies in their maintenance. In this chapter, we have drawn upon two different aspects of radical democratic theory – 'agonistic pluralism' and the politics of populism – in order to deconstruct and challenge the New Labour

discourses of 'citizen empowerment' and 'neighbourhood participation'. We argue that these discursive practices constitute New Labour's particular attempt to respond to, cover over and mediate the dislocations and crises experienced in a series of different communities and neighbourhoods across the United Kingdom during the late 1990s and into the new millennium. These discourses are, moreover, predicated on the myth of encouraging and promoting 'cohesive communities' which it is hoped can overcome the range of problems and difficulties experienced on the ground.

In developing and mobilizing these different dimensions of democratic theory, we have argued that the notion of 'agonistic pluralism' is composed of a distinctive ethos of democratic engagement, as well as a particular common public space or symbolic order wherein such an ethos can be encouraged and exercised. Alongside this notion of 'agonism' we have placed the concept of a populist politics, which involves the construction of equivalences amongst a plurality of social demands that results in the establishment of political frontiers amongst social actors. The latter involves the forging of hegemonic projects that link together a variety of demands and agents through the elaboration of a common discourse that can challenge and ultimately restructure and transform a given social order or practice. In general, this model of democratic renewal, which puts a particular type of political engagement and contestation at its heart, challenges communitarian, deliberative and civic republican responses to the actual and perceived dislocations of neighbourhoods and communities in late modern British society.

One important question that arises from our analysis, as well as the normative and prescriptive implications of our account, is the relationship between these different dimensions of our radical democratic project and proposals. Discussion of this relationship provokes strongly divergent positions. For some, a populist politics built around the concept of hegemony is directly at odds with a politics of agonistic respect. This is because the encouragement of difference and diversity associated with agonism is allegedly jeopardized by any politics that seeks to build common identities, which can then be institutionalized and sedimented in new discursive formations and spaces. Even Bill Connolly, who seeks a politics built around the creation of assemblages that can foster a politics of becoming, is sceptical about the drive for hegemony. In *The Ethos of Pluralization*, for example, he argues that 'the biggest impetus to fragmentation, violence, and anarchy … does not emerge from political engagement with the paradox of difference'; rather, it emanates from doctrines and movements

that suppress it. More specifically, it arises from totalizing identities that struggle implacably against differences, which 'threaten their hegemony or exclusivity' (Connolly, 1995, p. xxi). This theme that the construction of hegemony is essentially a form of exclusion and domination runs through a surprisingly wide number of accounts that deploy the concept. In short, hegemony is associated with political domination, the suppression of difference, and the imposition of a false consensus.

For many, therefore, 'hegemony' and 'agonistic pluralism' are viewed as incommensurable goods: the desire for unity and identity, on the one hand, conflicts with the need for diversity and the differential inclusion of others. In the language of discourse theory, which informs our account, this tension reflects the logics of equivalence and difference respectively: equivalence is associated with the condensation of demands and identities into a linked, overdetermined chain, while difference is connected to the displacement and disarticulation of linked demands into manageable and discrete units. On a normative level, the former is associated with the construction of hegemonic projects that involve the extension of equality into ever-widening social spaces, while the latter involves the defence of individual human rights, autonomy and the respect for differences: that is, pluralism.

Importantly, however, Laclau and Mouffe do not present these two aspects as opposed. On the contrary, they are both integral to their project for 'a radical and plural democracy' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p. 184). Challenging other non-plural, radical (democratic) projects, such as different forms of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, which advocate 'one single space of equality on the basis of the unlimited operation of the logic of equivalence', and which do 'not recognize the irreducible moment of the plurality of spaces' (1985, p. 184), they elaborate a 'principle of democratic equivalence' (1985, p.183) that involves a productive, but tension-ridden articulation of the mutually constitutive and checking logics of equivalence and autonomy. The principle addresses the potential incompatibility between establishing equivalential links amongst disparate democratic demands (such as anti-racism, anti-sexism and anti-capitalism), while simultaneously respecting the differential specificity of each demand.

In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, their solution to this potential incompatibility is twofold. On the one hand, borrowing from Gramsci, it involves the construction of a new 'common sense' which 'changes the identity of the different groups, in such a way that the demands of each group are articulated equivalentially with those of the others – in Marx's

words, "that the free development of each should be the condition for the free development of all"' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, p. 183). On the other hand, it means that the twin demands of equality and liberty – what Etienne Balibar calls '*egaliberté*' – ought to be understood not as self-sufficient values, but as the site of a balanced tension of mutually constitutive logics (1985, p. 184). Both aspects of their solution involve the logic of hegemony – the political practice of linking different demands and identities into a common project that recognizes and respects difference – which in turn presupposes the move from a closed system of social relations, in which all identities and interests are fixed, to an open-textured social ontology marked by the essential contingency of all identities and social relations, and a plurality of heterogeneous social spaces (see Howarth, 2000).

Where, then, does Mouffe's more recent stress on 'agonism' and 'agnostic pluralism' fit into this schema? In our view, it provides the theoretical means to account for the conduct of populist politics and the struggle for radical demands within a democratic context. This is because the stress on 'agonistic respect', with its twin concerns of ethos and public space, constitutes the 'lubricant' of democratic politics, thus enabling the passionate expression of conflict and antagonism in a radically democratic fashion. Consider first the notion of an ethos of agonistic respect. This ethos informs the proper relationship that ought to pertain between the different demands and subjectivities that make up an equivalential chain. More precisely, it means that the autonomy and difference of each component should be respected and valued in the construction and operation of any political coalition. Similarly, it speaks to the way in which antagonisms between different groups and coalitions ought to be played out: that there should be an acceptance of the common rules of the game, an acceptance of defeat in the political process, and an expectation that conflict and contestation is an ongoing and 'infinite' prospect. Finally, such an ethos ought also to inform the democratic subjects who conduct radical democratic politics, permeating the way they hold their beliefs and demands, as well as the different ways they interact with each other in different public spaces.

This articulation of an ethos of agonistic pluralism and populism requires also a public space – a common symbolic order – wherein such a politics can be enacted and performed, where identities and interests can be represented and interact. What precise conception of such a public space has to be folded into our articulation of agonism and populism? A myriad of issues present themselves in this regard, and in concluding we can only

allude to some of them. At the outset, it is important to stress that populist politics in general is not confined to an existing or sedimented social space, such that it might be complicit with a whole host of structural inequalities and forms of domination; on the contrary, populist politics often involves the construction of new social spaces and the radical politicization of existing social spaces. A key issue in this regard concerns the precise point at which boundaries are drawn, as well as the relationship between the two sides – the inside and the outside – of such frontiers.

It is here that the notions of a democratic ethos and a democratically organized public space assume their importance. For one thing, even though decisions have to be taken that exclude some from a democratic space, the virtue of agonistic respect requires an openness to those who are excluded; this ethos itself is predicated on the idea that such boundaries are never fixed, but contingent and revisable. Indeed the agonistic ethos requires the conduct of democratic practices which endeavour to transform and thereby include those who are deemed enemies or who declare themselves 'outsiders', practices that actively seek to transform enemies into democratic adversaries. In a similar fashion, agonism has to foster a politics of becoming that allows the marginal and those who are 'othered' to be cultivated, respected and brought into the public sphere, and this itself may involve a populist politics. In short, what these last reflections highlight is that while a democratic public space is underwritten by a set of rules – equal respect, commitments to basic human rights, political equality, and so on – that place limits on the interaction of social actors, such rules themselves have to be animated by a set of political and ethical practices. Ideally, these practices are in turn conducted by social actors who have been inculcated with a certain ethos and democratic subjectivity, especially a responsiveness to difference and diversity.

A final aspect concerns the internal composition of such spaces. To begin with, on a negative note, the approach adopted here is opposed to a homogenous concept of social space, which is characteristic of certain forms of communitarian thought. Here we have the idea of social space being grounded upon – or at least aspiring toward – a substantive conception of the good. And the obvious problem in this regard is the plurality of ways of living, which do not cohere into a single conception of the good life. Even more so, we have a denial of the plurality of (mostly) overlapping social spaces within which subjects find themselves today. However, while accepting the contemporary 'fact of pluralism', the approach adopted here does not accept the essentially liberal idea that social space is composed of

pure multiples or disaggregated individuals, divided between the public and the private, whose overall regulation requires an independent conception of justice accepted by all. Such a conception denies the existence of different and overlapping social spaces, and stands against the idea of politics as the ongoing construction and dissolution of social spaces. And, lastly, we oppose the idea of a fully opaque social space, grounded systematically on a form of illusion or false consciousness, which can be completely overturned and thus emancipated. This grand dialectic is characteristic of Marxist theories of space, and suffers not only by the denial of plurality and heterogeneity, but also by the idea of a fully constituted space, whether systematically misleading or transparent.

Instead, more positively, our preferred conception of social space begins with the ontological claim that all spaces are heterogeneous, multi-layered and overlapping, and are thus always riven with tensions, lacunae and inconsistencies. On a normative and prescriptive level, this ontological fact has to be acknowledged; indeed, it has to be fostered and cultivated rather than denied or concealed, as it makes possible the emergence of new identities which can be then be represented and mediated in the democratic public sphere (see Howarth, 2006).

In conclusion, then, we have argued that the notion of 'cohesive communities' in contemporary Britain is a quintessentially 'floating signifier' whose meaning is politically contested. The New Labour government endeavoured to fix its meaning in a particular fashion by inserting the signifier into its discourse of combating social exclusion and encouraging citizen participation within the context of its reform of public services and its commitment to a 'law and order' agenda. The latter includes a strong emphasis on 'respect', individual responsibility and duties to the community. In the case of New Labour it involves a top-down version of conferring meaning to the notion of 'cohesive communities', which is strongly marked by a logic of transformism.

This articulation represents one way of linking 'cohesive communities' into a broader political discourse, and there are others. More precisely, one could imagine a spectrum whose poles are, one the one hand, a strong version of 'transformism', in which demands are constructed from above and then accommodated within the existing rules of the game, and on the other hand, a strong version of 'populism' where demands are advanced 'on the ground' so to speak and are then welded together into an anti-establishment project. In the case of New Labour, viewed in these terms, we argue that in articulating the discourse of 'cohesive communities' it is

endeavouring to channel discontent and protest into acceptable demands that can be resolved in the existing institutions and within the context of its broader political project. This involves the imputation of 'cohesive communities' onto communities, and the attempt to disarticulate any autonomous populist expressions. Agonistic pluralism, in contrast, encourages the bottom-up articulation of demands within neighbourhoods, a robust challenge to any predetermined conception of 'Britishness', and ultimately practices that acknowledge strife within neighbourhoods rather than privileging consensus formation and appeals to harmony.

CONCLUSION

As we have suggested in this chapter, expertise and politics are often opposed terms in debates about the policy process, and the role of policy analysis more specifically. Challenges to positivism and scientism in the 1960s and 1970s often resulted in the valorization of political engagement and emancipation, such that expertise was either regarded as a neutral instrument to be used by competing parties, or subsumed into particular political and ethical projects. More recent debates have sought a third way that seeks to mediate between expertise and power politics. These proposals have positioned experts as mediators or facilitators of more democratic and ethically informed policy-making. Our efforts to connect ideas about the fostering of an 'agonistic ethos' and the importance of articulating various demands into popular equivalential chains that can challenge exclusionary equilibria build upon these ideas to deconstruct and rework the opposition between expertise and politics.

In seeking to draw out the implications of this proposal, we start by distinguishing between two types of expert in the policy process. What might be termed first-order experts are those who occupy positions of authority because of their particular training, institutional location, and knowledge about particular aspects of the social and natural world. Experts in this sense are 'specific intellectuals', to use Foucault's illuminating term, who can employ their highly specialized knowledge to inform publics, politicians and bureaucrats about pressing problems in the present. They are not universal or general intellectuals in that their status depends upon their access to highly specialized forms and techniques of knowledge, and not universal knowledge about social or natural totalities. In the same breath, they are not 'organic intellectuals', to use Gramsci's term, in that their function is not to construct new forms of common sense with which to bind various

actors and demands together, but to speak to controversial issues, such as climate change or the feasibility of large infrastructure projects.

These first-order experts can be distinguished from the second-order experts we name critical policy analysts (CPAs). In our view, the role of CPAs is to produce knowledge about aspects of the policy process by situating particular logics of decision-making and implementation in wider social, political and historical contexts, and by explicating alternative perspectives and interim visions that are repressed or marginalized in dominant epistemological regimes. The specific task of CPAs is critical explanation, in which in our view the conduct of policy analysis supposes an internal link between descriptive and explanatory knowledge, between explanation and critique, and between critique and the articulation of more positive normative orientations (Howarth, 2009). Our ideal policy experts must, therefore, embody certain ideals and values, which they can inject or project into their understandings of the policy process, and they are defined by a particular disposition that is marked by the inculcation and practice of certain virtues (such as critical responsiveness, presumptive generosity and agonistic respect), abilities (such as the critical explanation of various social phenomena), and techniques of research (such as the use of discourse analysis, ethnography, narratology and interpretive policy analysis). In keeping with our ontological commitments, these ideals and normative orientations will always be contingent and contestable; their propagation and acceptance depends upon political and rhetorical practices, and the latter are constrained by democratic rules and institutions. Their knowledge status is thus less certain than those of first-order experts, though even the latter are not subject to ongoing debate and discussion.

In our view, each of these forms of expertise constitutes particular positions in discourse from which agents can speak and act. It is not impossible that the same individual can occupy different, or even all, subject positions. A first-order expert may at the same time operate as an organic intellectual in a particular domain of social practice, and may also perform the role of a CPA in particular contexts. These positions are not mutually exclusive. However, it is important that these different positions are not conflated or completely overdetermined, for this would be to collapse functions and tasks, and may even compromise democratic ideals and procedures. Expertise, politics and democratic practices are best viewed as the site of a mutual and irreconcilable tension, which can never be transcended. Perhaps this opens the space for a better, more ethical

and democratic understanding of expertise and politics in our increasingly complex, heterogeneous and globalizing societies.

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Chapter 5

KNOWLEDGE AND POLITICS INSIDE THE POLICY PROCESS: CONTRADICTION OR COMPLEMENTARITY?

Philippe Zittoun

For the twenty-fifth anniversary of the American Political Science Association in 1950, a round table was organized to explore the possibility of reconciling science and politics. Charner Perry developed the idea that a scientific process on political activities poses two kinds of problems. First, for him, the scientific process requires a neutral language with regard to the reality it describes (Perry, 1950). If the language used for natural science is independent from the phenomena that are observed, then the main problem for political science is the inability of actors to use a separate language from that to which they are accustomed. How can the researcher define concepts such as power, democracy and liberty to describe a reality in which the participant is influenced by their definition of these concepts? Second, Perry found that applying the cause–effect model, typical of natural science, to the study of society was particularly artificial.

Harold Lasswell and Herbert Simon contested Perry's position by emphasizing their hope of producing a rigorous, scientific method of observation and a deductive model of political behaviour and policy process (Simon et al., 1950). For Harold Lasswell, this positivist project began by separating policy from politics, comparing policy to an object in flux, and developing a model to grasp and generalize this fluctuation as a natural movement. Some years later, he developed his first real model, which was the policy cycle. The initial research on his model became known in the

early 1940s with the idea that policy sciences must be developed to produce knowledge and help decision-makers 'improve the rationality and morality of their judgments'[27] (Lasswell, 1942*a*, 1942*b*; Lerner and Lasswell, 1951). In contrast to his former work, Lasswell left a Weberian neutral axiological position (Easton, 1950) and proposed to design a new science in the service of democracy.

From the 1950s onwards, the development of policy analysis was the outcome of the belief that researchers could produce general knowledge about policy from the specific reality they observed, and then transform this into political advice. For Charles Lindblom, for example, a science of 'muddling through' needed to be developed to pass knowledge on to decision-makers and help them make better decisions (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963; Lindblom, 1958*a*, 1965). Likewise, although David Easton and Aaron Wildavsky wanted to take into account the values and the politics inside the policy-making process, they still considered facts as separate from values in a positivist fashion and continued to reason that science could produce useful objective knowledge and 'speak truth' to power.

But ever since the 1950s, policy analysts have confronted a paradox when using this scientific approach. To build their general model, they need to inquire about the empirical reality of the policy process. However, how can the specificity and disorder of reality be reconciled with the generality and order of the model? How can the 'muddling through' of empirical reality, which is always contingent and particular, be reconciled with 'science', which needs regularity and universality?

This chapter looks first at traditional policy analysts, and shows how their project to build policy analysis as a positivist science, which attempted to produce an objective and depoliticized model, encountered an impasse. It then reconsiders the controversy between Perry and Simon–Lasswell by proposing a new approach that extends beyond the two positions. With Perry we will take into account the central role of language in carrying knowledge to order reality and shaping the interaction between participants in the policy process. With Simon and Lasswell, we will consider the production of a methodological science to observe the policy process, not in order to predict or to judge but rather to understand how politics works.

27 'By the intelligence function I refer to the process of making available to those who make decisions the facts and interpretations designed to improve the rationality and morality of their judgments. During the present war I have had unusual opportunity to experiment in this direction, and to become acquainted with difficulties to be overcome' (Lasswell, 1942*b*, p. 24).

THE POSITIVIST PROBLEM OF POLICY ANALYSIS

Since de Tocqueville studied prison policy in the United States (Beaumont et al., 1833), policy studies have continued to expand year after year. Generalizing, we can identify three kinds of studies that claim to belong to this domain.

All scientific studies about important societal problems (social, environmental or economic problems, for example) can be grouped in the first category. Harold Lasswell calls this category 'problem oriented' studies, and takes as a model the study by Gunnar Myrdal, 'American dilemma: the negro problem and modern democracy' (Lerner and Lasswell, 1951; Lasswell, 1942*a*). In this study, the author mobilized different disciplines, including sociology, economics, law and political science, to highlight the different aspects of an essential American problem. For Lasswell what was important was to help policy-makers understand the complexity of problems, something he attempted to realize by applying scientific knowledge to the policy process in an effort to frame the policy sciences as a multidisciplinary approach.

If the first category is focused on understanding society, the second category is more interested in the policy-making process. The main idea is to observe different empirical processes and build a general model to grasp specific situations. Inspired by the natural sciences, authors associated with this approach focus on policy change and develop a causal model to understand transitions. Charles Lindblom and Harold Lasswell were the first to propose this kind of work (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963; Lasswell, 1971). With incrementalism, Charles Lindblom proposed observing policy change inside a dynamic movement, wherein the point of reference is the policy itself (Lindblom, 1958*b*). With the policy cycle model, Harold Lasswell grasped a regularity of the policy process and transformed it into a general model, with a regular transition between different stages (Lasswell, 1966). With the systemic model, David Easton tried to integrate a systemic causality to rationalize phenomena from the input/problem to the output/policy (Easton, 1965*b*). On the whole, from the incrementalist model to the systemic model, through path dependency or the punctured equilibrium (Pierson, 2000; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993), the authors try to understand the transition of policy as an object (Bardach, 2006).

The third category is not much different from the second, and is also focused on the policy process. If the second category tries to grasp the empirical process and model it, the third proposes to theoretically define the 'best' methodology for doing so.

Some authors propose, for example, certain rigorous methods for defining the best solution towards the solution of a problem. The rational choice approach is a classic example. After identifying the problem, this method suggests a process for analysing and comparing the different instruments of policy. In the policy science project, Harold Lasswell considers policy science to be an applied science – like medicine – which helps policy-makers make better decisions by proposing a scientific method of choosing the best policy instruments (Lerner and Lasswell, 1951).

Each category represents a different aspect of policy analysis. The first category represents empirical and multidisciplinary science. The second category is empirical, and takes place in the realm of political science and economics. The third category lies between applied science and policy advice, and is supported by the same authors as the second category.

If the first category does not really develop inside the domain of policy analysis, the second category led the authors to an insurmountable difficulty: how to transform a chaotic, specific and complex reality to an ordered and universal representation of the world?

We shall examine first the second category, which theorizes the study of the policy process.

In policy analysis studies, we can identify and also subsume different kinds of models. Each model implies the transformation of policy into an object inside a change process, and the identification of certain, possibly causal, variables. Each model represents a different way of grasping the policy process.

The first model is the stage approach. In this model, the main idea is that policy change is the result of a succession of stages (Hupe and Hill, 2006). Generally, the first step identifies the agenda-setting problem and the last step decides the policy change and implementation. Each stage has a rational link to the previous one. In this case, the main cause of policy change is the appearance of a new problem or the definition of a new objective. Dividing the policy change process into different stages allows for the ordering of reality, and highlights more clearly the change process. Every author that tries to develop this stage approach constantly oscillates between two positions. On the one hand, they view the stage model as a descriptive model of the policy process, and on the other hand, they recommend the stage model as a heuristic method for analysing policy – which is actually the third category of policy analysis. In our point of view, this oscillation corresponds to the difficulty of confining empirical reality to a model.

Herbert Simon provided a good example of these difficulties. In *Administrative Behavior* (1947), Simon explained how the complexity of the environment, the uncertainty of the future, and the limited capacity of human reasoning combine to make any objective and rational method of choosing the best problem-solving instrument impossible. He developed a demonstration by contradiction showing that no reality can correspond to the rational process. Rationality, he observed, is always subjective, contingent and bounded. Throughout his life, he tried to find a model for grasping human rationality. If no reality corresponds to a rational model, the problem is that, as Kenneth Arrow explained, no theory corresponds to reality:

> The problem with accepting the hypothesis of bounded rationality is not its reality but its adequacy as a theory. I'm sufficiently an old-fashioned positivist (as was Herbert Simon) to hold that a theory that cannot be falsified is no theory. The gap is filled in practice by specific hypotheses about the particular form the bounds on rationality take in different contexts. But there is no general criterion for determining which limit on rationality holds in any given context and therefore the building of a complete theory of the economy on the basis on bounded rationality is a project for the future. … I conclude, though tentatively, that this project is not successful.
>
> *(Arrow, 2004, p. 54)*

In a similar way, Harold Lasswell tried to find a model to describe the reality of the policy process (1956, 1970). With the concept of the policy cycle, Lasswell developed the idea that we can define seven stages of the decision process: intelligence, recommendation, prescription, invocation, application, appraisal and termination. In his work, Lasswell presented two kinds of models. The first is a descriptive model in which each stage follows the last one. The second is a prescriptive model in which Lasswell explained the importance of following this cycle for ameliorating the policy process. There is a contradiction between the two kinds of model. If it is a descriptive case, Lasswell does not recommend following the model. If it is prescriptive, Lasswell cannot explain how reality follows the model. Sometimes he argued that this cycle was heuristic, while other times he saw it as a model of reality.

Many authors, such as Charles Jones, Charles Anderson and Robert Mack (Anderson, 1975; Jones, 1984; Mack, 1971), have encountered the

same difficulties. When they presented their models, they always oscillated between a description and a heuristic model for ordering reality.

The second model is dynamic or incremental. With the incrementalist approach, Charles Lindblom opened a new way to analysing policy change (1958*b*). The main difference between this approach and the previous one is that the main variable with which to understand policy change is not the agenda-setting problem but the previous policy. In this case, the object 'policy' has its own motion, and we can use the concept of 'dynamic' to underline its autonomous move. Incrementalism is a dynamic process, which considers that policy feedback is the first constraint towards policy change. This approach also takes into account historical neo-institutionalism and path dependency.

Following Herbert Simon's hypothesis about bounded rationality, Charles Lindblom suggested that in order to circumvent the difficulties of the synoptic model and rational objectivity, actors develop cognitive strategies to simplify reality and solve problems (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963). This hypothesis is derived from empirical observation, and Lindblom suggested that in most cases participants are 'muddling through' when they propose policy changes. Thus, Lindblom not only describes the reality of 'muddling through' but also suggests a rigorous method for taking it into account: the 'science of muddling through'. Here, science is not just a description but also a prescription for going through reality.

Lindblom, however, had real difficulties being understood, and he tried, twenty years after the first article, to clarify and correct some misunderstandings (Lindblom, 1979). The difficulty came essentially from a double paradox: if 'muddling through' is the reality of participants and the synoptic model a simple illusion, why did Lindblom continue to fight against it and regret its success? If 'muddling through' is the inescapable reality, how could Lindblom suggest a specific way of escaping it?

More generally, Eugene Bardach considered that a dynamic begins when a policy system's output becomes its input (2006). Hence, in dynamic approaches, the irregularity of the movement as a variation of policy change disappeared.

The third model is a mix of the stage and dynamic approaches. David Easton was one of the first authors to develop it. He began by considering all political interactions as a behaviour system (1965*a*, 1965*b*). According to him, the political system is made up of complex interactions that must react to a lot of perturbations. He rejected the hypothesis that actors in

the political system seek to produce or return to 'equilibrium', and rather advocated understanding the system as being in perpetual motion.

Easton imagined two kinds of 'perturbations'. The first perturbation/stress comes from society and systems within it. Easton's description of this perturbation is actually very close to that of the agenda-setting process. He considered that a problem appears when a group manages to formulate it. However, he insisted that formulating a problem is not enough. The problem needs to be translated into an issue that participants believe can be solved by a public authority. Finally, the relevant group needs to amass enough support to increase the intensity of the problem. In a certain way, the demand is the substance of the stress and the support is its intensity. Hence, David Easton insisted on the role of the 'spokesperson' for translating problems and aggregating a sufficient number of actors.

According to this argument, the input is the cause of the system's perturbation, leading to an outcome which is usually a policy. But Easton's main idea is to combine this first kind of perturbation with another one: the feedback from the outcome. Given his refusal of the idea of equilibrium, we can consider the system to be dynamic.

The punctuated equilibrium model from Jones and Baumgartner also tries to combine the agenda-setting process and the feedback effect (Baumgartner and Jones, 1991). Their primary goal was to explain why policies are most of the time stable. They argued that:

> [P]olicy stability is a function of two distinct sources. The first is 'friction' in the 'rules of games' that make it difficult for any action to take place in a political system. The formal rules that govern policy require a great deal of energy to overcome. … The second source of stability may be found in the cognitive and emotional constraints of political actors – the bounds of their rationality.
>
> *(Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, p. xxiii)*

Thus, the work of the two authors is very similar to the incrementalist approach, which understands policy changes as marginal, taking place within a stable system. This stability is produced by the presence of fixed institutions, which are understood as 'structural arrangements that are supported by powerful ideas' (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, p. 4).

Nevertheless, the most original aspect of the punctuated equilibrium system has to do with its capacity to mix the 'stability of the system' with a stage approach, whereby specific attention to a problem may suddenly cause

a significant change. Studying the agenda-setting process, Baumgartner and Jones suggested that attention to a problem in the political arena provides an opportunity for observing controversies between old and new ideas, and sometimes for modifying institutions, ideas and actors' powers inside a policy subsystem. 'In the end, we depict a political system that displays considerable stability with regard to the manner in which it processes issues, but the stability is punctuated with periods of volatile change' (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, p. 4).

Mixing the two models however, as Easton and Jones and Bautgartner have done, does not serve to solve the difficulties posed by each model on its own. In order to be able to build their models, these scholars always need to objectify policy and transform it into an object in repetitive motion.

The fourth model is the random model. It was developed by Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) to study decision-making processes, and was imported into policy analysis by John Kingdon (1995). The model is based on the hypothesis that there are independent movements between four independent streams: problems, solutions, energy from participants and choice. To understand the decision-making process, Cohen, March and Olsen suggested that each stream looks for another in a non-rational manner. In this model, there are a 'collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which they might be the answer and decision-makers looking for work' (Cohen et al., 1972, p. 294). This allows them to break with the rational idea that solutions are the product of problem-solving activities or of the dynamic of the decision itself. Their complex model supposes that the four streams are in such a phase as to allow a decision.

Based on empirical case studies (for instance inside universities), the random model shows how the previous models are wrong in some situations, especially when they try to see policy change as the outcome of a problem or a specific feedback. These studies aim to highlight specific cases where there are problematic preferences, unclear technology and fluid participation. As John Kingdon explains, a lot of decisions inside the process of changing public policy correspond to this kind of situation, thus signifying that a lot of policy decisions are not predictable and depend on the random meeting of the above-mentioned streams.

It is interesting to note how these four kinds of models propose contradictory explanations. A particularly easy way to understand this is to consider that each approach corresponds to specific situations. In this way,

we forget the universal vocation of the process of modelling. For example, if we consider the link between a problem and a solution in the policy process, each approach suggests a different way of conceptualizing it. For some, the solution comes from the problem itself, while for others not. No model or meta-model has a capacity to explain two cases. In reality, the different models are contradictory, and each one shows how the others do not take into account some crucial dimensions.

Beyond the contradiction, apart from the random model, these different approaches have several commonalities which can explain their failure to describe reality. In the first place, these models try to transform a chaotic, specific and complex reality into an ordered and universal world. Second, all of these approaches are based on the separation of facts from values, policy from politics, and object from subject. The process of modelling needs to identify universal objects and regular transitions. Third, all these approaches exclude the specificity of participants: for example the influence of their arguments, their knowledge and their discourses.

Only the random model takes into account some contingent elements, like the spirit of the participants, the specificity of the decision, and the specific process whereby a solution seeks a problem. As John Kingdon argues in the second edition of his book (1995), the limitation of this model has to do with the emphasis placed on opportunities and randomness, which Kingdon finds to be insufficient as explanations of policy change.

THE ROLE OF KNOWING AND CONVICTION INSIDE THE POLICY PROCESS

As we saw in the second category of policy analysis, traditional theory needs to separate facts from values and policy from politics in order to produce scientific knowledge and build models of policy change. But one of the complicated questions that confront these authors is exactly how to grasp the influence of knowledge inside the policy process. Knowledge in most cases is not considered as an influential variable in the policy process.

For example, understanding conviction and persuasion as social activities that influence the policy process is not taken into account by positivist approaches. This is surprising, given that it is these very same authors who try to influence the policy process by producing new knowledge. In addition, we argued that in the third category of policy analysis, the main idea is that policy analysis must produce knowledge capable of helping policy-makers.

Because knowledge is always considered as objective, and politics as subjective, and because all of the aforementioned models distinguish between facts and values, there is no need to take into account the subjective process of transferring knowledge in policy analysis.[28] For example, no model takes into account the distorting of the policy process resulting from the arguments of a new participant.

Before further examining some post-positivist authors associated with the argumentative turn in policy analysis (Fischer, 2003; Fischer and Forester, 1993; Hajer and Laws, 2006; Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2006), I would like to return to the traditional approaches and elaborate on the paradox we have identified. We generally find two kinds of knowledge in policy analysis: methodological knowledge that defines a good method to solve a problem and knowledge pertaining directly to problem-solving.

Most of the authors who propose a model to grasp the policy change process find this kind of approach ambitious. For example, Harold Lasswell aimed to develop a policy science, which would act as 'medicine' and help solve problems. Thus, policy analysts would act as advisors to policy-makers. Furthermore, for Charles Lindblom, incrementalism was not just a descriptive model but also a prescriptive method. To avoid falling into the paradox of prescribing something that already exists, Lindblom suggested that incrementalism was only one of the strategic methods used by participants to grasp reality. This explains his incredulity about the success of rational choice and the synoptic model.

We cannot understand the development of the advice aspect of policy analysis, however, without showing interest in the complex relationship between this new discipline and the success of the rational choice paradigm. Since the 1950s, some economists and political scientists have investigated new methods to solve problems. In the 1960s and the 1970s, the Planning Programming Budgeting System (PPBS), building on the rational choice paradigm, dominated the US administration (Botner, 1970; Wildavsky, 1969). The main idea of the PPBS was to transform policy into goals, alternatives and consequences, and to design a rational process for hierarchically organizing choices by using a common value to compare cost and performance.

Contesting the success of this economic and quantitative paradigm, different authors pointed out its limitations and tried to prove that there

28 By subjective knowledge I mean the knowledge designed and defended by a subject or a coalition of subjects who want to influence the policy process – even if the subjects argue that their knowledge is objective.

was a way of doing 'real' policy analysis; a more qualitative way that took into account the complexity of situations and the political aspects of the decision-making process. For political scientists, the proposed rational and methodological approach to knowledge raised two problems: the disappearance of politics from the forefront of rationality and the gap between theoretical models and 'real' empirical situations.

Aaron Wildavsky was one of the most important contributors to this movement. At the end of the 1960s, following Lindblom's paradigm, he wrote several articles in which he explained how the PPBS was problematic and argued for another possible way, 'policy analysis' (1964, 1969). Wildavsky defended the idea that policy analysis could not be rational and scientific but rather was an art and a craft (1987). Unfortunately, despite this rigorous demonstration, the author forgot an important aspect. If the PPBS and any policy analysis are intrinsically a form of craft and art, why do policy-makers, who produce their own knowledge about policy, need specific knowledge from policy analysts? What kinds of knowledge do policy analysts produce that could be useful to policy-makers?

Let us return to his argument to better understand this problem. Wildavsky developed an important critique of the PPBS. For him policy analysis was incapable of nullifying political aspects. On the contrary, it was only able to proceed after political choices had already been made. Similar to other authors, like David Easton or Yehezkel Dror, Wildavsky criticized the idea that policy is only factual, and considered rationality, as well as integrated values and primary objectives, to be aspects of policy that only political individuals can prioritize. Choosing between health goals and educational goals for children, for example, is rationally impossible. So Wildavsky's main idea was to reintegrate the question of values into policy analysis and abandon the notion that policy analysis is slowed by politics. Contrary to what PPBS experts think, Wildavsky argued that policy analysis follows political choice.

However, even though Wildavsky aimed to take into account values and politics, he still considered them as two distinct concepts separated by a clear boundary. This distinction allowed for the clear separation and identification of the respective roles of politics and analysts. The policy analyst, for Wildavsky, must produce knowledge about facts after the values are chosen by politics. His job consists in illuminating choices by producing information about means and ends.

The second aspect of the PPBS that Wildavsky criticized was its inability to achieve its objective. Returning to Lindblom's and Simon's

remarks about the synoptic and rational approaches, Wildavsky showed how this kind of analysis is impossible: it would be impossible to rigorously evaluate the amount of data and make all the necessary calculations. The consequences of alternatives would be difficult to estimate, the objective would be always difficult to specify, and the ability to draw a comparison would be compromised by both the difficulty of collecting data and the varying types of – often not even comparable – data that exist.

The PPBS produced by experts represents only a 'muddling through' with an exhaustive appearance. Because policy analysis could not be this rigorous, Wildavsky suggested that policy analysis was essentially an art and a craft. For him, the policy analyst must be able to help politics by analysing new solutions, which is:

> not only a mix of resources and objectives, not only an implicit causal model of a segment of reality, but also a structure of social relationships …. Good analysis compares alternative programs, neither objectives alone nor resources alone, but the assorted packages of resources and objectives, which constitute its foregone opportunities. Good analysis focuses on outcome: what does the distribution of resources look like, how should we evaluate it, and how should we change it to comport with our notions of efficiency and equity? Good analysis is tentative. … Good analysis promotes learning by making errors easier to identify by structuring incentives for their correction. Good analysis is skeptical. … Craft is distinguished from technique by the use of constraints to direct rather than deflect inquiry, to liberate rather than imprison analysis within the confines of custom.
>
> *(Wildavsky, 1987, p. 17)*

Finally, Wildavsky criticized the rational choice paradigm, which aims to produce absolute knowledge as a substitute for politics. In the PPBS, politics and knowledge are contradictory. In policy analysis, politics and knowledge are complementary. The condition of this complementarity is the capacity to mark a clear boundary between facts and values and to centre the production of knowledge around facts. Wildavsky identified an important problem. Because, as he rightly demonstrated, he could not invoke rigorous science for policy, he encountered difficulty in explaining why policy analysts have a better craft than other people. For example, why is the point of view of a politician less legitimate than the craft of policy analysts? Why does the rational choice paradigm, which is so evidently

incapable of proposing rigorous answers, have the ability to better influence stakeholders than do policy analysts?

More generally, it is very interesting to note here two things. First, the process of convincing policy-makers does not take into account the model of policy change. And second, policy analysts believe they can influence policy via formal deliberation and less formal discussions. In addition, we would like to defend the idea that the policy analyst, who tries to understand the policy process, must be careful that the deliberation includes all participants (experts, civil servants, stakeholders, policy analysts and so on). Overall, our hypothesis is that understanding the policy change process requires the development of a science, namely a science of 'muddling through'.

THE SCIENCE OF THE SCIENCE/ART OF 'MUDDLING THROUGH'

In the first edition of *The Policymaking Process* (1968), Charles Lindblom, who forgot the advice aspect of his theory, took a step back and proposed to consider the influence of knowledge produced during the policy process – knowledge that is produced through the process of 'muddling through' by participants. It was probably the first time that an author did this. His main idea was to consider that everybody needed to understand and grasp policy before acting on it. Exactly because he considered the rational solution of a problem impossible, he argued that participants need to develop cognitive strategies for simplifying and coping with problems.

Within this reflexive approach, incrementalism is just one of the cognitive strategies that actors can use. Lindblom thus opened a new way to understanding the policy process. Unfortunately, he did not develop this much further.[29]

Building on his work, I aim to link the two aspects of his theory – the question of knowledge and the question of the exchanges between participants. This way we can consider a point forgotten by him: the importance of a convincing statement when defending a specific policy position. Because all policy decisions require agreement between several participants, we cannot separate the question of cognitive strategies and the question of discursive exchanges. All knowledge needs language that

29 For example, he did not consider the question of why participants cannot recognize that this kind of policy knowledge is always produced from 'muddling through', something that he took for granted. Why did the science he proposed – the science of muddling through – not have the desired echo? He did not consider a way to link his understanding of cognitive strategies with his other approach concerning mutual adjustment.

is designed not only for thinking but also for communicating. It is not empirically possible to separate the individual process of thinking and the collective process whereby individual thinking is tested in discussion (Boudon, 1995; Wittgenstein, 1996). To grasp knowledge inside the policy process, the researcher needs to observe all the discursive signs of participants. As Foucault suggested, it is an illusion to separate thinking from discourse (1966, 1971). The only action the researcher can take is to observe discursive repetition.

In a complex topic such as policy, in which muddling through is the only way to propose a solution, we cannot suppose that each participant arrives at the same conclusion and defends the same solution without prior interaction. On the contrary, participants need to deliberate over a point of view, stabilize it, and build agreement around it. A collective agreement about a solution points to the occurrence of many discussions during which a communicative rationality emerge.

For example, the question of the link between a problem and a solution is typically observed in terms of cognitive aspects (Zittoun, 2008*b*). For some authors like Simon and Lindblom, the solution is the result of muddling through the problem-solving cognitive method. For other authors, like Cohen, March and Olsen, it emerges through luck and opportunity. Nonetheless, if the solution does not require a problem to exist and to be formulated, why does a solution continue to necessitate the identification of a problem? Why do participants form a solution without the existence of a problem?

If we take into account the discursive interactions between participants, we can answer this question differently by pointing to the importance of sharing the solution among participants in order for it to make sense. To be a commonly desired solution, a policy instrument must be perceived as problem-solving. If the linking process is not objectively rational, then one has to observe the efforts made by participants to demonstrate to others, as well as to themselves, that a specific solution is appropriate. In other words, if the problem and the solution are independent, we can suppose that participants need to glue both of these together using some convincing argument. In the process they aim to build a coalition of actors around certain ideas. This represents an intersubjective process which produces a shared, communicative rationality (Zittoun, 2008*a*, 2009).

Before presenting these main hypotheses, let us first discuss the concept of argumentation, which is often ignored by authors. Chaïm Perelman is one of the rare thinkers to take the argumentation process seriously (Perelman

and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958). He proposed understanding argumentation in opposition to demonstration. He saw demonstration as the only mode of reasoning which is truth-oriented. This assumption led him to limit the range of demonstration to pure, evident and logical reasoning; in other words, to mathematics. Perelman stressed that a demonstration is always right (or wrong), whatever the context. This does not hold true for another mode of reasoning, argumentation. Contrary to its close cousin, argumentation cannot situate itself under the realm of truth. It has (only) to do with 'likelihood' or 'plausibility'. Does this mean that we should see argumentation as a second-class mode of reasoning? Perelman proposed to break with this post-Cartesian distaste for likelihood – 'I will hold wrong everything which is only likely' – and return to an Aristotelian concept of argumentation. In doing so, he broke with the modern opposition between rationality (the realm of incontestable evidence and logic) and irrationality (the realm of sentiment, perceptions and passions).

Perelman's pragmatic stance clearly emerges from the attention he paid to the role of social interaction in argumentation: 'Prior to argumentation is a dual representation of reality where two parties, at least, participate in the deliberation' (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958, p. 28). As Perelman's commentaries on the book *Alice in Wonderland* show, argumentation starts with the recognition of the existence of the speaker and of the state of interlocution. This pragmatic view on argumentation is reminiscent of Olson's remarks concerning the free will of people participating in a group (1978). The salient point of a pragmatic theory of argumentation should not be persuasion – one can even engage in argumentation without trying to convince or, vice versa, being willing to let oneself be persuaded – but mutual recognition.

This is why the notion of 'audience' is so important in Perelman's work. He stressed that an argument is always directed to a specific audience. The latter might be large and it may entail all people the speaker wants to influence. Perelman stressed, however, that a 'universal audience' seems unlikely in practice. The notion of 'universal audience' only makes sense if one conceptualizes it as the sum of specific individual listeners. The reason for this is that arguments have no sense in themselves. Their meaning is shaped by the social relationship constituted by the speaker and her audience. As we will see in the next subsections, this stress on the role of the audience has interesting consequences for the study of argumentation in policy analysis.

Perelman also provided a stimulating response to sceptics who point out that most arguments are ex-post justifications. Against this objection, Perelman stated that we have no good reason to distinguish the process of belief formation and the process of argumentation. Speakers' ideas mature while they formulate their arguments; people construct and modify their thought during the process of argumentation.

It becomes clear that Perelman advocated a socialization of argumentation theories. To sum up, he stated that an argument does not exist out of context, that it is peculiar to a speaker, and always directed to a specific audience. By breaking with the notion of absolute rationality, Perelman also paved the way for other pragmatic approaches, which theorized the role of ambiguity in natural language and argumentation.

As any social practice, argumentation takes its own dynamic when people start interacting. Metaphorically, arguments and statements behave like viruses. They depend upon a host to keep them alive and growing. And when they travel from one individual to another, they mutate and evolve into new forms.

Having thus set the wider frame of this discussion, I would like now to go back to the role of argumentation inside the policy change process and defend my main hypothesis. Policy change decisions take place when enough important participants consent to change.

Let us now explore the issue of agreement. Given that policy participants do not wake up all together in the morning with the same ideas, I would argue that there is a process by which some participants debate with others, and this process results in decision-making and policy change. Ideally, the process could start when a policy entrepreneur wants to defend a new policy change. Identifying the actors they want to convince, the policy entrepreneur selects a specific 'audience' comprised of the people they deem important.

At this moment, the researcher can observe a persuasive process by taking into account both the concrete scene wherein the participants engage into argumentative exchanges and the previous work towards the setting-up of this scene. For example, in a lot of cases, the selection of participants whom the entrepreneur wants to convince depends on the entrepreneur's idea of power distribution. Because the conviction process is expensive, the actor can privilege 'important' participants. The choice of 'audience' (in Perelman's terminology) is always specific and crucial. Policy entrepreneurs do not want to persuade an abstract universal audience. They try to distinguish between actors who have some power and those who do not.

Having said that, this does not mean that they always manage to target the right audience. Social actors have limited cognitive resources. Nevertheless, observation suggests that most of the time policy entrepreneurs target institutional actors or people who are officially in charge. The question of power emerges when discussions commence. The policy entrepreneurs then try to overcome their inferior hierarchical positions by trying to convince their interlocutors of the plausibility of their argument. Of course, each situation is specific.

The second aspect of the persuasive process is the intersubjectivity of sharing a common policy statement. By 'policy statement' we mean all the aspects linked to the desired policy, which give it its sense. There are probably a lot of policy statements. Nonetheless, here I would like to describe two kinds that I have had the opportunity to observe during empirical work (Zittoun, 2009).

The first widespread persuasive strategy consists of linking the desired solution to a problem in which the decision-maker is interested. As stated by Kingdon, solutions and problems are constituted in different spaces; a policy emerges only if a policy entrepreneur manages to bridge the gap between these two logics. Kingdon remained surprisingly silent on the concrete modalities of this linkage. My hypothesis is that the linkage between a problem and a solution takes the form of a convincing policy statement. For example, I worked on the decision concerning the Paris tramway project, and showed the difficulty and the importance of linking a solution to a problem (Zittoun, 2007).

A second frequent persuasive strategy involves linking the desired solution to a new policy category. Policy instruments do not belong to just one category. Instruments travel from one policy category to another following the taxonomic choices of the actors. Hence, a good strategy may consist of moving one instrument from a waning policy category to a more dynamic one. Relabelling policy instruments may also prove useful if one wants to 'interest', or on the contrary bypass, important actors. For instance, in the case of urgent housing provision in France, a debate emerged regarding whether this instrument was part of a broader housing policy or of social policy (Zittoun, 2000). This was not a pure semantic debate. At stake was a conflict between the housing ministry and the social affairs ministry.

The idea here is that the work of the researcher is to follow a process from its inception and then outline the coalition that is working towards the desired solution. I would defend the hypothesis that during this process,

the participants try to produce specific knowledge to associate a problem with a solution, an instrument with a public policy, and/or legitimate participants. As Latour argues (2006), the knowledge process of associating different things (human or non-human) is an essential work that science must examine in order to understand society. In such cases, we need to understand that this process is not neutral but rather expansive; during the process the solution and the problem evolve to be stabilized inside a policy statement.

Finally, the science of 'muddling through' represents the knowledge that the participants produce to make sense of their experience in the argumentative process and to share their propositions. Is it a science or it is an art, as Wildavsky argues? Probably it is a mix of both. The point is not to characterize knowledge produced by participants as science or art, but to observe the argumentative process, as well as all qualifying processes, and to produce a science of the science/art of 'muddling through'.

A SCIENCE TO UNDERSTAND THE POLICY PROCESS AS POLITICS

A proposal to develop a science of the art of 'muddling through' is confronted by the question: what for? This question concerns all policy analysts, especially those who have difficulty supporting the dominant rational choice paradigm.

Because policy science is impossible and sound policy analysis is not the prerogative of research, researchers do not directly influence the policy process. Faced with these difficulties, some prefer to make politics responsible and claim that policy-makers must listen to the 'truth' of science. In this case, they never come to be any more rational than the rational choice analyst.

In this text, I have proposed a new approach which consists of observing the policy process as a phenomenon of conviction (Majone, 1989) in which the participants build and share an intersubjective policy statement. It is an empirical approach that helps us to describe reality (Popper and Notturno, 1994).

If we wish to describe the policy process, it is not in order to produce an approach to perfect it and thus fall back to the positivist paradox. It is to understand policy as one of the most important political activities in our society. The idea is not to differentiate knowledge from politics, as oppositional or complementary, but to observe knowledge as a political

activity in which knowledge speaks pragmatically about policy, problems or the public (Dewey, 1927).

This way, policy analysts must become political scientists who observe the endless efforts of humanity to build, grasp and solve problems in society – to order a disorderly reality – which is an endless project analogous to the onerous task faced by Sisyphus.

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Chapter 6
INFLUENCING POLICY: EXPERIENCE FROM THE FIELD

Fred Carden

INTRODUCTION

When research is well designed and executed – and skillfully communicated – it can inform policy that is more effective, more efficient and more equitable. But in all the confusions and frustrations of making policy in developing countries, research frequently fails to register any apparent influence whatsoever. What explains those successes and the failures? And how best can researchers and policy-makers bring timely, relevant and reliable new knowledge to bear on policy decisions in developing countries?

For a long time researchers have been struggling with the question of how their research can have an influence on public policy. Carol Weiss reminds us in her Foreword to *Knowledge to Policy* (Carden, 2009*a*) that this is a persistent question: she highlights studies in the mid-1800s on precisely this topic. While some researchers focus exclusively on the research and leave the influence to others, there have always been some researchers who want to know that what they do is relevant and is used.

Ideas on influencing policy were simplistic, even naive: good knowledge will be used. Period. All we have to do as good researchers is fund and carry out good, solid research and it would find its way into the policy arena and result in better lives for communities. Researchers (and research funders) could not understand why their findings were not used: why did policy-makers ignore their findings? Why couldn't the policy-makers see

what had to be done? Researchers bemoaned their lack of influence and – because they are researchers – started to inquire into why.

Researchers began to realize that policy-makers were not waiting for evidence in order to act. They were in fact responding to many different factors at the same time. Knowledge was only one input. Very often – even usually – ideology and politics played more important roles – and still do today. Their decisions were contextualized by many things – history, culture, politics, economy among others.

Carol Weiss, in her seminal research on this topic in the 1970s and 1980s (1977; 1982) found that research did have an influence, but that it was often incremental and took much time. She called this enlightenment: that slowly over time, the findings percolated into the main stream and influenced the policy decision process. There were usually no 'Aha!' moments in the use of knowledge. Rather policy-makers informed themselves and formed their views over months and years. When the time came to make a decision, they acted by considering what they knew, the context they were in, and what social, political and economic factors needed to be taken into account. Knowledge was part of the equation, but usually it was knowledge that had been gathered over time, processed by the decision-maker and integrated into their thinking. Further, she noted in a presentation in Ottawa in March 2003:

> the original notion of the single decision-maker, the person for whom the research is done and who will thereupon 'use' it, might be a myth. Decisions in government, and even in other organizations, are seldom the province of one person. The field would have to start thinking more broadly about the domains of influence.
>
> *(Weiss, 2003, p. 11)*

This is instructive on the matter of defining policy influence. It suggests that policy influence does not simply mean contributing to policy change. Sometimes that happens directly, but more often than not the influence is indirect, so when we speak about policy influence we also mean expanding policy capacities –for both researchers and decision-makers. This means increasing the capacity of researchers to think about the policy process in relation to their research, and also increasing the capacities of decision-makers to make use of knowledge, especially knowledge that might not fit their preconceived notions of what is correct and what is politically feasible. No policy change might emerge in the short term, but over time we have a stronger policy environment. The study also identified broadening policy

horizons as a key aspect of how research has an influence on public policy. This refers to opening up the understandings of both researchers and policy-makers to the myriad influences inside and outside their scope of work that affect the use of the research and the decisions they have to take. For example, agricultural policy is affected by climate change; adaptation to the effects of climate change is affected by urbanization, and so on.

And, of course, research has to contend with politics, power and position. Having the knowledge does not always mean that it will be used to advantage. Equally it does not mean that it will never be used. As policy-makers and policy environments change, knowledge comes into play in new ways and to respond to changing social, political, economic and technical contexts. Power, politics and position play ongoing, sometimes unpredictable, roles.

THE LONG VIEW

The study on which this chapter is based was a study of the influence of research supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) (Carden, 2009*a*). The Centre's mandate is twofold: to build capacity for research in the global South (developing regions of Asia, Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean); and to support research on development problems pertinent to these regions. For the past forty years the Centre has worked on this broad mandate through a series of research programmes in a wide range of domains.[30] The Centre's programme staff do much more than fund research; programme staff work actively with researchers to strengthen their research skills from the design stage of a project. Through building capacity and focusing on research in the global South the Centre intends to contribute to building a body of researchers who can lead development-centred research within the countries of the global South.

The focus on development research at the Centre suggests that at least some of the research supported by the Centre should have an influence on public policy. The Centre had never taken a broad look at what that meant nor had it considered what projects had an influence and how. The study was therefore designed to assist the Centre in its understanding of what it means by policy influence, where policy influence has resulted from

30 Current programmes are defined as Agriculture and Environment, Research on Health Equity, Social and Economic Policy and Innovation, Policy and Science.

IDRC-supported research and what key factors played a role in successful influence.

In setting up this study to find out if and how it had had an influence on public policy, Carol Weiss reminded us to take the long view. She reminded us that from the time the British Navy discovered the cause of scurvy, a disease that killed many sailors, until the time they enacted policy to deal with the problem, 150 years had passed. (Fortunately the sailors did not wait for policy to take action!)

As a result, in the design of this study, we did take the long view; we identified projects with a long history and projects that were initiated in some case eighteen years before the start of this study. This was possible because of the approach the Centre takes to supporting research. Persistence has long been a key characteristic of IDRC support. Many projects include more than one phase of activity, as Figure 6.1 (page 172)explains. Building research capacity is seen as much more than training at the Centre. Programme officers work closely with proponents on research design and implementation issues, from problem identification, through design, consideration of factors such as ethics, and other factors in ensuring research quality, implementation, research write-up and so on. Projects may start with a focus on training, but then move into research support and eventually the skills needed to advocate for policy change. The 'IDRC approach' is illustrated with the example of the Asian Fisheries Social Sciences Research Network.

THE CASE OF THE ASIAN FISHERIES SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH NETWORK

A useful illustration of the long time involved in building research capacity for influence is one of the cases used for the evaluation: the Asian Fisheries Social Sciences Research Network (hereafter the network). The network was set up in 1983 after a year or two of discussions. It was set up when a small group, led by a programme officer at the Centre, realized that the fisheries in South-East Asia – which are the main resource of the poorest of the poor – were being managed only as a biological resource when their economic impact was so great. So, with Centre support, they started the network, modestly at first, to bring a social science research perspective to the fisheries. That commenced with training in economics and the economics of natural resources.[31]

31 This is not to suggest that the fishery should not be managed as a biological resource, but rather that both the biology and the economy need to be considered.

Once a number of people were trained, the network began to support research on fisheries economics, and at the same time it continued to train more social scientists. Research skills continued to develop in this period of consolidation.

In the late 1980s, some policy research was tentatively initiated. By that time, there was a significant group of researchers in the network – fourteen teams, including eighty researchers. The teams were based in Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia. The researchers began to publish. Funding for research on the captured fisheries and other topics began to emerge. The network continued, with support for graduate training as well as for research.

In the mid-1990s, some fifteen years after the network was first conceptualized, Viet Nam also joined. In this same period policy research began to take on a central function in the network. The network was increasingly independent as it evolved and grew. It took on a life of its own as the members began to build the other skills they would need to keep the network alive as an independent group. The members continued to publish research, to meet, to build skills and to influence policy. Many of the original graduate trainees who received the first degrees in the region on fishery economics were now in charge of research centres. Others were senior bureaucrats in ministries of fisheries and natural resources in their countries. As a result, many of the network members were in a position to influence decisions about management of the fisheries in their countries. The network was a useful and important sounding board for the members on fishery management issues. It was also a place for sharing ideas and experiences across the countries of the region.

The Centre stopped funding to the network in 1997 as it shifted its programming priorities. Interestingly, the network did not end at that point even though it had been reliant on the Centre for the financial resources to meet and carry out research. The members found value in the group and continue to meet and share knowledge and ideas, and to influence fisheries policy. They hold their meetings on the periphery of related meetings many of them attend (such as meetings of the World Fish Centre) and carry on their dialogue and exchange of ideas through a newsletter.

The Centre cannot claim full credit for policies that were changed in these countries through the interventions of researchers it helped train or who were supported to do research though the network. Just as research and new knowledge are only one aspect of a policy decision, the support from IDRC is only one aspect of strengthening the capacities of these individuals

to influence the policy process. What we can see however is a clear path from the identification of the problem: that the fishery was not being managed as a resource to support the livelihoods of the poorest of the poor; through the intent to change that; and eventually to policies being considered and changed with the involvement of the researchers. In this sense the Centre's role is one of influence.

This is one example. The hypothesis was that a review of a broad range of research projects in a widely dispersed set of countries would allow us to identify some overlaps and patterns that would help us propose the factors that can aid other researchers to set the conditions for their findings to be used. That is what this study set out to uncover.

METHODOLOGY

Before going into the findings of the study and their implications, I discuss three brief notes on the methodology. A much more detailed analysis of the methodology is included in Part 3 of the book on this study (Carden, 2009*a*).

Comparison is the hallmark of good evaluation – some even call it the platinum standard (Khagram and Thomas, 2010). In this study, we completed twenty-three case studies as the basis for our work. The cases were selected to cover the geographic and subject area interests of the Centre. This meant including case studies from Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as the Middle East and North Africa. It meant cases in information and communication technologies, education, health systems, trade, financial reform, agriculture and the environment. So the comparison we had was deep. The findings could be further enriched by comparisons over time and with other studies, but we already have a good foundation for our findings.[32]

Second, this study celebrates success, but does so in a critical way. It started with a positive sample of projects to investigate how (and whether) influence happens. Often in evaluation we focus on the negative, on the problems. But we have much to learn from success, especially as we try to apply our learning to future endeavours.

Third, *user engagement* was important. In this study, users were engaged in the definition of the problem to be investigated, in the definition of the sample, in the preliminary analysis and in exploring the findings. It is important to note here that while users were engaged, the evaluation team

32 I go into the issues around case studies in evaluation in more depth in the technical notes in the book as well as in articles on the subject (Carden, 2004, 2009*b*).

retained decision-making power and was responsible for the final analysis. The team's efforts were significantly enriched by a thorough understanding of the needs, expectations and interests of the potential users. As the data in an assessment of corporate performance at the Centre indicated, the Centre adopted the language of the findings of the study in its discussions and debates about policy influence (IDRC, 2007).

THE FINDINGS: A REALIST PERSPECTIVE

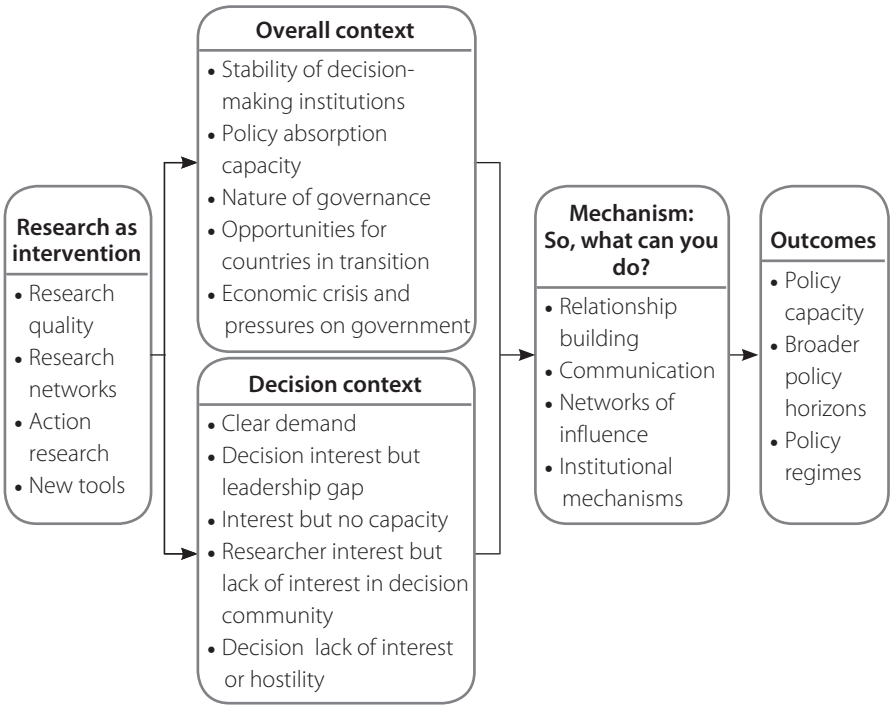
The findings presented here are based on a framework from realist synthesis (Pawson, 2006). Realist synthesis identifies three key elements of an evaluation process: context, mechanisms, outcomes. It is one of the very few approaches that successfully integrates context directly into the framework for evaluation. It starts from a focus on research projects or programmes that are oriented to change. Hence, it sees research as intervention. A number of approaches and starting points to thinking about research as intervention are at play – networking, action research, the development of new tools and an over-riding concern with research quality (see Figure 6.1).

CONTEXT

A key challenge in evaluation is to figure out how to address context. Studies often note its importance but give little or no guidance on what that means or what you need to do as a consequence. In this study, a key assumption was that context mattered. For that reason, the guidance for the case studies included a section on the context surrounding the research. In addition, to strengthen the focus on context, the case studies were carried out in almost all cases by researchers from the country or region where the research took place, or were individuals with considerable experience in and knowledge of the region.

A review of the cases suggests two dimensions to context. First, the overall context identified five key elements that cut across the cases and affected the ability of a system to make use of research. These are described below as five contingencies. Second, the decision context identified five different decision spaces, or situations. Understanding these is essential in order to know what kind of work needs to be done with decision-makers.

FIGURE 6.1 A realist perspective on the research to policy process



THE OVERALL CONTEXT

In our case studies we identified five system contingencies that deserve attention because they played such a key role in many of the cases. They define the most important elements of the overall context. These are not factors researchers can control but are variables that they need to consider in thinking through an influence strategy – if you are going to wend your way through confusion, a strategy is helpful.

Capacity of policy-makers to apply research

Weak government capacity can limit the use of research findings. Some of the cases we looked at worked to overcome this problem by working with the decision-makers as well as researchers. In Senegal where public advocacy and critique of government is not encouraged, the leader of a poverty research project spent much time over a number of years informally advising government officials, creating opportunities for exchange of ideas and dialogue to strengthen the capacities of government officials to work

with the research findings. When poverty research needs emerged, the policy-makers had built up some understanding of what research could provide to meet their new need, and had developed a trusting relationship with the researcher. Other projects such as the Latin American Trade Network found themselves spending a good deal more time than they expected educating decision-makers on the use of research.

Stability of decision-making institutions

Because of the importance of relationships in policy influence, the nature of decision-making institutions must be taken into account. Where there is rapid turnover at the senior levels it is extremely difficult for researchers to establish strong and trusting relationships. Shifts of power from the legislative to executive branches of government, as in the Guatemala case, left the researchers completely unprepared. In the Ukraine, researchers coped with institutional instabilities by focusing at two levels: the general public and the presidency – a highly stable part of a generally unstable system. The Latin American Trade Network coped with rapid changes at the senior levels because of high turnover in government systems in the region by focusing at the third level down in the bureaucracy where relative stability prevailed – where the revolving bureaucrats at the top also had to turn for policy advice. Mapping the characteristics of the system you operate within is key.

Nature of governance: decentralization or tight government control

Use of analysis or influence of research is not solely the purview of democratic systems of government, nor is it the purview of centralized or decentralized systems. What matters is alignment of the influence plan with the real world structure of decision-making. Whatever the governance system, knowledge can have an influence. So, in the Philippines when the poverty-monitoring system was highly effective in helping with the policy process in Palawan province, there was a desire to expand the approach to other provinces. The decentralized system meant a much more intensive effort to mobilize implementation. In Viet Nam, economic analysis was avidly consumed by a highly centralized system of government as it made the transition to a market-based economy.

Countries in transition

The example above of economic transition in Viet Nam highlights another important contingency. Countries in transition offer special opportunities for influence. Where a major change is under way, policy-makers are much more alive to innovation and unorthodox thought. They are often more willing to admit a lack of knowledge and to seek external inputs. These are not easy settings in which to work. Major advances and major setbacks come quickly and often from unexpected directions.

Economic conditions

Economic crisis is the final contingency to highlight here. In most cases where government receptivity to research was highest, government leaders were responding to an economic imperative. In Viet Nam for example, policy-makers were open because they were responding to an imperative to modernize and reform the economic system. In Senegal, leaders sought out research because of demands for reform put forward in the poverty alleviation process advocated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Importantly, contingencies change over time in any one setting. They merge; new demands and crises take hold; and researchers need to be attentive to these changes if they are to continue to have success in their quest for policy influence. Defining contingencies is not a 'one-off' mapping exercise, but rather an iterative process that should be watchful to change and new patterns as they emerge.

THE DECISION CONTEXT

Perhaps one of the most interesting sets of findings from this study is those findings related to the decision context. The decision context is messy and uncertain, difficult to define and capture in a way that enables us to make use of its understanding to influence how we act. The environment plays an enormously powerful role; we often put down success or failure to context without a very thorough understanding of what that means. It is a bit of a black box, but one that this study illuminated in some useful ways. Like contingencies, decision contexts change and are, if anything, even more volatile.

What emerged from the twenty-three cases was a set of five decision contexts within which research took place. How researchers acted in each of those contexts was necessarily different if they were going to be successful.

The nature of their relationships varied, how they communicated was affected and where they put their effort changed. Maximizing opportunities for influence calls for researchers to have an understanding of the environments in which they are working – and to adjust as the context changes over time. What follows is a brief overview of the contexts.

The first is where there is clear government demand for knowledge in order to determine a course of action. Some may see this as the best of all possible worlds, and indeed it does mean that findings get used. At the same time it requires two things of researchers: they must have trusting relationships built on a reputation for solid research; and they must have anticipated the demand in advance – there is nothing worse when a policy-maker comes for advice than to have to say, 'Give me a year to do the research.' With these two provisos, the potential for influence is highest in this context. This was most often evident in new policy contexts, where major transitions were underway in a government or where a new and unknown field emerged. For example, the explosion of internet and wireless communications put enormous demands on national regulatory systems. Governments did not have a history of dealing with these new systems and so seemed more willing to turn to research for help than in traditional fields such as health care or education. This was the case in Nepal as well as Mozambique. The Nepal case is particularly instructive because it was the study of a project valued at only US$60,000 and it contributed quite directly to policy change in the telecommunications regulatory sector. This only occurred because the researchers had been effectively scanning and mapping their environment and had built the relationships of trust discussed earlier.

The second is one where there is government interest in the problem but leadership is absent. The issue is well known, but government has yet to take a leadership position. As a result, there is no institutional structure to deal with the issue. In this context, analysts have to exercise a leadership role, building relationships and focusing attention on the institutional needs as well as on the research itself. In other words, beyond the findings themselves, an implementation plan is essential. This leadership role is not comfortable for many researchers.

The third is one where again there is government interest in a salient policy problem, but there is a resources gap. The implementation challenge here is different. Not only are institutional structures missing, but the priority of the issue must be increased so that resources are diverted to address it. Again, researchers are not used to operating in these spaces.

In the Ukraine (our only case in Eastern Europe), a project to clean up the Dnipro River provides a good illustration of this context. The river is described as the life blood of the country, but was in a desperately poor condition with high levels of pollution and little regulation of industry on its banks. Efforts to clean it had focused largely around expensive technologies that the state could not afford. A research project with Canadian and Ukrainian researchers began to look to alternative, low-cost technologies in conjunction with thinking through the policy and institutional implications. Their efforts were successful in putting forward an alternative approach to river management, building capacities to use research as well as the necessary institutional capacities within the governance systems.

The fourth, and the most common decision context in which analysis or research is initiated, is one where there is strong researcher interest in the problem, but policy-makers are uninterested or even unaware. It is not surprising that this is the most common context. Research after all is often at the forefront; researchers are often ahead of the curve in defining issues. Because of a lack of interest from policy-makers, it is also the most challenging position from which to create policy influence. It is high risk to want to move from here to policy influence. But some succeed, to a greater or lesser degree. And we see in that success many skills in building relationships – relationships with decision-makers, with the community, with the press. We see remarkable persistence and patience in this relationship-building process. We see strong communication skills, strong advocacy skills and a mobilization of public opinion. Sometimes these efforts succeed while at other times they do not. Where they do not succeed, they have not necessarily failed for good. Biding their time, researchers can bring an issue to the fore as the decision context or the contingencies become more favourable. This requires researchers to remain watchful of their environment and find moments for success.

The fifth and final decision context is one where there is researcher interest in an issue, and lack of interest or hostility from government. This often represents the failure of efforts to influence policy, and requires persistence and careful nurturing of research findings over a long period of time in order to seize any window of opportunity that might emerge to reintroduce the issue. As in science, policy conditions change over time, and analysts armed with good data can seize those moments to move an issue up the policy agenda. Researchers need to show great patience and persistence, to fight another day to bring their research to the policy table.

These are the five elements defined in the decision context out of the twenty-three case studies. Mapping – iterative mapping – is essential to success. Given these conditions and the factors that came into play, several mechanisms were identified that successful researchers employed in building on the context to bring their findings to the policy process. These are discussed in the next section.

MECHANISMS

The challenge of addressing context is that while it is important and essential to understand, as someone trying to create change in the system, the researcher does not control it. Where it is important is that it helps them understand the mechanisms they can use to influence and create change. Four factors emerged as central mechanisms, given a solid understanding of context:

- communications
- relationship-building
- institution-building
- networks of influence.

Over time and in different policy readiness contexts, how communications, relationship-building, supporting networks of influence and institution-building are addressed changes. So for example, during times of policy-maker demand for advice, how you communicate that advice is less important: a glossy brochure is simply not needed. But when you have to persuade, cajole, convince or involve interested publics, communication is critical. With whom you communicate changes over decision contexts as well. In situations of policy-maker demand, key communications are with the policy community. When decision-makers are not yet interested or have not yet put priority on the problem, communications must include others, such as the media and interested community groups. Pressure brought to bear on decision-makers from other sources can make a difference.

At all levels and stages, relationship-building is central. When policy-makers seek advice they are most likely to seek it from people they know and trust. So the researcher must build a working relationship that will allow decision-makers to talk to them and seek their advice. That means working on relationships over time, even when the decision-makers are

not interested in the issue. Relationships with the community and with potential pressure groups (media or advocacy) are also important over time. Being available as a media expert for example, or providing support to a community group are means of building relationships and trust – again the research that is being explored here is research as intervention in the development process.

Institution-building is an interesting issue. As mentioned earlier, there is often a leadership gap in the decision-making process. So thinking about the implications of policy decisions is important: how will the policy be implemented, by whom and in what setting, what department? As you move up the decision chain and to more and more open policy windows, this is more overtly important until the decision is taken.

Networks of influence play a central role, and are the fourth key element identified in which the researcher can act. The example of the Asian Fisheries Network illustrates the importance of the network. It is the network that permitted researchers to share ideas and bring new approaches and research findings to bear on decisions in their countries. The network had as an explicit goal the sharing of ideas, perspectives and findings to improve the economics of the fisheries in the member countries.

When researchers want to influence development they have to build a range of skills beyond their research function. They cannot content themselves with simply doing good research but must find ways to think about how it will be implemented and what their role will be.

A range of skills has been raised here. In some special cases, a 'research entrepreneur' may embody most or all of these skills, in addition to the abilities of foresight and producing high-quality research. But this is rare. More often, researchers need to build alliances and work with others to create a setting in which all these skills are present and are part of the process of using research – knowledge and ideas – to influence the policy process. Even with all of this, success is not preordained. Researchers have to remember that many factors go into a decision. They must also have the humility to recognize they may be wrong.

OUTCOMES

As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, a range of outcomes is considered. The outcome of policy change itself is but one aspect. In the research for development world, this is only one and often not the most important outcome. Changing policy capacities and broadening policy

horizons are equally important because it is through these changes that policies change over time. The ultimate purpose of social betterment – which can never be linked in a direct causal change to any one action – is kept squarely in view in this perspective.

CONCLUSION

The overarching objective of development is to improve the lives of people in developing countries. More often than not, public policy is an indispensable instrument for converting new knowledge into better lives and better futures. And the urgency is equally pressing for the policy community. After all, systematic access to evidence-based researcher advice can dramatically improve the chances of deciding and carrying out policy that achieves intended results and attracts durable public support. Researchers and policy-makers do not always speak the same language. But they can find a common cause in the pursuit of development policy that is just and sustainable.

To work at making research count is to act on the powerful logic that propels and justifies development research anywhere. This is research that informs stronger policy, that engages citizen participation in accountable government, that releases a country's economic energies and inventions, and that fosters the capacity of marginalized people in poor countries to discover new choices for growth and change. This is research for better governance.

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Chapter 7
KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS AND TRANSNATIONAL POLICY PROCESSES

Diane Stone

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, policy-making was the preserve of the sovereign nation-state. Today, the forces of globalization and regionalization have complicated matters. The utilization of knowledge in policy-making involves its transfer and exchange between governments, research organizations like universities and think tanks as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other policy actors around the world. In these processes of knowledge creation and sharing, transnational networks are an important vehicle for the spread of policy knowledge between nation-states, and also in emergent venues of global and regional governance such as may be found in parts of the European Union and elsewhere, or in the proliferation of global partnerships.

The knowledge utilization literature has been criticized for assumptions that paradigmatic shifts or policy learning occur as ideas are 'diffused' into the policy atmosphere. There has been insufficient explanation of the mechanisms and agents through which change occurs (Campbell, 2008). Accordingly, this chapter hones in upon organizational and individual actors who generate knowledge and advocate policy ideas. A specific focus is on transnational networks and how knowledge for

governance is incorporated into these networks of public, business and other private actors.

This first part of the discussion identifies a range of scientific bodies that operate in regional or global domains. The second section identifies four distinct types of policy network. These are the neo-pluralist version of 'transnational advocacy networks' (TANs), neo-corporatist concepts of global public policy networks (GPPNs), the intergovernmentalist idea of 'transnational executive networks' (TENs), then finally, the notion of knowledge networks such as epistemic communities. These concepts incorporate, in varying degrees, knowledge as a source of power and as an input to policy-making. Accordingly, the second part of the chapter addresses some issues of ideational power in the global order.

The third part of the discussion concludes with an analysis as to why knowledge (research, data, expertise and so on) and 'experts' have become so important in the global political economy. The focus here is on networks as a contemporary mode of governance and as policy venues in which knowledge is networked. At an institutional level, international organizations have become key in commissioning, creating, diffusing and applying knowledge, often through partnership arrangements (for instance, the World Bank and United Nations agencies). Knowledge and 'experts' have always been important to interpretations of the dynamics of the global political economy or the articulation and justification of policy responses, but via networks their impact can be magnified. As a social technology, the network can be regarded as both an agent (promoting world views and concepts) and a structure (of governance). Networks are not merely transmission belts or passive vehicles for advocacy. Instead, global knowledge networks are social technologies of governance:

> [they] are not simply mechanical devices; they are assemblages of forms of practical knowledge, with practices of calculation and types of authority and judgements traversed by outcomes related to the conduct of the governed … a global knowledge network is a mobile technology of government. It is made up of an ever-changing range of persons, groups, institutions or organizations from across the globe. It works within various social, economic, political or market situations for short or long periods of time, and operates with innovative information and communications technologies that link its members to each other in new ways.
>
> *(Ilcan and Phillips, 2008, p. 714)*

However, the causal nexus between knowledge, research and ideas on the one hand, and its implications for policy agendas, political deliberations and implementation on the other, has never been a clear or unambiguous one. Unsurprisingly, politicians and civil servants prefer to lay claim to policy initiative and reform rather than cede authority over or authorship of policy innovation to what are often unelected experts.

GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE UTILIZATION

Knowledge actors with a policy orientation and involved in the global spread of knowledge are varied. Organizational bases include philanthropic foundations, scientific associations, think tanks, universities and colleges, training institutes, professional associations and consultancy firms as well as research-oriented NGOs. With the advances in technology and communications of the last century, intellectual and professional exchange of knowledge has rapidly gone global.

Social scientists have long been puzzled by how, why and when policy advice and expertise is incorporated into government deliberations and bureaucratic activity. A more contemporary question concerns how policy knowledge is transferred and utilized between and above countries. Researchers, experts and scientific consultants have built transnational network communities – the so-called 'invisible college' – often bankrolled by international foundations (Guilhot, 2007; Roelefs, 2009), universities (Gross Stein et al., 2001) and international organizations as well as by bilateral development agencies (Evers et al., 2009; Miller, 2007).

The European Union, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and UN agencies are just some of the international organizations that are important financiers and consumers of research and policy analysis. The OECD employs a substantial staff of in-house experts and from this base organizes transnational networks of researchers in numerous fields (Mahon and Macbride, 2009, p. 87). Policy research is also used extensively in multilateral initiatives such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)[33] and the Global Forum for Health Research,[34] which are reliant on various expert communities for scientific input as well as for monitoring and evaluation. There are also unofficial global dialogues and elite meetings such as the

33 http://www.cgiar.org/who/index.html.
34 http://www.globalforumhealth.org/About

World Economic Forum in Davos that make substantial use of experts for punditry as well as for more rigorous analysis.

Transnational networks, international dialogues and global partnerships are more fluid policy structures than traditional nation-state organizations such as functionally defined government departments. Policy negotiation often moves in an issue-specific and institutionally fragmented manner between (networks of) bodies as diverse as the G-20, the European Commission, and the International Finance Corporation, which interact with a range of research or policy analytic bodies: for example the well-known Transparency International and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. There are also less well-known entities like the Legal Capacity Building Initiative for International Trade and Investment in Africa[35] and International Tax Dialogue.[36] These operate around specific technocratic issues, often out of the public eye.

Non-state actors such as think tanks and NGOs are increasingly interconnected through their own formal networks. The Global Development Network (GDN)[37] is the most notable and ambitious international think tank network, having transmogrified from an NGO to an intergovernmental organization. Regional and issue-specific associations are more commonplace, such as the Soros Open Society network in Central and Eastern Europe (Buldioski, 2009), and the Network of East Asian Think tanks. For the burgeoning think tank industry, there are now handbooks for civil society organizations seeking policy influence via global and regional policy networks (Weyrauch, 2007).

The transnational character of policy problems establishes rationales for research collaboration and the international diffusion of policy knowledge (Stone and Maxwell, 2005), a process better known as policy transfer. Think tanks, philanthropic foundations, university centres, scientific associations and professional societies – whether acting independently or collaboratively – help transfer the intellectual matter that underpins policies. Ordinarily private or quasi-autonomous organizations, many have used their intellectual authority or market expertise to reinforce and legitimate certain forms of policy or normative standards as 'best practice'. They provide essential services for decision-makers by acting as resource banks; advocating policy ideas and developing discourses of

35 http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTDGF/DGFPrograms/21177430/FY07LegalCapBuildInitForInterTradandInvt.pdf
36 http://www.itdweb.org/Pages/Home.aspx
37 www.gdnet.org

transfer, as well as spreading ideas and information. For instance, the 'new public management' (NPM) was spread around the globe because of the existence of a global 'fashion-setting' network of academic experts, management consulting firms and the key involvement of bodies such as the Public Management Committee (PUMA) of the OECD (Mahon and MacBride, 2009, p. 91). Likewise, philanthropic foundations have been key actors in sponsoring the spread of norms, values and standards – often American standards – in areas such as democratization and civil society promotion (see i*nter alia* Parmar, 2002; Roelofs, 2009).

Knowledge organizations transfer knowledge and people. In theory, they have the institutional capacity to scan the international environment and undertake detailed research alongside evaluations of policy that will help prevent the simplistic, ad hoc copying of policy that leads to inappropriate transfer and policy failure. Notwithstanding evidence of a considerable degree of information-sharing, policy research and expert advice shared within transnational policy communities, the causal nexus between transferred policy ideas and their adoption within governance structures is neither clear nor automatic. There are many intervening variables. It is relatively easy to engage in the 'soft' transfer of ideas and information but it is a more difficult enterprise, first to see such ideas structure thinking, and second, to ensure that the same recommendations become institutionalized. While some ideas may capture the political imagination, many more fall by the wayside or are modified beyond recognition by politicking. Non-governmental modes of *knowledge* transfer are more extensive than *policy* transfer.

The non-governmental status of NGOs is a major structural constraint to policy transfer. In this case, knowledge actors cannot bring about policy transfer alone but are dependent on governments and international organizations to see policy transfer instituted. Accordingly, these organizations are often to be found in partnership or coalition on either an ad hoc or more permanent basis with government departments and agencies, international organizations or other NGOs. In this way, knowledge and expertise in the form of human capital, as well as codified products, can be woven into policy deliberations on a more systematic basis than that seen in the ad hoc contracting of consultants or appointment of scientific advisors. A consequence sometimes argued to result from collaboration in partnerships or networks is that standards of policy analysis are raised (Buldioski, 2009).

KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS/POLICY NETWORKS

Knowledge networks (KNETs) do not exist in isolation from other kinds of networks. Indeed, a KNET is an ideal type, as are most other categories of policy network. Consequently, KNETs blur and overlap with other kinds of arrangements such as:

- TANS – transnational advocacy networks
- GPPNs – global public policy networks
- TENs – transnational executive networks.

Other labels and categories abound in the social science literature on networks. However, the four network species itemized above are used here for heuristic purposes to highlight the differing foundations or logic of their organization. That is, these networks are distinguishable in that the first is founded on the basis of shared norms. The second type is formed around common policy and/or material interests. The third relies on public authority and official status, and the fourth – KNET – coheres around scientific and knowledge advancement.

Transnational advocacy networks (TANs)

The first type is TANs (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). TANs are similar in character to social movements but much more specifically issue-focused. They characteristically accommodate a range of NGOs and activists. They are bound together by shared values or 'principled beliefs', and a shared discourse where the dominant modality is information exchange. They are called advocacy networks because 'advocates plead the causes of others or defend a cause or proposition' (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, p. 8). Examples include the transnational campaigns surrounding anti-slavery, 'blood diamonds' and other human rights issues. TANs usually have a strong normative basis for moral judgement in seeking to shape the climate of public debate and influence global policy agendas. However, compared with other network species, they are not well integrated into policy-making and operate more like 'outsider groups'.

There are numerous examples of TANs. The following list is merely illustrative of the diversity:

- Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)
- International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

- Cluster Munition Coalition (www.stopclustermunitions.org)
- European Council on Refugees and Exiles (www.ecre.org)
- Open Society Institute and Soros Foundations Network.

A TAN is a much broader collectivity than an epistemic community (outlined below) but not as broad as a social movement. Major actors in TANs can include international and domestic non-governmental research and advocacy organizations, local social movements, foundations, the media, churches, trade unions, consumer organizations and intellectuals, parts of regional and international intergovernmental organizations, and parts of the executive and/or parliamentary branches of government. Clearly, knowledge actors are one set of participants in such networks. For instance, WLUML collects, analyses and circulates information regarding women's diverse experiences and strategies in Muslim contexts.

Mobilization of opinion by TANs occurs through four main strategies:

- information politics – the capacity to quickly generate politically usable and credible information and data, and move it to where it will have most impact
- symbolic politics – the ability to draw upon symbols, actions or stories that help make sense of a situation for an audience that is often far removed from it
- leverage politics – the power to call upon influential actors who can affect a situation where weaker members of a network are constrained or unlikely to have impact
- accountability politics – the efforts to hold powerful actors to previously stated policies, principles or international standards/code of conduct.

Knowledge creation and utilization is part of TAN strategies. Yet, the resources of a TAN do not just consist of technical expertise; 'for them it is the interpretation and strategic use of information that is most important' (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, p. 31). The stress in this framework tends to be on alternative policy visions, reform and innovation. The kind of influence that TANs potentially exert is in 'shaming' governments, corporations or others into conforming to normative standards and/or codes of conduct.

The concept is neo-pluralist in inspiration as this analytical category presumes competition between different promotional groups for the attention of governments and international organizations. It is a market-centred pattern of political incorporation that emphasizes competition of norms and ideas (often backed up by research) to influence policy.

Global public policy networks (GPPNs)

A GPPN, the second kind of network, delivers or regulates global public goods (Reinicke and Deng, 2000). GPPNs are trisectoral in character: that is, they are alliances of government agencies alongside international organizations as well as corporations and elements of civil society. The official involvement of public actors is important in bestowing governmental patronage to the network, and gives it a quasi-public veneer and some 'insider' status. Stakeholders invest in these communities to pursue material interests but have in common a shared problem. Their interactions are shaped by resource dependencies and bargaining. They tend to cohere around international organizations and governments that have entered into a policy partnership for the delivery of global public goods.

Compared with TANs, which tend to be generated by 'bottom-up' strategic initiatives with solid footing in civil society or connected to wider social movements, GPPNs stress their links to official sources of authority and the delegated powers they acquire as a consequence. In other words, they are more closely integrated into governance. This may reflect the institutional norms and values of the international organizations that tend to take the initiative in convening these multilateral policy partnerships. A few examples are:

- CGIAR
- Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
- Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
- Alliance for Responsible Fisheries (ALLFISH)[38]

All of the above examples were gestated from the World Bank's Development Grant Facility, and there are at least another fifty bodies supported by this source.

Other international organizations also have 'network programmes'. For instance, the UN Office for Partnerships serves as a gateway for

38 http://www.allfish.org

partnership opportunities with the UN family. It promotes collaborations and alliances in furtherance of the Millennium Development Goals. The European Commission sponsors a bewildering array of formal partnership arrangements (such as the Asia–Europe Meeting) as well as informal networks and coalitions.

This concept is neo-corporatist in design as it is strongly tripartite, bringing together sectional interests of government and international organizations from one corner, business and corporate interests from another, and from the third, stakeholders. These might include labour representatives, but the GPPN could alternatively bring in other interests from civil society, for the purposes of interest mediation over a policy problem of common concern (Ottaway, 2001). Again, knowledge and expertise, which could be in the form of legal opinion, scientific data or social surveys, is part of the constitution of the network.

Transnational executive networks (TENs)

TENs, the third type, are sometimes known as 'transnational regulatory networks' (Verdier, 2009). In this perspective, the state is not disappearing but it is becoming disaggregated and penetrated by horizontal networks existing between 'high level officials directly responsive to the national political process – the ministerial level – as well as between lower level national regulators' (Slaughter, 2004, p. 19). These networks of judges, legislators or regulators such as utilities commissioners are intergovernmental in character. In other words, the interests of the state remain core.

The actors who compose TENs are formally designated power-holders and rule-makers who derive their authority from their official positions within their nation-state. A common characteristic is that network members all hold some public office. The underlying logic of TENs is that networked threats – such as may be observed with terrorists, arms dealers, money launderers, drug cartels and human traffickers operating through global networks – require networked responses from states. Such intergovernmental networks also exist in highly technical or complex legal policy areas of standard setting. Examples are:

- International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS)[39]
- Basel Committee on banking standards

39 http://www.iaisweb.org/index.cfm?pageID=28

- Financial Action Task Force on money laundering
- International Tax Dialogue.

Of the four network species, TENs have the greatest executive authority, since in these bodies government officials have a dual domestic and international function. TENs are official bureaucratic structures that pool authority and stretch, soften or diffuse sovereignty via inter-governmental networks. In other words, these networks become tools for the maintenance of sovereignty where global problems are solved by 'networked government' responses. As mechanisms for the state to reinvent itself, TENs offer a system of 'checks and balances' to ensure accountability and public responsiveness (Slaughter, 2004, p. 29).

The TEN is a neo-Weberian conceptual construct based on assumptions of intergovernmental world affairs where state sovereignty is paramount. Hence, the state-bound bureaucratic apparatus plays a prime role, albeit a reconfigured one, in cross-bureaucratic collaboration on transnational policy problems. To continue with a Weberian metaphor, in this conceptual framework, a network future is likely to be an 'iron cage' in which rational bureaucratic forms remain the critical political and administrative mechanism through which institutional power is generated and maintained.TENs are also reliant on the technical assistance that bodies such as International Tax Dialogue provides, and the 'global insurance principles, standards and guidance papers' that IAIS issues.

Knowledge networks (KNET)

KNETs, the fourth type of network, are 'a system of coordinated research, study (and often graduate-level teaching), results dissemination and publication, intellectual exchange, and financing across national boundaries' (Parmar, 2002, p. 13). This definition places greater emphasis on the transnational dimensions of knowledge generation and dissemination.

KNETs include professional bodies, academic research groups and scientific communities that organize around a special subject matter or issue. Individual or institutional inclusion in such networks is based upon professional recognition of expertise such as commitment to certain journals, conferences or other gatherings and organs that help bestow scholarly and scientific credibility. KNETs are often also practically engaged in 'capacity-building': that is, mobilizing funds and other resources for scholarships and training, supporting institutional consolidation that facilitates both network regeneration and knowledge construction.

The primary motivation of KNETs is to create and advance knowledge as well as to share, spread and, in some cases use, that knowledge to inform policy and apply it to practice. Some examples are:

- African Knowledge Networks Forum (AKNF)
- the 'networks of excellence' sponsored by the European Commission
- the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS)
- Global Development Network (Plehwe, 2007)
- Asian Fisheries Social Science Research Network.

A distinction to be made is the degree of policy relevance of these networks. Some are focused primarily on knowledge creation and sharing. Others like ASEAN-ISIS operate with an agenda of using knowledge to inform South-East Asian policy communities on regional security cooperation.

One of the most common concepts associated with knowledge networks is the *epistemic community*. An epistemic community is made up of experts who seek to translate their beliefs through a common policy project into public policies and programmes. They are networks of specialists with a common world-view about cause and effect relationships which relate to their domain of expertise and common political values about the type of policies to which they should be applied. Members of the community push what they consider to be true – the 'evidence' – into policy domains. Since they come from diverse intellectual backgrounds and institutions, the ties that bind these individuals are neither bureaucratic nor based on vested interest. Instead, they have shared professional judgements. Epistemic communities have four defining features (Haas, 1992, p. 3). They have:

- shared normative and principled beliefs which provide the value-based rationales for their action
- shared causal beliefs or professional judgements
- common notions of validity based on intersubjective, internally defined criteria for validating knowledge
- a common policy enterprise.

It is the combination of these characteristics that distinguishes epistemic communities from other groups involved in the policy-making process.[40]

Epistemic communities assert their independence from government and vested interests on the basis of their expert knowledge. The shared professional and educational pedigree, and the 'consensual knowledge' of the epistemic community, are socio-political barriers to the entry of others into the group.[41] Consensual knowledge may be, for example, a commitment to ecological principles or the tenets of Keynesian economics (Haas and Haas, 1995). The status and prestige associated with their expertise and their high professional training and authoritative knowledge regarding a particular problem are politically empowering and provide members with access to policy deliberations. This is especially the case in conditions of 'uncertainty' about new policy problems, where decision-makers cannot make decisions on the basis of existing knowledge or past experience.

The epistemic community framework has most often been used to explain the impact of scientists, particularly environmental scientists. However, the concept has been extended and applied to social scientists. For instance, it might apply to the experts involved in the Club of Rome (Haas and Haas, 1995, p. 261), macro-economists advocating structural adjustment programmes from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank during the last two decades (Deacon, 2005), and the monetary policy experts of the Delors Committee in the European Union (Verdun, 1999). This conceptual stretching has been fruitful, but in some cases the epistemic community idea has become a concept stretched too far.

The epistemic community framework has been criticized for its positivist position concerning the role of scientists as the legitimate bearers of truth, when policy issues generally raise normative questions and where norms can form the basis of collective action (Miller and Fox, 2001). In other words, these epistemic networks might be better described as 'doxic communities'. An alternative analytical frame is that of 'interpretive communities', which deploys a broader idea of 'professional interpreters':

40 Interest groups are politically driven by interest rather than causal beliefs. Academic disciplines are too heterodox to be called epistemic communities. Professions lack the normative basis of an epistemic community and its policy enterprise. Epistemic communities also differ from groups of administrators and legislators such as TENs in their unwillingness to advocate or participate in the implementation of policy that conflicts with their normative objectives (Haas, 1992, pp. 16–20).

41 Consensual knowledge is structured information about causes and effects among physical and social phenomena that enjoys general acceptance as true and accurate among the members of the relevant professional community. To become consensual, information must be analysed, arranged and structured in accordance with epistemological principles that command wide acceptance in society (Haas and Haas, 1995, p. 259).

> All professional interpreters … 'are situated within an institutional context, and interpretative activity makes sense only in terms of the purposes of the enterprise in which the interpreter is participating'. Meaning is produced neither by the text nor by the reader but by the interpretative community in which both are situated.
>
> *(Johnstone, 2005, p. 189, quoting Stanley Fish)*

This idea is at the polar opposite from that of the epistemic community, and has most recently been applied to the interpretation of international treaties (Johnstone, 2005). In this perspective, scientific facts or 'evidence' are socially constructed by the community, which becomes a forum for 'regulatory learning'. Within networks, the texts are the publications and policy commentary (briefs, speeches and so on) utilized or produced collectively by knowledge actors. An interpretive community has many institutional bases, and evolves over time. This is not to suggest an uncontested or consensual pattern of research or debate within these communities. Significant divisions exist among scholars and institutions.[42] Even so, the personal ties and friendships, the social capital engendered via collaborative research and collective discussions help generate frames of reference for making policy.

This takes us a step further to the idea of 'knowledge cultures', which 'are to a knowledge society what national cultures were to industrial society' (Knorr Cetina, 2007, p. 373). In this perspective the focus is on 'the construction of the machineries of knowledge construction, relocating culture in the micropractices of laboratories and other bounded habitats of knowledge practice. Not all places of knowledge, however, are bounded spaces.' In other words, 'more distributed locations' such as networks and the empirical question of how knowledge is created, diffused and shared become the analytical concern. Knowledge is a cultural product rather than a matter of rational, cognitive and technical procedures undertaken by scientists (Knorr Cetina, 2007, pp. 361–62).

KNETs are essential for the international spread of knowledge and what is deemed international 'best practice' on matters such as tax harmonization, gender mainstreaming or setting standards for the sustainability of world fish stocks. International organizations and other multilateral initiatives

42 Disputes over meaning can be managed by the interpretive community through accepted practices of argument and judgment within the community. If a member fails to persuade by proffering policy perspectives that fall outside the range of the understanding or consensual knowledge of the community, that individual ceases to be part of the interpretive community (Johnstone, 2005).

require policy analysis and research to support problem definition, outline policy solutions, to monitor and evaluate existing policy as well as to provide scholarly legitimation for policy development. They contract think tanks, universities and laboratories as sources of international policy analysis and advice. In other words, knowledge is a key resource in global public policy development, and KNETs are a form of 'governmentality'.

In short, the ideas, knowledge and expertise that are collected and amplified via KNETs help create authoritative claims describing the dynamics of the world, or causal relationships, or the normative legitimacy of certain actions. First, networks help to construct the problems and issues that enter the policy agenda. Second, ideational processes shape the assumptions of network participants that impact the content of reform proposals. Third, these processes can become discursive weapons that participate in the construction of reform imperatives with publics (Béland, 2009, p. 702).

Reprise

The sources of power, and logic of organization, of the four ideal types are distinguishable respectively by material interests (GPPNs), normative ambition (TANs), politico-legal office (TENs) and epistemic authority (KNETs). Even so, the KNET is not a pure type. Instead, KNETs blur and blend with other network types. KNETs sometimes fold into GPPNs, TENs and TANs in a 'web' of interactions that also intersect with official decision-making venues. For example, CGIAR has features of both a GPPN and also a KNET, given the scientific research on *inter alia* agroforestry, biodiversity and livestock undertaken in the national laboratories that make up the network.

Likewise, epistemic communities are not static: they can dissolve into more structured and heterogeneous GPPNs where greater recognition is given to the play of material interests. This is especially the case when it is recognized that 'knowledge hardly ever remains consensual once it passes out of the control of the initiating epistemic community' into the hands of a national or international bureaucracy (Haas and Haas, 1995). Similarly, epistemic communities can act in concert with (or perhaps within) TANs (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, pp. 134, 161) or with interest groups. Some TENs are strongly focused on analysis and information-sharing. Consequently, these network species are fluid categories. And all policy-engaged networks are founded on some form of 'taken-for-granted' knowledge, with some

type of expertise embedded in the way they approach economic, political and social issues.

NETWORK POWER AND KNOWLEDGE UTILIZATION

At least three points on network power are worth consideration. First, there is normative and ideational power in the sense of networks as creators and broadcasters of ideas that inform perception and set agendas. Second, networks function as structures that exclude/include, co-opt/induct, legitimize/revoke or accept/deny perspectives and participants. The expansion of knowledge networks as 'sites of authority' – and broader policy networks that utilize these sites of authority – potentially accelerates the normalization of the dominant discourses of power. Third, networks become part of the logic of global governance.

Ideational power and normative agendas

First, governments as well as international organizations require the creation and widespread acceptance of persuasive accounts of 'public policy problems' as the basis of legitimate policy and just laws. Public institutions depend on groups of 'experts' whose views on such issues are considered authoritative. As would be expected there are different theoretical accounts of how knowledge and norms impact upon and influence governance. For reasons of brevity, only two accounts can be touched upon here: neo-Marxist/Gramscian ideas of 'embedded knowledge networks', and discourse accounts. The epistemic community framework has already been identified, and posits rationalistic scientific inputs into decision-making, with assumptions that the 'evidence' will speak for itself in a linear transmission process of science, decision, policy execution.

By contrast, the embedded knowledge network framework stresses the role of ideas being connected and subsidiary to interests (Sinclair, 2004). In this neo-Gramscian definition, the stress is first on how networks contribute to the construction of the legitimacy of policy judgements of individual experts and other sources of private authority; and second, how private knowledge actors and institutions are linked to the material interests and structures of globalizing capitalism. Notwithstanding independent sources of funding from private philanthropies and other donors, in such a perspective, KNETs such as the GDN represent a means for sustaining the neoliberal capitalist order through the reproduction of economic ideas about growth and development supportive of it (Plehwe, 2007). Hence, scientific

expertise is used for ideological purposes of 'paradigm maintenance' and the normalization of dominant discourses of power (for instance see Broad, 2006 on the role of neoclassical economists working in the World Bank's research department). Consequently, policy becomes a battle of ideas, and knowledge a weapon in the service of material interests. In this perspective, KNETs are regarded as tied to state or economic interests, or indirectly linked through other networks like GPPNs or TENs to provide the concepts, data and theories that bolster and substantiate the 'ruling ideas' that govern us.

However, hegemony is incomplete and partial (Plehwe, 2007). The approach posits a degree of intentionality to knowledge agents and networks that is not necessarily the case. A grid-like complex of ideas shaping consciousness and dominating the global order gives little credence to alternative world-views and sites of intellectual resistance that do emerge through TANs as well as social movements. Moreover, such approaches over-determine the internal coherence and consistency of networks, which can be composed of contradictory knowledges or scientific disputes. A related approach drawing upon subaltern studies and the critical feminist literature sees knowledge-makers as 'those engaged in historical transmissions as well as those in defiance of dominant epistemological flows of power'. This perspective loosens the hegemonic grid-like power of the neo-Gramscian approach. It also overlaps with interpretive frameworks in that it identifies 'communication codes' that help integrate and expand networks into flows of power and globalizing capitalism (Rai, 2004; see also Prügl, 2004).

By taking discourse as the object of analysis, and interpretation and persuasion as the source of policy change, the role of experts and their institutional affiliations becomes more significant. Discourse is a system that, through language or text, or a set of statements or social interactions, structures the way we perceive reality. Discourse constrains perceptions. It shapes how groups respond to particular situations and how some things come to be regarded as normal or legitimate – the 'taken-for-granted' features of a social order. The insights from discursive institutionalism (Schmidt, 2008) and the interpretive turn in policy studies (Fischer, 2003) regard processes of meaning-making – deliberation and argumentation – as prior to, and informing, interest formation.

Discourse coalitions seek to impose their 'discourse' in policy domains. If their discourse shapes the way in which society conceptualizes the world or a particular problem, then the coalition has achieved 'discourse structuration' and agendas are likely to be restricted to a limited spectrum

of possibilities (Fischer, 2003). If a discourse becomes entrenched in the minds of many as the dominant mode of perception, it can become distilled in institutions and organizational practices as the conventional mode of reasoning or 'global space characterized by regimes of truth' (Prügl, 2004, p. 72). This latter process is 'discourse institutionalization'. The framework captures how discourses – the expertise of KNETs – are transformed in their articulation through the policy cycle. Discourses are not stable or uncontested, and can be transformed by the institutional context into which they are propelled. To understand the politics of discourse is to understand a key element of how knowledge in the form of research, professional codes and expert advice gets translated, even if imperfectly, into policy.

In contradistinction to neo-Gramscian arguments, the discourse approach unhinges knowledge from interests and allows scope for ideas to have independent force and inherent power. Discourse is less directed or strategic, but nevertheless diffuses into consciousness. But the policy impact of the discourses of a GPPN, TEN, TAN or KNET is not automatic. The international movement or diffusion of ideas is composed of many competing discourses contributing to global debates on health or human rights, global standards for transparency in oil, gas and mining industries, or best practice in disaster recovery. Not all of these discourses become entrenched in institutions. Many are ignored or discarded.

As studies of agenda-setting have highlighted, many potentially relevant policy ideas 'go nowhere' largely because there are no influential policy entrepreneurs actively promoting them (Béland, 2009). The discourse *coalition* concept encapsulates both the idea of scientists, experts and their organizations as policy entrepreneurs and their strategic interactions via networks to propel knowledge into policy-making communities by deploying symbols, policy narratives and story lines.

In accounting for ideational influence, the neo-Gramscian framework brings into analytical sight the power of KNETs aligning with powerful material interests in the international political economy. By contrast, TANs are often subaltern in character, as can be some KNETs. For instance, the Global Drug Policy Program supported by the Open Society Institute 'aims to reveal to the public and policymakers that the "war on drugs" is actually a "war on drug users" that violates human rights and has a host of destructive consequences such as undermining HIV prevention efforts, fueling organized crime and corruption, damaging fragile economies, and inhibiting countries from implementing progressive and pragmatic drug control policies' (Open Society Foundations, 2011). It is an unorthodox

position that goes against the entrenched policies of many governments. Notwithstanding their lack of policy or political influence, subaltern or oppositional networks perform wider societal roles of knowledge creation, consciousness-raising of emergent policy problems and capacity-building around them. Networks that appear to have little policy impact or to be espousing unorthodox policy perspectives are neither completely ineffectual nor hopelessly marginalized. Instead, subaltern KNETs and the TANs they interact with are symptomatic of how dominated groups form identities through common language and understanding, and mobilize resources around alternative definitions of reality.

Authority construction and network exclusivity

The knowledge credentials and expertise of network actors (Ph.D.; career profile in a think tank, university or government research agency; service on blue ribbon commissions or expert advisory groups, and so on) bestow credibility and special status in policy debates and give weight to their recommendations. A network amplifies and disseminates ideas, research and information to an extent that could not be achieved by individuals or institutions alone. Moreover, a network mutually confers legitimacy and pools authority and respectability in a positive-sum manner. In other words, the epistemic power of a network can often be greater than that of its constituent parts.

Accreditation practices – generally unique to specific policy fields – also serve to exclude those without recognized expertise. To be part of CGIAR, a participant needs to have training as an agricultural scientist or economist. The barriers to participation in policy networks are not restricted to expert credentials or conformity to the norms or ideology of an international regime. It is resource-intensive to keep up sustained participation across the myriad transnational regulatory 'coalitions' or 'policy alliances'. Accessing GPPNs requires time, commitment and funds, resources that are usually beyond the capacities of ordinary citizens (who remain largely ignorant of these policy structures and are bound by local frames of reference – Evers et al., 2009, p. 65). Likewise, some developing country bureaucracies struggle to engage with policy structures. When developing countries are stretched significantly to deliver adequate representation in official venues such as World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations or treaty discussions, participating in the more informal global policy processes may remain elusive. Indeed, this is recognized in some quarters with initiatives like the Legal Capacity Building Initiative for

International Trade and Investment, which was created to address the need for quality legal education in Africa and to build a critical mass of expertise so that lawyers in Africa 'will be equipped to (a) represent their countries effectively in international organizations and other fora … and (b) help African clients take advantage of opportunities created by trade agreements and overcome challenges posed' (World Bank, nd).

Networks systematize and structure the knowledge generated by diverse individual and organizational knowledge actors, and impose a rationality that gives precedence to a particular conception of knowledge – usually of a codified, technocratic, secular, Westernized or gender-blind character. Given that processes of knowledge formation and the institutionalization of expertise are in themselves political exercises, the political patronage or financial support of certain KNETs contributes to the shape and character of global governance. KNETs not only provide expert interpretations and scientific narratives, they also create self-supporting structures of authority to incarnate as 'neutral' research brokers and dispassionate scientific advisors. The legitimacy and credibility of a KNET's expertise are drawn through a circular process between the knowledge it produces and the audiences that use and thereby legitimize that knowledge. For instance, the patronage of the World Bank and bilateral development agencies of both the GDN and the CGIAR through participation in their conferences and funding of their research activities serves to legitimize these networks, and others, as credible and reputable research organizations (Lera St Clair, 2006). In sum, KNETs do not simply crystallize around different sites and forms of power where knowledge products are used by more powerful actors; instead, the network is one site and form of power in itself and its capacities to (re)produce knowledges and discourses that define fields of action.

Knowledge networks as governmentality

Why is it relevant and useful to make the distinction between the transnational policy network structures identified earlier? Making this distinction allows us to understand the ways in which power relations are in constant flux and reconstituted at different social levels within particular governance structures. From this standpoint, knowledge – reconfigured into and codified by epistemic communities, or coopted into supporting the mission of GPPNs and TENs – is a mode of coordination and regulation of specific elements of the international political economy. For instance, banking regulation manifested through the Basel Committee is regarded by

many as the product of a transnational policy community of key financial actors (from the world of global finance at large including public, private, think tank and academia), formed gradually over the past thirty years to bring much-needed technical expertise and coordination to policy-making and to address issues arising from liberalization and intensive financial innovation from the 1980s onwards (Tsingou, 2009).

But no two networks are alike. Where certain networks perpetuate gender inequality or bolster the capitalist financial system (such as the Basel Committee could be said to do), other types – such as TANs – can help confront and combat it. There is a dual dynamic and in many instances a competition of ideas.

Many TAN studies start with how networks have contributed to international agendas from their standpoint in global civil society. Liberal and democratic cosmopolitan thinkers see the rise of non-state actors as a progressive contribution to a global civil society and to new and more democratic global 'governance without government'. By contrast, the assumption here is that transnational KNETs are embedded in global governance and already represent a new logic of 'governmentality' (Sending and Neumann, 2006). Although space considerations preclude a detailed discussion here, it is important to note that for the democratic theorist, the construction and deployment of policy-relevant knowledge thus becomes a significant source of power in global governance, and that as a consequence, KNETs and other network arrangements need to be subject to their own democratic critique (Miller, 2007).

Networks are becoming a mode of governance whereby the patterns of linkages and interaction are the means through which policy is jointly organized. In short, there is a functional interdependence between public and private actors whereby networks allow resources to be mobilized towards common policy objectives in domains delegated or delinked from the hierarchical control of governments. Furthermore, the network logic itself is being diffused by international organizations, with their advocacy of partnership and tripartite policy coalitions as methods to deal with transnational problems.[43] It promotes a flexibility and efficiency in dealing with relatively intractable cross-border policy issues.

43 See above regarding the DGF financed programmes.

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Chapter 8
THINK TANKS, DISCURSIVE INSTITUTIONALISM AND POLICY CHANGE

Stella Ladi

Policy failures, lack of implementation and the economic crisis have increased the desire for informed and effective public policy. Think tanks, policy research institutes and private consultant firms have been in the forefront of providing policy ideas and evidence for sustaining policy change. They often act as mediators between society and governments or between governments and international organizations in order to promote institutional and policy change. This chapter aims to unpack the role of think tanks by asking two key questions. First, what is the role of think tanks during public policy shifts? Second, is knowledge used in an instrumental or in a symbolic way? Examples of foreign policy shifts in the United States and in Europe are discussed in order to illustrate the theoretical discussion.

Think tanks are important agents of public policy change. This does not make them 'independent', but it means that they have an independent impact upon public policy, especially in critical junctures when public policy shifts are more likely to occur. In order to be established and sustained, public policy shifts need a discourse with coordinative and communicative functions, and most of the time think tanks are well placed and well resourced to offer it (Schmidt, 2008). The coordinative discourse refers to the 'creation, elaboration, and justification of policy and programmatic ideas' by policy actors and the way they exchange views and they persuade each other. The communicative discourse is concerned with the relationship between policy-makers and the public. It refers to 'the presentation, deliberation,

and legitimation of political ideas to the general public' (Schmidt, 2008, p. 310). A second important dimension concerns the way public organizations make use of the discourse produced or promoted by think tanks. Boswell (2009) argues that there are two types of knowledge use: instrumental and symbolic use. The instrumental use of knowledge assumes rational policy-making where knowledge is used in order to solve a problem, while the symbolic use of knowledge refers to knowledge as a mean of legitimation and strengthening of a policy position. This paper aims to explore the role of think tanks in producing and promoting coordinative and communicative discourse. It then moves to question the relationship between discourse and knowledge, and whether public organizations use knowledge in an instrumental or symbolic way.

Think tanks are important because they can provide both types of discourse, and the knowledge they produce has the potential to be used in either an instrumental or symbolic way. What normally initiates the mobilization of think tanks and brings them into the heart of public policy are 'events' that lead to critical junctures such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, 9/11 and today's economic crisis. This is the time when policy-makers need to clarify and coordinate their discourse, and also to communicate it to the public. This is also the time when policy-makers are urged to find solutions to the problems and to legitimize harsh changes. Even if it is difficult to make general claims about the influence of think tanks, it can be argued that their special position in the policy process allows them during critical junctures to come to the fore and influence public discourse and thus public policy, by framing the arguments of policy-makers and politicians. As Boswell (2009, pp. 30–31) argues, to look for influence assumes a problem-solving function of knowledge and thus of think tanks which in reality may be less important than their symbolic function.

The chapter is organized into five sections. The first section outlines discursive institutionalism by emphasizing the importance of critical junctures in the development of coordinative and communicative discourse. The second section distinguishes between institutional and policy change, and links them to policy learning, which gives a special emphasis to ideas. The third section discusses the relationship between discourse and knowledge, and explores the role of think tanks. The fourth section moves a step further by analysing instrumental and symbolic use of knowledge. Finally, the last section offers some US and European foreign policy examples that illustrate the previous arguments.

DISCURSIVE INSTITUTIONALISM AND CRITICAL JUNCTURES

Discursive institutionalism is the theoretical starting point of this chapter, and the discussion aims to shed light on the role of knowledge and policy agents and to explain change. It is expected to facilitate the analysis of think tanks, which are the agents of policy change under discussion in this chapter. Discursive institutionalism has been outlined by Schmidt (2008) as a fourth institutionalism, distinct from rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism and sociological institutionalism (Hall and Taylor, 1996), reflecting the turn to ideas and discourse in political science. Institutions are understood as the context within which agents think, speak and act, and at the same time as the result of agents' thoughts, words and actions. In order to understand change both the coordinative and the communicative dimensions of discourse should be taken into account. In both types of discourse the role of agents is central, and thus it is argued that in order to explain change, special attention should be paid to them.

Following Schmidt (2008, p. 305), discourse has ideas about policies, programmes and philosophies as its substance but it is not confined by them. Discourse as developed in discursive institutionalism describes the substantive content of ideas but also the interactive process by which ideas are spread. Discourse is not just about ideas or 'text' but also about the context in which the ideas are developed and promoted. Schmidt and Radaelli (2004, p. 193), talking about discourse and policy change, clarify that the study of discourse should coexist with the awareness that interests also matter, as well as material conditions and hard economic variables. Discourse in this sense is the link between structure and agency. Empirically, it is interesting to shed light on cases where discourse proves to be central in the development of events and to pick the agents that are responsible for its coordination and communication. Foreign policy is an area where the significance of discourse can be observed.

Discursive institutionalism is described by Schmidt (2008, p. 314) as complementary to the other three institutionalisms. Accordingly, in this chapter it is linked with historical institutionalism. It is further argued that part of Schmidt's critique of some of the tools of historical institutionalism is too harsh and should be reconsidered. Specifically, Schmidt (2008) claims that in order to explain change the historical institutionalist tradition relies too much on concepts such as critical junctures, which are unexplainable moments in time when change is triggered, often as a result of exogenous factors. Discursive institutionalism is expected to shed light on the agency

during those critical junctures through the study of ideas and discourse. Although agency is a significant parameter in explaining change, another parameter is time, and critical junctures are an integral part of time. The limitation of discursive institutionalism to explain all kind of change is acknowledged because it is accepted that events outside people's control happen, and actions have unintended consequences (Schmidt, 2010). It is further argued here that the specific time of these events, which can be described as critical junctures, can prove to be catalytic for change. It must not be forgotten that what we aim to explain and understand is the change and not the critical juncture itself.

Nevertheless, critical junctures refer to particular historical moments that have lasting consequences, and can be either 'big' events or less significant incidents that happen at the right time and have an impact across time (Pierson, 2000). The starting proposition of historical institutionalism is that institution formation during the foundation of a country affects its developmental path. Critical junctures are important because they can interrupt these paths and provoke change. Thus, timing and sequencing are very important for the understanding of the policy process. What comes next is to explore why critical junctures do not always cause the same effects and why change does not always last (Thelen, 1999). A turn to discursive institutionalism and the role of agents in the creation and promotion of discourse is expected to help us move forward. In this chapter, for example, it is claimed that during these critical junctures think tanks increase their visibility as carriers of new discourse and can facilitate change. Previous attempts to include agency in historical institutionalist analysis such as the discussion of policy entrepreneurs were much more limited in scope and depth (Kingdon, 1995). We now turn to policy change and processes of policy learning.

INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY CHANGE AND PROCESSES OF LEARNING

Change is one of the most central topics in public policy analysis. The normative grounding of public policy analysis is finding solutions to problems and improving policies. Implementing solutions and making use of knowledge remains the most difficult part of the equation, and thus change constitutes one of the most interesting fields of research. Parsons (1995, p. 570) distinguishes between change in the 'policy space' (or what I call policy change) and change in the 'organizational space' (in

this chapter, institutional change). Change in the 'policy space' refers to change in policy goals, values, beliefs, purposes and priorities, while change in the 'organizational space' refers to the relationship between the 'policy space' and the institutional context of policy. This means that policy and institutional change are closely linked but they can be distinguished at least analytically. Policy change is expected to precede institutional change and to be closely linked with processes of policy learning and thus with discourse. Institutional change can be better understood through a discussion of time, critical junctures and of the ways in which policy change is translated to new or renewed institutions.

Policy change is often linked to the idea of policy learning (Bennett and Howlett, 1992). In order to understand policy change, it is not enough to study social pressures; the role of ideas should also be considered (see Heclo, 1974). This is the purpose of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's (1993) concept of policy-oriented learning, within their advocacy coalition framework (ACF). This framework analyses changes in policy objective arising from new experiences or information. An advocacy coalition is defined as:

> People from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest groups leaders, researchers) who share a particular belief system – i.e. a set of basic values, causal assumptions and problem perceptions- and who show a non trivial degree of coordinated activity over time.
>
> *(Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p. 25)*

In the ACF, one of the main causes of policy change is policy-oriented learning. The members of a coalition try to understand the world better through policy-oriented learning, but at the same time they tend to resist deliberating on information that suggests that their deep or policy core beliefs are invalid. Therefore, policy-oriented learning is normally expected to be able to change the secondary aspects but not the core beliefs of a coalition. However, alteration of the core beliefs can happen as a result of important changes in environmental conditions (or critical junctures such as the outbreak of a war). At the same time, 'across-coalition learning' can occur as part of the policy-oriented learning process (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993).

An important aspect of policy learning is its collective nature. For learning to lead to change, it has to be collective and to include a large number of people across and within organizations who believe in policy change. Learning applies more easily to individuals than organizations, and

thus the analysis of its impact upon policies is not always straightforward (Hannan and Freeman, 1989). It is here that the concepts of coordinative and communicative discourse become particularly helpful. It is argued that policy learning is closely related to discourse, that is to say to programmes and philosophies or in general ideas about policies. Coordinative discourse, which refers to the 'creation, elaboration, and justification of policy and programmatic ideas' by policy actors and the way they exchange views and they persuade each other, 'can be seen as the outcome of advocacy coalitions' activity (Schmidt, 2008, p. 310).

Communicative discourse, which is concerned with the relationship between policy-makers and the public, and refers to 'the presentation, deliberation, and legitimation of political ideas to the general public' (Schmidt, 2008, p. 310), is closer to Parsons's (1995, p. 570) change of the 'organizational space'. Both discourses are necessary for policy change to occur and for institutional change to follow. It is interesting that institutional change happens in some instances and not in others. Tools from historical institutionalism such as critical junctures and the importance of time can be used in order to understand when institutional change actually happens. In other words, coordinative and communicative discourses prepare the ground and push policy change forward, but for deeper institutional change to occur what is important is the right time. Critical junctures often produce the right time for institutional change to occur. What is interesting for this chapter is the role of 'knowledge agents' such as think tanks in the translation of knowledge to discourse and then to change.

KNOWLEDGE, DISCOURSE AND THINK TANKS

Before we turn to the specific role of think tanks in coordinative and communicative discourse, we need to discuss the relationship between knowledge and discourse. Think tanks are described as carriers of discourse, but at the same time we should not forget that the main resource that they advertise is knowledge. Knowledge and discourse are not synonyms, and a closer look at their relationship is a first step for exploring the institutional and/or symbolic use of knowledge. The next step is to analyse the way coordinative and communicative discourse are related to public policy change.

Our starting point is Foucault's (1979, p. 100) claim that 'it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together'. It is suggested here that knowledge is central in the creation of discourse when linked with

power. But what is meant by knowledge? Lindblom (1990, p. 123) defines knowledge as a 'well-probed belief, whether empirical or evaluative', and Knott and Wildavsky (1980, p. 548) distinguish it from information, which is seen as an educated guess. Knowledge is more definitive, and that is why when linked with power it creates discourse. This makes knowledge agents such as think tanks particularly significant, because it is not just the content of knowledge that is important, but also the knowledge agent and whether they hold power or not. For knowledge to even have the possibility of becoming part of the coordinative and communicative discourse and thus influence policy change, it has to be found and promoted by powerful institutions. The question then is how knowledge is put to work through discursive practices in specific institutional settings (Foucault, 1980).

What exactly is the role of think tanks in the policy process, and especially in the transformation of knowledge to discourse? Wallace (1994) argues that policy-makers need advisers when they need to rethink the dominant assumptions of policy. Think tanks are there to provide this rethink when necessary. The main objective of think tanks is to bring knowledge and policy-making together by informing and if possible influencing the policy process. Think tanks conduct and summarize research with the aim of solving policy problems, and not solely to advance academic knowledge and/or theoretical debates. In this way, although think tanks consist of experts and provide policy analysis, they often recycle rather than produce academic knowledge. Their aim is to make academic findings more palatable for busy politicians and policy-makers (Stone, 2007). This gives think tanks the opportunity to set the policy agenda and to prioritize some topics over others, and thus play an important role in public policy design.

Most think tanks state that they conduct independent research in order to inform the public and the government on how to improve public policy. Their rhetoric often says that their work is for the common good and for educating the public. Nevertheless, their concern about their image and reputation limits the spectrum of their policy proposals. Even more, the extent to which think tanks can determine their own research agendas and their own arguments is doubtful because they are dependent on contracts and public and private funding (Stone, 2007). For instance, Jacobs and Page (2005), in a study about influence upon US foreign policy, conclude that internationally oriented businesses are the most important source of influence, followed by experts who may themselves be influenced by businesses. Furthermore the idea that think tanks offer an independent

bridge between academia and policy-makers is problematic because it assumes that there are two fields (academia and politics) that need to be linked. Although this may be true, in many countries the directors and experts of think tanks are closely related to politicians and bureaucrats (Stone, 2007). Academics themselves are not distant from think tanks or from politics as they move in and out of official posts. In reality, they all belong to the same elite, they have similar world views and their affiliation often changes (Newsom, 1995–96).

To summarize, the main argument up to now is that think tanks neither act as neutral bridges between academia and politics nor always function having public good as a compass. When they have the power, they transform knowledge to discourse and they then act as carriers of coordinative and communicative discourse. To be a carrier of coordinative discourse means that think tanks participate in the creation, elaboration, and justification of policy and programmatic ideas, when these are negotiated between policy-makers. They can promote specific ideas, specific framing of policy issues, and provide arguments for the debate by participating in advocacy coalitions (for example, the activity of US think tanks in the coordination of a more interventionist US foreign policy after 9/11). To be a carrier of communicative discourse means that think tanks are central in the presentation, deliberation and legitimation of political ideas to the general public when decisions have been taken and the time is right (for example, the role of think tanks in European capitals for the communication of the creation of the European Security and Defence Policy, ESDP). They become central in the symbolic use of knowledge.

INSTRUMENTAL AND SYMBOLIC USE OF KNOWLEDGE

In this section, the way knowledge is used by public organizations is further explored. Regardless of whether knowledge is transformed in coordinative or communicative discourse, it is still important to examine the rationale of public organizations in being interested in knowledge in the first place. Boswell (2009) argues that there are two types of knowledge use, instrumental and symbolic. Instrumental use of knowledge assumes rational policy-making where knowledge is used in order to solve a problem, while the symbolic use of knowledge refers to knowledge as a means of legitimation and strengthening of a policy position. Think tanks in both cases are expected to play an intermediary role, but in order to understand

their role as carriers of discourse, it is important to know whether their contribution is expected to be substantial or symbolic.

The instrumentalist account of knowledge use, according to Boswell (2009, pp. 29–60), follows either a Weberian logic of knowledge and has a problem-solving function, or a Foucauldian account of knowledge being used as a technique of social control. The instrumentalist account is interested in the effects of knowledge in policy-making, which means that it looks for influence. It assumes that actors are rational and that organizations are unified, and draw on knowledge only if it assists them in the implementation of their policy goals. The lack of evidence of the influence of knowledge on policy-making led to a critique of the instrumentalist view. The first type of criticism was that the gap between research and policy communities leads to a lack of communication and thus to a difficulty of knowledge transfer to the policy level (Holzner et al., 1983). The second type of criticism concerned the absorption of knowledge, and noticed that knowledge can be the background and can influence the conceptualization or framing of problems, but it cannot have a direct impact on policy-making (Weiss, 1986). Boswell (2009) argues that the instrumentalist account of knowledge is limited mainly because of its understanding of organizations as rational actors that have specific rational goals. Although I agree with her critique of the Weberian model, I see the Foucauldian account as much broader and not only having instrumentalist character. A turn to the symbolic account of knowledge can prove to be particularly enlightening.

The outlining of the symbolic use of expert knowledge is Boswell's (2009, pp. 61–88) main contribution to the debate. According to her, knowledge can play two different roles. First, it may enhance the legitimacy of an organization, and second, it can lend credibility to its decisions. In both cases, knowledge is valued not for its content but for its ability to signal authority. The legitimizing function of knowledge becomes particularly important in instances of organizational uncertainty or in environments that attach value to expertise. The substantiating function of knowledge is more likely to be observed in highly contested areas where the debate revolves around technocratic issues rather than interests and values. Boswell's argument draws on neo-institutionalist analysis of organizational action, and distinguishes between political and action organizations in order to elaborate the legitimizing and substantiating functions of knowledge. This chapter is concerned with the role of think tanks in policy change, and thus the symbolic use of knowledge has to be seen in a larger context. It is argued that discursive institutionalism is a useful analytical framework

for combining the insights of organizational analysis with the political and policy process.

Schmidt's (2008) distinction between coordinative and communicative discourse can be fruitfully linked to Boswell's (2009) discussion of symbolic use of knowledge. If Foucault's view that knowledge and power are linked in discourse is accepted, and if power is seen as an inextricable element of the policy process, then to understand the role of knowledge agents such as think tanks in the policy process, discourse and the symbolic use of knowledge should be linked. More specifically, the legitimizing and the substantiating use of knowledge can lead to coordinative and communicative discourse if power becomes part of the equation. In other words, if a powerful actor finds a specific set of knowledge claims interesting or useful, it is possible to use them for the production of coordinative and communicative discourse. The question then is whether think tanks play the role of this actor, and whether this kind of activity is particularly dynamic at critical junctures.

As was argued in the previous section, think tanks, when they have the power, transform knowledge to discourse and then act as carriers of coordinative and communicative discourse. What makes a think tank powerful are its economic and knowledge resources as well as its participation in advocacy coalitions, which allows not only for the production but also for the promotion of ideas. Additionally, the timing of think tanks' action is important. It is during critical junctures that think tanks increase their chances of acting as carriers of coordinative and communicative discourse, thus affecting policy change. The next section offers an example of the above theoretical discussion by looking at the role of think tanks in US and European foreign policies.

THINK TANKS IN US AND EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICIES

US and European foreign policies are not easily comparable. Even the existence of a European foreign policy is still under question (e.g. Smith, 2008). Comparing either the institutions or the operations of the two foreign policies is beyond the scope of this chapter. The aim of this section is to apply some of the theoretical propositions made in the previous sections to the role of think tanks in foreign policy, and to show that although think tanks in the European Union and in EU member-states are expected to

be less active than those in the United States, there is evidence that they perform a similar role as far as discourse is concerned.

The influence of think tanks in US public and foreign policy-making is well documented (e.g. Abelson, 2006). A recent example that reasserts this thesis is the creation of a new foreign policy establishment after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 (9/11). This can be described as a critical juncture that created the conditions for the promotion of a 'new' coordinative and communicative discourse concerning US foreign policy. It is important to stress that the ideas concerned were promoted prior to 9/11, and as Parmar (2005) argues, the catalytic events just brought these previously unpopular ideas to the fore. The 'new' coordinative and communicative discourse of US foreign policy after the attacks and under the Bush administration was more assertive, more militarist, more unilateralist and more patriotic. It praised US values such as freedom, democracy and human rights, and it applauded a more 'pre-emptive' and preventive foreign policy strategy (Parmar, 2005, p. 3). The outcomes of the new discourse and of the new policy have been the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

Parmar (2005, pp. 8–14) demonstrates how neo-conservative think tanks and ideologues have pushed to the top of the agenda what we have described as the 'new' coordinative and communicative discourse. He shows that the new-conservative movement had been growing since the late 1960s and early 1970s and thus predated the 9/11 attacks. In particular, it is worth noticing that a number of think tanks and research institutes have acted as carriers of the 'new' discourse. At the centre of the new foreign policy establishment have been the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), the older American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and the Middle East Forum, as well as the Middle East Media Research Institute and the Hudson Institute. This interconnected network of think tanks can be described as the source of communicative discourse because it has been well-funded and had a lot of television and newspaper exposure at the critical moment of the new era. Finally Parmar's (2005) analysis about energy corporation interests sustains the argument made by Jacobs and Page (2005) about business elites influencing both foreign policy-makers and think tank leaders. The claim here is that such processes are not exclusive properties of the US system. We can observe similar trends in Europe in both the past and present.

A key example is the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the way it affected the strengthening of European foreign policy. The fall of the Berlin Wall was not an unexpected event but it can be described as a critical juncture. It signified the end of the Cold War, had an impact on

the international balance of power, and led to foreign policy shifts in both the European Union and the United States. Kappen-Risse (1994) shows that the 'end of the Cold War' cannot be explained using only structural and functional arguments. He claims that a role was played by ideas and by the promotion of foreign policy change by not only transnational but also domestic coalitions. This is similar to what we have described as coordinative and communicative discourse. Think tanks and research institutes such as the Soviet Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) and the American Brookings Institution were actually active in the development of this coordinative and communicative discourse.

What is even more interesting for the purposes of this article is the role of think tanks within advocacy coalitions during the development of coordinative and communicative discourse for the Europeanization of foreign policy. Howorth (2004) offers an analytical discussion of the discursive changes that took place, and explains that although the discussion of a European pillar inside NATO existed prior to 1989, the catalytic events of 1989 meant that a rethink was necessary. France played a leading role in promoting the idea of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and presenting it to the United States. President Mitterrand was supported in the creation and use of a coordinative discourse by a whole advocacy coalition in France including in-house research organizations such as the Centre d'Analyse et de Prévision in the Quai d'Orsay and the Délégation aux Affaires Stratégiques at the Ministry of Defence, and think tanks such as the Institut Francais des Relations Internationales and the Fondation pour les Etudes de Défense Nationale/Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique. Germany has been described as another key actor in the effort of promoting a European foreign policy, especially during its presidency of the European Union, with a number of foreign policy and security think tanks, institutes, experts and commentators that had a close and permanent relation to the government producing coordinative discourse (Howorth, 2004, p. 216).

Furthermore, the new Blair government in 1997 brought Britain closer to the CFSP, although much more reluctantly than France and Germany. The main problem was that Britain's discourse had traditionally been that of a bridge between the United States and Europe, and the support of a European foreign and security policy was conceived as a new path. Nevertheless, British think tanks (e.g. the Centre for European Reform) and Foreign Office officials became members of a European advocacy coalition that was discussing the issue (Howorth, 2004, p. 221). The Kosovo crisis can be described as a second critical juncture that pushed forward the

introduction of the ESDP. What was necessary at that time was mainly a communicative discourse, as the coordination between European policy-makers had already taken place. The main argument pushed forward was that the European Union was unable to act in its own yard and that a common policy was necessary. In 1999 the ESDP was born. Since then, although the policy remains controversial, some police and military interventions have been undertaken by the European Union (Bailes, 2008).

CONCLUSIONS

Discursive institutionalism and in particular the concepts of coordinative and communicative discourse have proven to be particularly helpful for the discussion of the role of think tanks in policy change. Discourse offers an inside view of the role of agents during instances of policy change. It is argued here that it should be linked with historical institutionalism and especially with the concept of critical junctures in order to shed light on structures and timing issues, and thus on possible institutional changes. Coordinative and cooperative discourses are integral parts of change. Think tanks and their activity within advocacy coalitions are central in the development of discourse for policy change. Moreover, think tanks play an important role in translating knowledge to discourse when their power recourses allow them to do so.

More specifically, as far as policy change is concerned, discourse is central in the preparation of policy shifts, and think tanks are key carriers of both coordinative and communicative discourse. In this chapter, it has been argued that policy change does not happen in a vacuum. Changes in policy paths are often accelerated at critical junctures, and it is at these critical junctures that discourse becomes more important. Think tanks are privileged during these periods because they have the resources to recycle knowledge and to produce coordinative and communicative discourse. Thus, both time and knowledge resources are important factors of policy change. Knowledge resources are not limited to studies and policy proposals. They also include advocacy coalitions of people in the media, in academia and in the policy process, which can provide information and at the same time promote a discourse of change.

At a more empirical level, it has been claimed that the process of promoting new ideas via think tanks and other expert groups has been similar in the United States and Europe. Although think tanks have a more visible presence in the United States, a closer look at Europe points to

similar coordinative and communicative discursive practices and processes. The examples of the emergence of the ESDP ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the new US foreign policy establishment after 9/11, amply demonstrate the importance of discourse and the need for carriers of the 'new' discourse in both continents. This is a significant claim given that the differences between foreign policies are often overemphasized.

The subtle position of think tanks in the policy process has meant that their accountability has often been neglected (e.g. http://www.oneworldtrust.org/). More in-depth analysis is needed in order to shed light on their specific roles. Their claim of public purpose cannot be enough for the legitimation of their privileged position in the policy process when their influential role as carriers of coordinative and communicative discourse is taken into account. Think tanks, similarly to other types of organization, need to be accountable in order to guarantee the quality of their policy analysis and to ensure that they assume responsibility for their policy proposals.

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Chapter 9
BRINGING EU SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH INTO POLICY: EXPERIENCE AND PROSPECTS

Nikos Kastrinos[44]

INTRODUCTION

Ergas (1987) coined the characterizations 'mission oriented' and 'diffusion oriented' as types of national technology policies. What distinguishes the two is the focusing of national efforts in specific sectors and whether the policy emphasis is on generating radical innovations or on creating the capacity for diffusion of innovations:

> Best described as mission oriented, [such] technology policies … focus on radical innovations needed to achieve objectives of national importance. … Closely bound up with by the provision of public goods, the principle purpose of (diffusion oriented) policies is to diffuse technological capabilities throughout the industrial structure, thus facilitating the ongoing, mainly incremental adaptation to change.
>
> *(Ergas, 1987, p. 192)*

In a recent paper (Kastrinos, 2010), I argued that the thematic research programmes of the European Union seldom display the characteristics of

44 All views presented are the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

mission-oriented research policies, and that through the years the evolution of EU research policy has been becoming more and more diffusion-oriented. This trend, I argued, has been strengthened by the European Research Area (ERA) policy of the last decade, including the recent talk about grand societal challenges as targets for EU research policy.

In this chapter I examine the interaction of the diffusion orientation of EU research policy with the way in which the social sciences and humanities (SSH) research programmes have approached the issue of the impact of their research on policies, and the way they try to engage with policy-makers and potential users of their research results. We could be forgiven for wondering about the relevance of categories of technology policy to the analysis of SSH research programmes. There are two reasons that support the approach. First, in the EU context there is surprising uniformity in the political and administrative means whereby research programmes are designed and implemented across scientific and technological areas of research. The rules that apply on information technology and space research apply also on SSH. Second, EU research programmes in SSH have an obligation, founded in the Treaty on European Union, to support the policies of the European Union, and this provided the context for a programme along the lines of 'mode 2 production of knowledge', which was promiment in the 1990s (Gibbons et al., 1994). Engagement with users has been an important aspect of the programme since the beginning.

My discussion is chronological. I distinguish between three phases. The first phase takes place largely in the 1980s with the establishment of the Framework Programmes (FP). This was an important formative period for research policy in the European Union, and a period in which support to SSH research was limited. The second period begins in 1994 with the launch of the Targeted Socio-economic Research Programmes and continues to the last call of FP5 in 2002. This period was signified by the explosive growth of SSH budgets, but also by important experiments and efforts to link research and policy. The third period is signalled by the launch of the ERA initiative in 2000 (EC, 2000) and covers the implementation of FP6 and the first half of FP7; a period in which the research policy landscape of Europe changed dramatically, especially through the rapid development of the European Research Council (ERC). This period, which is marked by a concern with structuring research in Europe, brought some important new elements to the configuration of the research–policy nexus around the programme.

In the course of the discussion, I pay particular attention to the research–policy nexus and considerably less attention to salient features

of the programme, such as the extremely important role of international collaboration in research in SSH, and the very important contributions it made to the development of comparative research in Europe. My reason for this is the assumption that comparative research in SSH offers significant theoretical and empirical insights which strengthen the reliability and validity of scientific knowledge, and thus make it more useful for policy. Although this assumption can generate considerable discussion, I consider it broadly warranted.

The evolution of the research–policy nexus is then discussed in brief, in relation to the diffusion-oriented character of EU research policy, and the involvement of 'users' with the research. In a policy context that favours the creation and diffusion of capacity over the generation of radical innovation, and where the European nature of the research strengthens the quality of insight and understanding, a great deal depends on whether potential users of knowledge are aware and have the capacity to absorb the new knowledge. This important lesson from the experience in the EU programme over the last ten years is discussed in the last section of the chapter, which concludes with some lessons for the programme's strategy.

THE BEGINNINGS OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES IN THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

European Union involvement in science and research predates the FPs (Guzzetti, 1995). Research was stipulated in European Coal and Steel Community Treaty of 1951 and was a central component of the EURATOM Treaty of 1958. Furthermore, important documents concerning the European economy had from early days recognized the economic importance of research (e.g. EC, 1970). However, the development of links between research and the European Economic Community became part of a longstanding industrial policy debate that kept EU research efforts low key and of limited importance in the whole European scene (Hodges, 1983; Sharp, 1989). The SSH were parts of two sets of policies that were launched in the late 1970s. First they were part of the evolving policy on fellowship schemes which supported the mobility of scientists. These did not distinguish between different disciplines or types of research, and thus they were used by scholars in SSH to support their research activities. Second, they were part of the mechanism of making policy for science and technology in the Commission. The first such activity was 'Europe + 30', an attempt to mobilize SSH to investigate the future of Europe. This was

effectively one research project, which was launched following a specific Council Resolution in 14 January 1974.[45]

This project was followed by a series of programmes in Forecasting and Assessment in Science and Technology (FAST), the second of which was part of FP1 (1984-1987), and the third of which was part of a broader programme called MONITOR in FP2 (1987–91). MONITOR combined three sub-programmes: FAST, a programme on Strategic Analyses in Science and Technology (SAST) and a programme on Evaluation of Research called SPEAR. These programmes were small and located within the administration whose policy they were meant to influence. Part of the research was done internally, often with the help of seconded experts. The MONITOR programme had a budget of 23 million ECU and was managed by three 'units' in the Directorate-General for Science, Research and Development of the European Commission, one for each of its components. As a comparison, the 210 million ECU of programmes dedicated to fellowships in FP2 were managed by one unit in the same directorate.

In many respects the MONITOR programme was a unique environment and a turning point in the history of EU policy in the fields of social sciences. It was highly specialized, placed a lot of emphasis in direct involvement of the Commission in the research process by virtue of employing researchers to manage the projects of the programme, and supported important and influential research projects in its fields. FAST contributed greatly to the development of research in areas covered by the influential OECD Technology and the Economy Programme, such as research on globalization and innovation systems, and contributed greatly to the development of the policy views expressed in the 1993 Delors white paper on *Growth, Competitiveness, Employment: The Challenges and Ways Forward into the 21st Century* (EC, 1993). Yet there was no immediate successor programme in FP3 (1990–94), in which the only support to SSH was through a substantially expanded human capital and mobility programme (518 million ECU), which reserved about 1 per cent of its budget for the European stimulation plan for economic science. By the time of the white paper, the programmes that contributed to its ideas were winding down and the Commission was launching its ideas for FP4, which involved a fully fledged and rather substantial programme of targeted socio-economic research (TSER).

45 The file on the relevant Council Resolution is in the historical archives of the Council classified as CM2, CEE, CEEA 1974.1.598.

THE TAKE-OFF OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESEARCH

In 1992 the Maastricht Treaty rephrased the formulation of the objectives of EU research policy (Article 130f) as follows:

> The Community shall have the objective to strengthen the scientific and technological basis of European industry and to encourage it to become more competitive at international level, *while promoting all the research activities deemed necessary by virtue of other chapters of this Treaty*.[46]

In this context the FP budget doubled and social sciences got a big boost. FP4 dedicated 147 million ECU (1.1 per cent of the FP budget) to TSER, which was meant to continue from MONITOR and massively expand its efforts in size and focus. Research was to focus on three areas: evaluation of science and technology policy options, education and training, and social integration and social exclusion in Europe.

The most direct heir of the MONITOR programme was the field of evaluation of science and technology policy options. Here the ambition was to:

> provide a common knowledge base for decision-makers in the fields of science and technology policy at regional, national and European level and for all those responsible for other areas of activity in which science and technology play a role, with the ultimate objective of encouraging greater consistency and closer coordination of RTD efforts and policies in Europe.
>
> *(EC, 1994, p. 81)*

In this field the programme was to dedicate the biggest part of its budget, and combine three sets of resources: research programme funding (50 million ECU), the activities of the European Technology Assessment Network (ETAN), and the activities of the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS), which was founded at the Joint Research Centre in 1994.[47] ETAN was meant to be established by this programme and to 'operate in close cooperation with the main bodies actively involved in evaluation of science and technology policy options in Europe. The intention (was) to make best use of the expertise available …. And to circulate information on the research and other work in progress in the European Union (EC, 1994, p. 84).

46 My emphasis on the changes.

47 It is important to note that 33 million ECU of the programme budget was meant to support research at the Joint Research Centre, most of it at the IPTS.

In the other two fields, 'education and training' and 'social integration and social exclusion in Europe', the budgets were lower (25 and 33 million ECU respectively), the links between the programme and the needs of decision-makers were left implicit, and the ambitions to organize the supply of scientific knowledge were not associated with anything like the specific institutional ambition of ETAN. Table 9.1 outlines the areas of research funded by the programme.

TABLE 9.1 Thematic coverage of EU targeted socio-economic research

Evaluation of science and technology policy options (50 MECU)
The R&D situation in Europe (efforts, policies, strategies of actors, innovation systems, technology management)
Short and medium-term needs, socio-economic changes and new S&T developments (major social, economic, political and sociocultural challenges with a forward looking perspective)
Methods tools and approaches (data, indicators and statistics)
Education and training (25 MECU)
Effectiveness of policies and actions (trends in education, recent developments and evaluation of specific schemes)
New methods, tools and technologies (innovation in education and training)
Education, training and economic development (comparative analyses of systems and measures, economic needs and demands from education, learning at work, education and social integration)
Social integration and social exclusion (33 MECU)
Forms and processes of social exclusion and integration; causes of social exclusion (particularly unemployment)
Migration
Evaluation of social integration policies (social policies; health and safety; social cohesion and citizenship in Europe)

Note: the descriptions are the author's attempts to summarize the programme texts.

It is worth discussing at this point the changes in the relationship between the programme and policy-making, between MONITOR and TSER. In a sense MONITOR was an integral part of Europe's policy-making in science and technology. It fed directly into a reflection process in the Commission which was directed by the needs and objectives of the Commission. In order to do this, Commission staff and visiting seconded scientists were greatly involved in the management of the research and ensured the research contributed to Commission proposals on what should happen in Europe. In parallel, the programme contributed to scientific discussions in Europe,

thus playing an important role in the shaping of a community of practice that permeates the institutional boundaries between research and policy-making.

This vision of science and technology policy-making was articulated at a large scale in the proposal for ETAN. However, many of the expectations of the model were not fulfilled. The scaling up of expectations increased vastly the diversity of actors and approaches that needed to be involved, and the relatively coherent small network of researchers and policy-makers that was formed around MONITOR did not manage to keep its coherence and evolve into a large-scale network (see Kastrinos, 1996). ETAN focused on providing scientific advice on technology policy issues, and developed a small number of reports that contributed to the shaping of the research activities of FP5 (Kastrinos, 2001).

However, with ETAN not functioning as it was meant to, the implementation of the vision of the TSER programme to provide a common knowledge base for decision-makers faced a huge challenge to identify the common knowledge needs of an incredibly diverse audience. In addition to that, the distance increased between policy-making and the programme within the Commission. As in the case of the MONITOR programme, the Directorate-General for Science, Research and Development was the main policy-making agency interested in the research in evaluation of science and technology policy options. However, where in MONITOR a research budget of 23 million ECU was managed by three 'units', in the TSER a research budget of 108 million ECU was managed by one unit. At the same time substantial Commission staff involvement in such research was moved to IPTS, which was located in Seville, Spain. The huge rise in the ratio of budget to Commission staff led to an inevitable rise in the degree of formalization of the relationship between the researchers and the Commission staff. As the management staff was less involved in the research, its ability to bring the knowledge to bear in policy-making decreased.

As the research themes pursued by the programme broadened, a new set of Commission services became interested in the research programme: the Directorates-General for Education and Employment and Social Affairs, who became increasingly active in advising on the research topics to be pursued and in the selection of research projects. As these policy clients were entirely independent from the process of managing the research, the management of the programme was placed in the position of an intermediary, a promoter of research results.

At the same time, and in order to serve the vast variety of decision-makers potentially interested in science and technology, the programme required the researchers to explain how their research would reach users and to involve users in their projects where possible. In that sense the programme bestowed the responsibility for achieving policy impact to the researchers it supported, who were expected to achieve this by finding potential users and subjecting them to their results. A similar situation was unfolding at the same time in the United Kingdom, and many of the observations of Shove and Rip (2000) in relation to the UK Economic and Social Research Council also apply to TSER.

The FP5 strengthened this tendency. On the one hand research was organized in 'key actions' that addressed specific socio-economic needs: in other words, specific contexts of use. On the other hand, a key action on Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge-base was part of the programme on Improving Human Potential, which included also a small programme on Strategic Analysis of Specific Political Issues, the heir of the domain carved out by the few ETAN reports (see http://cordis.europa.eu/etan/). The Key Action was a direct follow-on from the TSER research part, with similar procedures, management and aspirations:

> (I)n a period of increasing challenges … European society would have to undergo changes …. [and s]ocial sciences must … be in a position to respond to these challenges. … The objective … is to improve our understanding of the structural changes taking place in European society in order to identify ways of managing change.
>
> *(EC, 1999a, p. 115)*

The programme text was less specific on the interaction between research and policy than the TSER, stating that 'activities will contribute to the policy decision-making process with a sound knowledge of the challenges' (EC, 1999*a*, p. 115). Also the definition of thematic targets became more abstract, and as a result expanded substantially the terrain to be covered by research. Table 9.2 presents the themes that were intended to be covered by the Key Action.

TABLE 9.2 Thematic coverage of the Key Action on socio-economic research

Societal trends and structural changes
Structural, demographic and social changes; life chances, family structures, economic changes, labour market institutions, cultural patterns and value systems; European regional diversities; xenophobia, racism and migration; impact on economic development; social integration, social protection and factors of social inequalities and discrimination; changing patterns of work and organization of time, of the use of new types of atypical and part-time or temporary jobs, education and training; gender issues.
Technology, society and employment
Technology and society; methods of interaction between actors concerned; technologies in various socio-economic, territorial, institutional, political and cultural contexts; the role of the public sector in innovation; technology and employment, ICT and organizations; new professions; geography of employment; changes in working conditions and skills. Innovation in education and training, life-long learning; education, employment, social integration and equal opportunities.
Governance and citizenship
European integration and governance in Europe; dialogue, deliberation and decision-making; economic and social regulation and European integration; political parties, public interest groups and social partners; welfare systems; public service and public interest; political, economic and social power; citizenship; participation regulation; culture, values and education; individuals; media in a global economy; governance and citizenship.
New development models fostering growth and employment
New sustainable development models; reduction of inequalities and improvement in quality of life; dynamics of wealth-creation and distribution; the public sector in a globalized economy; indicators and methodologies for assessing added value; factors of competitiveness; organizational innovation; new types of work and employment; rising demand for services; the non-profit sector; Europe's regional divergences; socio-economic and demographic differences; economic and social cohesion; Europe in the world economic relations.

Note: the descriptions are the author's attempts to summarize the programme texts.

In the implementation of the Key Action, the Commission mandated the establishment of a dialogue mechanism between 'researchers, policy-makers and the Commission'.[48] This dialogue mechanism consisted of specially designed 'dialogue workshops' (see Liberatore, 2001). The workshops brought together researchers from relevant research projects and policy-makers, mostly but not exclusively from European Union institutions, to discuss policy issues and options, relevant research findings and emerging directions.

48 This was mentioned in all the work programmes of the Key Action (e.g. see EC, 1999b).

The dialogue workshops were an evolution of the 'brokerage' role of programme management, which complemented the obligation of researchers to disseminate their results to policy-makers. The workshops acted as opportunities for the researchers to meet with interested policy-makers. For policy-makers they represented an opportunity to think about issues outside the confines of everyday work. And for the programme, the workshops offered an opportunity to make its research visible and thus increase its potential impact, as well as to identify gatekeepers to policy-making processes. These gatekeepers were people who could bring policy ideas into the programme by expressing, for example, the research needs of their Directorate-General, and could carry back ideas and information into the policy documents produced by the Commission. Between 2000 and 2004 no less than twenty-seven dialogue workshops were held, building on work from the TSER and bringing in research on the Key Action.

It must be noted here that this dynamic of dialogue between researchers and policy-makers feeding back into the research agenda became an important element of continuity and progressive build-up in the programme. An important part of it was the perception that research programming in SSH is less of a search for important discoveries that will underpin radical innovations of the future, and more of a cumulative progress in understanding that will bring benefits through its diffusion in user communities.

SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES IN THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

In 2000 the Commission published the communication *Towards a European Research Area*, which set out to bring important changes in EU research policy (EC, 2000). The core of the argument was that research planning at government level in Europe needs to be coordinated:

> We need to go beyond the current static structure of '15+1'…. National research policies and Union policy overlap without forming a coherent whole.
>
> *(EC, 2000, p 7)*

With these words the Commission launched a discussion about the structures that form the European research system and a reflection as to what such

a system would look like.[49] In SSH the ERA was seen as an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunities were related to the recognition of the potential for comparative research offered by Europe (see Kuhn and Remoe, 2005) and the vision that comparative research in highly visible large-scale projects would contribute to remedying the chronic underutilization of the social sciences (see Caplan, 1979). The challenges were associated with the potential resistance of existing scientific communities to large-scale endeavours and structuring mechanisms (see Kuhn and Remoe, 2005).

The Key Action took on both the challenges and the opportunities. In its third call it supported the development of European infrastructures for comparative research in SSH, and launched support activities to stimulate the development of SSH in the ERA. With the launch of FP6 the Commission carried out a large-scale consultation with the research community 'on its readiness to prepare research actions using, in particular, the new instruments for topics within the Priority Thematic Areas of Research' (EC, 2002*a*). The term 'new instruments' was used for 'networks of excellence', which were large-scale networks aimed at achieving durable integration of research capacities in individual fields, and 'integrated projects', which aimed at pushing the boundaries of science and technology through large-scale research efforts.

The FP6 SSH programme, or Priority 7 as it was called, was entitled 'Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-Based Society', and with a budget of €225 million, it represented 1.3 per cent of the total budget. The response of the SSH research community to the consultation was overwhelming, with 1,187 expressions of interest submitted for SSH, out of a total of 'more than 11700' across the whole FP (EC, 2002*b*). Despite the overwhelming response, the use of integrated projects and networks of excellence created considerable controversy (see Marimon et al., 2004; Kuhn and Remoe, 2005). In the end, Priority 7 launched thirty-four such projects with average budgets of about €4.2 million and twenty-five partners. In addition to these large-scale projects, Priority 7 launched also 135 smaller projects with an average budget of €920,000 and averaging nine partners each. Table 9.3 gives the thematic coverage of Priority 7.

49 An overview of the evolution of the ERA initiative and the discussions made by the European Commission can be found at http://www.era.gv.at/space/11442/directory/11444.html

TABLE 9.3 Thematic coverage of Priority 7: Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge for consistency Based Society

Improving the generation, distribution and use of knowledge and its impact of economic and social development
Knowledge in the economy and society; innovation and entrepreneurship; economic and social transformations; dynamics of knowledge production, distribution and use; knowledge and ICT; territorial structures and social networks.
Options and choices for the development of a knowledge-based society
Knowledge-based society and EU objectives; sustainable development, social and territorial cohesion and improved quality of life; ageing of the population; gender and intergenerational relations; changes to work and employment; education, training, and life-long learning.
Variety of paths towards a knowledge society
Globalization and convergence; regional variation; multiculturalism and European societies; the role of the media.
Implications of European integration and enlargement for governance and the citizen
European integration, enlargement and institutional change; the global context and Europe; the consequences of an enlarged European Union for the well-being of its citizens.
Articulation of areas of responsibility and new forms of governance
Articulation between territorial levels; public and private sectors; democratic governance, representative institutions and civil society organizations; privatization, the public interest, new regulatory approaches, corporate governance; implications for legal systems.
Resolution of conflicts and restoration of peace and justice
Factors leading to conflict; prevention and mediation of conflicts and achievement of justice; fundamental rights; Europe's role.
New forms of citizenship and cultural identities
New forms of citizenship; identities and cultural diversity; population flows; social and cultural dialogue; other world regions; tolerance, human rights, racism and xenophobia; media and the European public sphere.

Note: the descriptions are the author's attempts to summarize the programme texts.

While the themes of Priority 7 were somewhat less abstract and more normative than those of the Key Action, there was a great deal of continuity between the two. Furthermore, the management of the research and its interfaces with policy continued along the same lines. One unit in DG Research managed the projects, and the researchers were expected to involve users in the research and to promote and disseminate their results to policy-makers. The programme management helped, by occasionally organizing workshops and conferences with policy-makers, but the

'dialogue workshops' gradually stopped. The emphasis on structuring the research scene partly explains this turn, as the programme turned towards the broader scientific community, became involved with research funding agencies, issues of coordination of research efforts, and discussions about European research infrastructures in SSH (see ESFRI, 2006; RISSH, 2004), and started organizing broad strategic conferences.[50]

In terms of relations between research and policy, two elements of FP6 are noteworthy. The first is that a number of the large projects of FP6, the networks of excellence and integrated projects, thanks to their increased mass and visibility, managed to make significant inroads in discussions with policy-makers, and managed to organize their outputs in ways that achieved a significant presence in public discussion. The portal for policy-makers of the IMISCOE (International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion) project, and the Observatory organized by the project 'The Changing Landscape of European Liberty and Security' (CHALLENGE) are examples of the kind of resources that these projects bring to making their mark in public debate.[51] The statement of Pascal Lamy, president of the World Trade Organization, in praise of the GARNET project (Global Governance, Regionalization and Regulation: the Role of the EU) (Lamy, nd) testifies to the influence these projects can muster.

The second element is the initiative of Specific Support to Policy, through which FP6 dedicated a significant budget to research projects defined directly by policy-makers and managed in close contact with those policy-makers. Social science research was launched as support to policies in two areas:

- providing health, security and opportunity to the people of Europe
- underpinning the economic potential and cohesion of a larger and more integrated European Union.

Under these headings twenty-four projects (averaging €0.9 million and seven partners per project) were launched in cooperation with EC departments responsible for policy in relevant domains. These projects were seen as important contributions to policy, feeding the policy-makers with needed data and understandings. One important contribution of these projects was that they raised the profile of EU research within the policy-making

50 An overview of the activities of the programme can be found through http://cordis.europa.eu/citizens/

51 See: http://www.imiscoe.org/policymaking/ and http://www.libertysecurity.org/

directorates-general. Policy units of the Commission dedicated specific staff to monitoring trends in research and following up the projects, and new important gatekeepers began to collaborate with the programme.

The programme on Specific Support to Policy was not continued in FP7. Its heritage was incorporated in the theme called 'Research in the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities' of the cooperation programme, which was also the successor of Priority 7. This has a budget of €623 million, which equals about 1.25 per cent of the FP budget. It covers research in an even broader spectrum of domains than previous programmes, which is presented in Table 9.4.

TABLE 9.4 Thematic coverage of the theme 'Research in the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities'

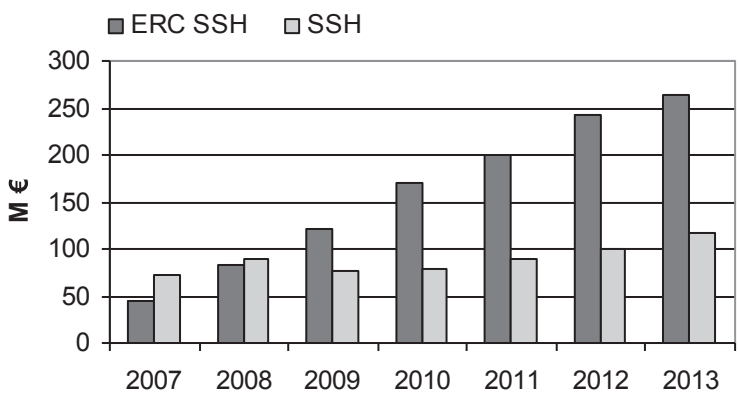
Growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge society
Innovation, competitiveness and labour market policies; education and life-long learning; and economic structures and productivity
Combining economic, social and environmental objectives in a European perspective
Socio-economic models within Europe and across the world; economic and social cohesion across regions, the social and economic dimensions of environmental policy
Major trends in society and their implications
Demographic change, reconciling family and work, health and quality of life, youth policies, social exclusion and discrimination
Europe in the world
Trade, migration, poverty, crime, conflict and resolution
The citizen in the European Union
Political participation, citizenship and rights, democracy and accountability, the media, cultural diversity and heritage, religions, attitudes and values
Socio-economic and scientific indicators
The use and value of indicators in policy-making at all levels
Foresight activities
The future implications of global knowledge, migration, ageing, risk and the emerging domains in research and science

Note: the descriptions are the author's attempts to summarize the programme texts.

While the title of the programme as well as the rather abstract definition of the themes alluded to a policy for supporting scientific disciplines, support to policies became an increasingly important dimension. A reason for this was that FP7 saw the launch of the ERC and the 'ideas' programme, a programme dedicated to frontier research supported only on the basis of criteria of

scientific excellence and without any regard for targeting particular domains. The programme was allocated a budget of €7 billion, and it was planned to start at a low level but climb quickly. From the beginning the ERC Scientific Council decided to dedicate some 15 per cent of the total budget to proposals in SSH (see EC, 2007). This decision was shown to reflect the proportions of proposals submitted and evaluated positively in SSH, and thus subsequent work-programmes continued along the same lines. Assuming that this will continue, Figure 9.1 compares the annual budgets of the SSH programme with 15 per cent of the ERC budgets, showing that the ERC very quickly became an important resource for SSH in Europe.

FIGURE 9.1 Budgetary allocations to social sciences and humanities in the EY's Seven Frame Programme



This context strengthened the orientation of the programme towards policy support. Consultations with the policy-making services of the Commission became regular. Workshops between researchers and policy-makers on topical issues began to be organized again, and the programme made a gradual turn towards large-scale projects addressing important societal challenges (see EC, 2009). The scale of these projects, which have yet to be launched, is substantially higher than that of FP6 projects, and in addition to the responsibility to disseminate their results to policy-makers, they are asked to engage in forward-looking activities that will make their research easier to absorb by policy-making processes.

While the success of these endeavours remains to be seen, it is important to observe the trends in the evolution of the research–policy nexus as constructed in SSH. One important trend has been the trend towards ever larger projects bringing larger concentrations of research capacity to focus

on particular issues for longer periods of time. A second important trend has been the gradual strengthening of the responsibility of researchers to disseminate results to users. A third trend has been the gradual focusing of the process of exploitation of SSH research in the Commission on specific individuals and departments, to reflect the expansion of the thematic coverage of the programme. It is these trends that the next sections will try to discuss with reference to research policy modes.

MISSION ORIENTATIONS AND DIFFUSION ORIENTATIONS: THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH POLICY STYLES

In Kastrinos (2010) I argue that EU programmes were never part of a mission-oriented policy, because the coordination frameworks that should link the research with the mission were never quite established. There are some important exceptions mostly in the field of ICT and associated with standards (GSM, GEANT), but these are few and far between. There have also been periods where mission-oriented discourses surfaced in the Community, for example, the beginning of FP4 with the concept of 'key actions', but the discourses never quite became policy because of the lack of responsible implementing agents, a coordination framework or both.

It is particularly difficult to construct mission-oriented research policies based on SSH. The focus of mission-oriented policies on radical innovations is a considerable challenge for SSH, where large-scale societal visions are increasingly criticized (see Karlsson, 2005). One could imagine SSH as forming parts of radical techno-social missions, for instance to bring about the colonization of Mars (see Zubrina, 2009), although the social innovation aspects of colonizing Mars will probably be much less radical than the technological innovations required, at least in the beginning.

The socio-technical visions underpinning the concept of FP4 Key Actions could be regarded as missions (such as 'the city of tomorrow'). However in their context, the missions were not easy to define, the actors entrusted with the mission were not obvious (whose job is it to make the cities of the future?) and the coordination mechanisms of the FP were not strong enough to make the research accountable to the mission. Such coordination conditions are often found when SSH research is performed as part of an effort to improve a public service by the responsible agency. In this context, the agency can evaluate the contributions of research to its mission and adjust its research efforts accordingly. The research could be

commissioned, but the agency would then need a strong contract as well as important capacity to follow the course of the research and learn from the research findings. The nearest SSH came to these organizational conditions was the MONITOR programme.

It is not known why there was no equivalent to MONITOR in FP3. On the one hand its management was substantially more expensive than the other programmes as it employed many staff for a comparatively very small research budget. On the other hand, the TSER and ETAN show a political will to scale up the operations substantially in FP4. As the operation was scaled up, programme management became an intermediary between those who do the research and those who may use it to support their policy missions. As these missions were more incremental improvements than radical changes and the programme turned its emphasis towards broad dissemination of results and diffusion of capacities, it became part of a straightforward diffusion-oriented policy framework, developing the functions of an intermediary agency similar to those found in national social science funding agencies across Europe (Braun, 1993).

In the context of the ERA, the programme became part of a comprehensive European package of supporting research in SSH, and this resulted in a stronger targeting of the research and greater emphasis on 'users'. This has been the result of a search for an appropriate division of labour between the different parts of the package, but also the result of the gradual evolution of the research–policy nexus around the programme. Throughout the life of the programme, strategy has involved the identification of societal needs for incremental innovation, deriving research priorities from those needs, and promoting the diffusion of results in the appropriate quarters. Important evolutions have to do with the increasing identification of individuals who are seen as advanced, innovative knowledge users in the sense of von Hippel (2006), and with the increasing development of absorptive capacity.

FROM USERS AND UNICORNS TO ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY

I recall the first time I met a person speaking about the first call of the first EU TSER. I was representing my university department in an information event, which was promoting the TSER programme. He spoke a lot about the need to involve users of the research in the proposals. I remember asking about that. In my mind at the time a user was somebody willing to

pay for my research. So I asked whether the FP itself would be classed as a user of my research (why else would it pay for it?) or whether a letter from a person in charge of a local authority expressing an interest in my project would be the kind of evidence sought that policy-makers were interested in my research. The reply was that the programme had a broad perspective on users, as indeed its texts declared. However, the implications of this reply for a research proposal were not immediately apparent to me.

I was already working for the programme when I read Shove and Rip (2000), 'Users and unicorns: a discussion of mythical beasts in interactive science'. I felt familiar with a great deal of what they proposed. Users of research in the social sciences are, in a way, imagined actors in imagined situations that play a legitimizing role in proposals about research that has yet to happen. The fact that they are imagined does not mean that they are imaginary. Shove and Rip (2000) accept that there are real users, but they had a great deal of difficulty in identifying them:

> [I]t is perhaps genuinely impossible to be a user in the sense of being someone who consistently and persistently uses social science … utility is a function of the non-academic context and … interpretations of relevance come and go as contexts change. Moments of recognition and relevance are fleeting and user identities are just as fickle. In other words, an individual may be a user at a particular moment not because they are a user but because opportunities and possibilities come together in such a way that the research is momentarily relevant.
>
> *(Shove and Rip, 2000, p. 181)*

Interestingly, it is not difficult to think about contexts in which the use of social science is continuous, consistent and persistent. There are professions that are by definition contexts of consistent and persistent use of social science. One can immediately think of lawyers, and social workers, and depending on what is included in the definition of social sciences the list can expand to bankers, educators, managers, civil servants, carers and so on. These professions use social science in the same way as medical doctors use medical science and engineering professions use engineering science. Shove and Rip (2000) kept these contexts away from their analysis, probably because this is not the kind of impact discourse one finds in SSH research programmes.

In professional contexts, individual 'users' use their own professional knowledge rather than that of academics who argue for research grants.

Thus, while a 'professional' on the governing board of a research project can help guide the project in order to make the research more relevant and thus more amenable to affecting the state of the art of professional knowledge, their role is more of a 'translator' rather than a user of the knowledge produced by the project. Translation of research findings and academic arguments into knowledge applied in professional practice requires a process of 'learning' by a community of practitioners (in the sense of Constant, 1984).

The world of SSH is characterized by an important belief in the division between two communities: one of 'science' and one of 'policy' (see Caplan, 1979). The boundaries between these two communities are sometimes seen as something to be preserved in order to safeguard the integrity of science (see Weingart, 2001) and sometimes as something to be overcome in order to improve policy (Amann, 2001). Professional communities of practitioners are not necessarily distinct from 'academics' and 'policy-makers'. Membership is not fixed and individuals can be both 'policy-makers' and 'academics'. Furthermore, the learning mechanisms of the two communities are not as distinct or separate as the two communities theory implies. Not all policy-makers read scientific literatures but some certainly do. Some even publish in journals. For example, it is common for World Bank economists to publish in reputable academic journals, cite relevant literature and often be amongst the most cited authors in that literature.

As we have seen, the TSER programme and its successors adopted a very broad discourse towards user communities, construing the question of use of the research as a dissemination issue in a 'two communities' framework: that is, as a responsibility of the researchers to disseminate the results to the community of policy-makers through dedicated means. FP6 marked two important developments in this respect. One was that projects became large enough to engage policy-makers and to begin to build information infrastructures, usually around websites which functioned as a space of communication between the researchers involved in the projects, and as a means of promotion of the research of the project to broader audiences and of offering services to policy-makers. These infrastructures can be seen as spaces around which hybrid communities are organized, comprising researchers and policy-makers interested in the topic of the project. The other important development was that users from within the Commission began to address the issue of following up research projects in a systematic way, and began to develop specialized competences. Similar

developments took place in the United Kingdom, largely as a result of the drive of the Economic and Social Research Council towards evidence-based-policy (Amann, 2001), which contributed greatly to the rising profile of SSH research in government, and to the shaping of social science research activity in government (see Davies, 2004). The absorptive capacity of government departments increased, while important infrastructures for making relevant SSH research evidence accessible to policy-makers were developed (e.g. see http://www.nationalschool.gov.uk/policyhub/).

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Absorptive capacity is a critical part of an environment in which diffusion-oriented policies perform well. To put it differently, a prime objective of a diffusion-oriented policy is to increase the absorptive capacity of agents of change. In an environment with high absorptive capacity, research knowledge would diffuse through communities of practitioners, depending on the quality and relevance of the knowledge itself. In an environment with low absorptive capacity, even the best and most relevant knowledge will find it difficult to penetrate practice.

What can a research programme do to facilitate the build-up of absorptive capacity, and what is the meaning of a research strategy in this context? One area that springs out is the development of hybrid communities of practitioners, not necessarily through top-down declarations like ETAN, but more through building on the successes of the past, and supporting the infrastructural investment that allowed successful projects to develop into accessible sources of knowledge and information for policy areas. In this respect the elements of the new strategy of FP7, the focus on important challenges, combining research, forward-looking perspectives and important complementary investment, seems to hold promise. Another area that springs in mind is training. Absorptive capacity consists of highly skilled people trained in using information infrastructures. It is not an accident that the UK 'policy hub' portal is hosted in the site of the training centre for the civil service.

All these are not easy tasks. One challenge for the programme will continue to be how to manage continuity. For infrastructures to be built and used, continuity and build-up are critical, yet research programmes have a tendency to favour innovation and change. It is in this sense that strategic choices have to be made. In any such choices the links with 'users' are critical, and the existence of good contacts in the different policy-making

departments of the Commission is a great asset. The challenge for the programme here is to develop a circle of 'advanced users' who will ensure that its choices will create capacities needed for leading-edge innovation, being aware that the best policy is not necessarily the most technically complex.

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Chapter 10

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH AND NATIONAL POLICY-MAKING IN BRAZIL: IS IT ONLY EVIDENCE THAT MATTERS?

Carlos R. S. Milani

INTRODUCTION

In the vast field of linkages between social science research and public policies, knowledge includes what is produced within research centres and universities, but also non-scholar and non-academic organizations. At the same time, the making of public policies involves national and international governmental and non-governmental actors, which means that the conception of public policy-making supposes complex and dialectical dynamics of politics and players, including issues relating to recognition of identities (those social subjects and demands that are included in the policy-formulation agenda), participation of actors (those actors who are invited to take an active part in the decision-making process), the nature of norms (the different kinds of policy norms dealing with universality and/or particularity, general objectives and/or focused results), and co-responsibility in implementation (the monopoly of the state in public action versus pluralistic approaches in public service provision and public–private partnerships).

International organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union and many others, are undoubtedly

consequential in influencing national policy-making. Such organizations are ultimately beholden to their member states, especially those that count on substantial material or symbolic resources, but officials within international bureaucracies can nevertheless act on their own within sometimes broad mandates. In many contexts, international organizations can be the transmitters of international norms, cultural or social values, and science patterns, thus playing a key role in the 'global knowledge politics'. As I will develop in the first section of this chapter, they have formulated and disseminated efficiency criteria for the development of social sciences, and have emphasized evidence-based policy-relevant research as a 'best practice'. Their agenda-setter and transmitter roles doubtlessly apply to the case of scientific development and social policy-making in developing countries. In this connection the second part of this chapter will analyse the experience of USAID in the agenda-setting of public policies related to violence against children and adolescents during the 1990s in Brazil.

Finally, by means of an exploration of some complex links between politics and social scientific knowledge, this chapter argues in its third part that the aspiration to universal applicability (and by extension to an ultimately benevolent problem-solving character) on the part of evidence-based policy-making is problematic. Consequently, it suggests that the accumulation of scientific evidence that does not address conditions of unequal distribution, misrecognition or disempowerment will not necessarily lead to deeper social transformations. As a conclusion, this chapter intends to frame the understanding of the nexus between social science and decision-making rooted in a more critical, problem-building research–policy paradigm, which emphasizes new roles assigned for citizens, researchers, politicians, activist networks and international organizations, and contributes to the development of a wider public sphere for the construction, conduction and dissemination of social science research problems and policy agendas.

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND POLICY-MAKING: PRACTICES FROM SOME INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

I have chosen to analyse the role of four major international organizations here: the United Nations University (UNU), the European Union, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). The basic criteria for selecting these organizations were:

- The four organizations in focus have put in place a series of projects and debates to foster the importance of policy social research and evidence-based public policies. They have also published documents, books, policy papers and so on that reflect upon the linkages between social science and policy-making.
- Their means, both human and financial, are of great relevance, and their contribution to the construction of models based on their own work is considerable, both regionally and worldwide.
- They tend to express different cultural and political perceptions and interpretative frameworks of how social transformations, development and governmental policies should be globally thought of, decided upon and implemented. In other words, it can be suggested that this variation in world visions should also result in distinct conceptions of how social science research and public policies relate to each other.
- They also announce in their programmes that they adhere to diverse methods of work when promoting closer ties between social scientific knowledge and the making of public policies.[52]

Case one: the United Nations University (UNU)

UNU develops its mandate in the field of science–policy linkages focusing on two major modalities: first, building situational diagnoses on several issue areas, and second, transforming multidisciplinary research and knowledge into policy-relevant prescription and analysis. Within this second modality, it also develops models and scenarios, and evaluates the implications of different policy options. In fact, UNU presents itself as a think tank for the United Nations, and attempts to give answers to complex global governance questions and to communicate them to a diverse audience, including Member States and academia, but also the private sector and non-governmental organization (NGO) networks.

52 Methodologically speaking, it is important to assert that this research is the result of information that was exclusively collected by means of the international organizations' internet pages, since there has been no opportunity to undertake interviews and/or produce primary data for this analysis. This is a clear shortcoming of this part of the chapter that must be acknowledged at its outset. I do believe, however, that websites and internet reports show what these organizations intend to render visible to a larger public audience, thus making the analysis of the discourses and narratives produced here valid on the basis of the material that has been used and consulted. For a full-fledged version of the report, see Milani (2009).

UNU affirms that its science–policy communication activities include, for instance:

- The involvement of practitioners in research by facilitating their participation in workshops and by bringing in mid-level management from key organizations as visiting scholars for two to three months in order to provide an opportunity for joint reflection.
- Quick publication of policy/research briefs for each research project.
- Policy advocacy (direct or through the media, particularly targeting national governments, civil society organizations and global institutions).
- Organization of policy forums to disseminate the implications of UNU work.
- Undertaking more rapid short-term projects or forums on urgent economic, political and social problems. These short-term and urgent projects require a particular methodology, since they suppose more consultation with end-users in the formulation and implementation of such policy-oriented projects.

In its *Strategic Direction Report (2007–2010*), UNU reaffirms the need to disseminate information for policy-makers in a format that is accessible, mainly through short, readable policy and research briefs. As a matter of fact, UNU has been publishing 'policy briefs' since 2005, mainly based on the research done by four of its institutes: WIDER (the World Institute for Development Economics Research), whose major thematic interest has so far been research on spatial disparities; CRISP (the Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy), working on issues relating to sciences and technology policies; EHS (the Institute for Environment and Human Security), whose motto is 'Advancing human security through knowledge-based approaches to reducing vulnerability and environmental risks'; and IAS (the Institute of Advanced Studies) based in Tokyo, whose thematic field includes issues relating to global environmental governance and sustainable development.

In addition, it is important to say that, like many other UN institutions in the aftermath of the launching of the Global Compact by Kofi Annan at Davos in 1999, UNU is also involved in promoting alliances with the corporate sector, through its 'Partnership Initiative'. UNU acknowledges that it is important to 'engage private enterprises in the work of governments

and the United Nations, to build sustainable and equitable societies together, and to mobilize comparative advantages in pursuit of a world free from want and from fear'. It reaffirms that business companies recognize that 'addressing global problems such as poverty, environmental deterioration and trade imbalances through a Corporate Social Responsibility program is an investment opportunity'. Through this Partnership Initiative (and here I cite the institutional rhetoric in the field of public–private partnerships), UNU supports efforts for national governance programmes together with long-term private business investment; corporate partners may enhance their credibility, image and reputation; and corporate partners may gain first-hand access to the university's extensive international networks. Moreover, private partners can have first-hand access to UNU research that shapes global values and policies. What is the role for the corporate sector in policy-making and social science research funding? What are the dangers for the future development of democracy when corporations are directly involved in public decision-making and funding of policy-relevant social science research? By quoting such remarks from UNU internet pages and raising these questions, I intend to suggest that some reflection is needed on the actual results of public–private partnerships in the funding of social science research, and the involvement of private companies in public policy-making and implementation. I come back to this issue in the third part of this chapter.

Case two: the European Union and the European Research Area

In 2000, the European Union decided to create the European Research Area (ERA), which was announced as the starting point for the development of a future unified research area all across Europe. This ERA should enable researchers to:

- move and interact, benefit from high-level infrastructures and work with networks of different European research institutions
- share, teach, value and use knowledge effectively for social, business and policy purposes
- optimize European, national and regional research programmes in order to support the best research throughout Europe
- develop strong links with partners around the world so that Europe benefits from the worldwide progress of knowledge, contributes to

global development and takes a leading role in international initiatives to solve global issues.

Moreover, this research area should inspire the best talents to enter research careers in Europe, incite industry to invest more in European research – contributing to the EU objective to devote 3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to research, and strongly contribute to the creation of sustainable growth and jobs.

It is true that such a huge strategic change is still in the making in Europe, and that the reality of research is very diverse across the European continent. The creation of ERA coincides with budget cuts and reduction of posts in many European countries, which is just one expression of contradictions between what Brussels announces as its policy priorities and European national realities. With 80 per cent of public sector research in Europe being conducted at national level, mainly under national or regional research programmes, spending on science and research in the ERA is still far too low (around 1.9 per cent of GDP) for the region to catch up with the United States (approximately 2.6 per cent of GDP) or Japan (2.7 per cent).[53]

According to information made available in EU Research Directorate reports, seven years on the creation of ERA has become a central pillar of the European Union for growth and jobs, together with the completion of the Single Market, the European innovation strategy and the creation of a European Higher Education Area. Today, there are still strong national and institutional barriers which prevent ERA from becoming a reality. Fragmentation remains a prevailing characteristic of the European public research base. Researchers still see career opportunities curtailed by legal and practical barriers hampering their mobility across institutions, sectors and countries. Businesses often find it difficult to cooperate and enter into partnerships with technological research institutions in Europe, particularly across countries. National and regional research funding remains largely uncoordinated. This leads to dispersion of resources and excessive duplication. Reforms undertaken at national level often lack a true European perspective and transnational coherence.

For these reasons, the European Commission has published a green paper (2008) reviewing progress made with respect to the European Research Area, raising questions for debate. The Commission sought answers to these questions and solicited further new ideas in a public

53 See Euractiv Foundation at www.euractiv.com.

consultation which lasted from May to August 2007. Following the public consultation results (over 800 written submissions), the Commission and Member States launched a series of new initiatives to develop this research area, called the Ljubljana Process, and five initiatives on specific areas of the ERA green paper. As far as knowledge–use and science–policy linkages are concerned, the green paper and the consultation process show some interesting features. They acknowledge that access to knowledge generated by the public research base and its use by business and policy-makers lie at the heart of the ERA, where knowledge should circulate without barriers throughout the whole society. Another feature that should draw our attention is that social sciences are very rarely referred to. The green paper mentions the central relevance of effective knowledge-sharing notably between public research and industry, and in this case exact sciences and engineering are also considered important.[54]

Case three: the World Bank

Three main activities have been analysed within the broad spectrum of programmes implemented by the World Bank in the field of social science and public policy linkages: policy research reports (PRRs) (and related policy research working papers), the Knowledge for Change Programme (KCP), and the Modeling Tool to Monitor the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) (addressed to policy-makers, and based on the Development Data Platform, DDP). First, the PRRs aim to bring to a broad audience the results of World Bank research on development policies. These reports are designed to contribute to the debate on *appropriate* public policies for *developing economies*. PRRs are supposed to help policy-makers take stock of what is known and clearly identify what is not known, and they should thus contribute to the debate in both the academic and policy communities on adequate public policy objectives. Because they summarize research, the PRRs are said to provoke further debate, both within the Bank and

54 In the consultation process, for instance, it is said in the green paper that 'regarding the main factors hindering efficient knowledge transfer to industry, most of the 528 on-line respondents consider cultural differences between the business and science communities to be a "very" (293) or "fairly" (146) important barrier' (EC, 2008, p. 68). On page 74, it reaffirms that it is very important to increase the transparency of how scientific results feed back into policy-making and ensure multidisciplinary expertise in decision-making processes. On page 75 of the green paper, there is another mention of the issue of dialogue between researchers and civil society. Responses during the consultation process highlight the major advantage of their contribution to citizens' better understanding of research and the clarification of its social relevance for policy-making. Here, the matter of an 'advocacy of research–policy linkage' seems to appear as an important issue. For more detailed explanations, see http://ec.europa.eu/research/leaflets/index_en.html

outside, concerning the methods used and the conclusions drawn. With regard to these reports, the World Bank recalls that the policy research working papers are more addressed to Bank researchers and the design of future Bank programmes.

In both types of World Bank reports, the production of empirical evidence rooted in quantitative methods is considered more strategic insofar as it should contribute to efficient public spending and thus greater government accountability. Social impact analysis is another example of policy-relevant research methodology that the World Bank affirms using in support of beneficiary countries. According to the Bank's explanation of the objectives and use of such PRRs, *evidence-based public policies are those that have demonstrated the benefits of focusing on what works*, and they therefore *result in more efficient spending of public funds*. It goes without saying that, in this case, there is a strategic approach to creating knowledge and steering its usage by developing countries in the policy-making process (my emphasis).

There is another question to be raised in relation to PRRs, their dissemination and reaching out to the policy-making community worldwide. In a report published by the World Bank itself, it is said that the way the Bank's analytical work is disseminated and discussed is often inadequate. Reports tend to be long and often are not fully read even by policy-makers. In many cases they are not translated into local languages or discussed outside a limited group of government counterparts (World Bank, 2007, p. 64).

Second, the KCP serves as a very well-funded vehicle for the pooling of intellectual and financial resources for data collection, analysis and research supporting poverty reduction and sustainable development. Launched in 2002 by the World Bank's Development Economics (DEC) Vice Presidency and its founding donors, Finland and the United Kingdom, KCP aims to encourage and facilitate the Bank's dialogue with partner agencies, developing country managers and other interested parties. A subsidiary objective of this programme is to give support to data collection and analysis, and improve research capacities in the Bank's client countries. The KCP funds are said to have played an important role in influencing opinion-formation on development policies mainly through the world development reports (WDRs). The WDR 2008, for instance, has been cited by Nobel laureate Norman Borlaug, the Gates Foundation, Kofi Annan and several leading economists, and of course, support for agriculture projects is being scaled up significantly by the Bank Group itself as well as by many

other donors. Herein resides one major influence of knowledge produced by the World Bank: it addresses its own constituencies directly (mainly donors and clients), and sets development agendas in several world regions, particularly in less developed Asian, African, Latin American and Caribbean countries (World Bank, 2008).

The methodological focus of the KCP, according to the World Bank, is to move rapidly into areas and development issues where the creation of new knowledge is likely to assist the formulation of better policies with a greater impact on poverty. The three trust funds established under the KCP support activities relating to the overarching themes of poverty dynamics and delivery of basic services, investment climate and trade and integration, and global public goods. As far as the first theme is concerned (poverty reduction), for instance, one of the main activities refers to the development of impact assessments, which tend to be considered a fundamental means to learn about the effectiveness of development interventions in achieving results. With approximately US$11.8 million of donor contributions for the development of this activity (since its launch), the World Bank gives support to countries in designing evaluation methodologies, and facilitates global learning on development interventions based on such evaluations. The World Bank is also initiating a series of projects which aim to assess the development impact of some new interventions in key areas such as education (school-based management), infrastructure (slum upgrading), health (HIV/AIDS), and rural development (land reform). Moreover, the Bank also uses poverty measurement as a tool for monitoring, describing and forecasting income poverty and inequality, including aggregate poverty measures, sharper poverty profiles, and better household surveys.[55]

In the field of capacity-building, the Bank's efforts have been channelled through country-level support to academic and technical institutions via its lending programme and associated technical assistance. The Bank offers training and courses, mainly via the World Bank Institute (WBI), and provides research grants to networks such as the African

55 The procedures and criteria used under KCP are also worth describing. Proposals should demonstrate relevance to the objectives of the programme and details of key aspects such as innovation, partners, country participation, deliverables, and development impact. A log frame-type matrix summarizing project objectives, inputs, outputs, outcome/impact, performance indicators, risks and critical assumptions, is required as part of each application for funding under the KCP, to facilitate evaluation. The criteria for assessing proposals include the degree to which proposals are innovative, provide new knowledge and/or pilot/demonstration impact; demonstrate country participation and ownership; incorporate developing country capacity-building; can apply to a different country or region; and achieve results while remaining cost effective.

Economic Research Consortium (AERC), the Economic Research Forum for the Arab countries, Iran and Turkey (ERF), and the Economic Education and Research Consortium (EERC) – for countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. These networks are in turn now part of the Global Development Network (GDN).

These capacity-building activities are monitored by researchers inside the World Bank Group. One should recall that, with a significant central research department and myriad research activities throughout the organization, the World Bank Group constitutes one of the largest concentrations of development researchers in the world. The Bank's full-time researchers are mainly found in the Development Research Group (DECRG) within the Development Economics Vice-Presidency. These researchers in DECRG are embedded within a vast development agency (with a global staff of about 8,500) that is oriented towards the implementation of projects in developing countries. What is the role of research in the development practice at the Bank (Ravaillon, 2007)? Is the profile of researchers (disciplines, schools of thought, background) who are recruited by the World Bank an influential factor in research design and scientific options?

Ravaillon (2007), a professional with more than twenty years of research experience with the World Bank, affirms that the Bank has mainly developed two kinds of research. First is evaluative research, which is broader than impact evaluation, and attempts to assess whether development policies are effective, and under what circumstances they tend to be more effective. It embraces both 'micro' interventions in specific sectors and policies, and it includes both ex ante and ex post evaluation. Evaluative research must be driven by questions formulated by policy-makers, and not by preferences for certain types of data or certain methods. In evaluative research design, policy questions should constitute the driving issue, although the World Bank tends to focus more on methodological questions relating to data collection, software design, data analysis and so on. Policy should not fit the methodology, but vice versa.

The second type of cross-cutting research developed by the World Bank can be termed methodological research, which should help expand the toolkit routinely employed by policy-makers and analysts, including the data collected and the methods used to analyse data. The Bank has become a major producer of development data, and World Bank researchers have played a crucial role. Nevertheless, Ravaillon recalls that 'not every

important piece of development research has an immediate and clear policy implication' (2007, p. 1). Why? The author puts forward three main features to explain this:

- Policy-makers and practitioners must still understand the potential for research to inform policy processes, and also be ready to pay for the costs associated with research development.
- Policy-makers should increase their perception of benefits once research projects address what they consider to be 'relevant questions'.
- Research projects should also result in '*credible* answers, *which can be based on evidence*' (my emphasis).

Of course, it should also be said that this dialogue between researchers and policy-makers is highly political, and involves micro background features of the research team, as well as (and mostly) macro institutional development factors. Schick (2002), for instance, through the analysis of a government-sponsored study of race relations in New Zealand schools, shows how political and institutional pressures and a positivist-empiricist research culture further supported a mechanistic approach to social inclusion. In her article she argues that a meaningful approach to difference and voice in inclusive research requires critical attention to the conditions of communication and the micro-politics of the day-to-day interactions that shape the meaning of social categories in practice.

That is why policy research should not be limited to research projects on technical and methodological issues. Social science research may be rooted in a diverse set of ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies, including action research, critical theory and post-positivist research. As Cox and Sinclair (1996) assert, the world of research tends to divide the social reality into separate spheres, creating subdivisions that are dictated by arbitrary (and often very conservative) intellectual conventions. There is no such thing as *the* theory, since all theories are based on a context, and can relate to either ontologies of problem-solving (taking the world and its institutions as they are, seeking for solutions to concrete society problems) or problem-building (looking for the historical background, complexities and deep causes of social problems). In the first case, the number of intervening variables is limited; research is based on a particular problem to be analysed, thus producing laws and regularities. In the second case, there is no divide between research, society and politics; research is ontologically normative and epistemologically critical, since it seeks to produce social change

according to a certain set of values. Critical social research is problem-building insofar as it does not separate facts from values, problematizes society and social relations, and is not oriented towards adaptation and maintenance of a given status quo (Cox and Sinclair, 1996, pp. 60–84).

Choucri (2007) rightly complements this reasoning, affirming that there is a direct connection between knowledge and political factors, such as power, influence, capability, war and peace. This connection is generally acknowledged but seldom addressed head on by academia or international agencies. If we accept the idea that knowledge is power, it is obvious that its application is necessary for the actual realization of power. Power is embedded in concrete social relationships; it is not an abstract attribute of a single and isolated political actor. That is why knowledge may become both instrumental (that is, leading to change) and contextual (constrained by conditions). Parenthetically, the formulation of evidence-based policy is precisely the use of knowledge for the pursuit of policy, and the resort to knowledge as a legitimization mechanism (Choucri, 2007).

In order to conclude on the Bank's activities in the field of research–policy linkages under the programme 'Modeling to monitor the MDGs' in the DDP, one can find other policy research tools available for decision-makers. The modelling methodologies being used by the Bank to understand the challenges of achieving the MDGs at country as well as global level use software programmes to deliver computable general equilibrium (CGE) models (in the context of neoclassical economics). These are used to analyse macroeconomic data, along with micro data gathered in detailed household surveys. Policy-makers using these tools are supposed to be able to analyse various policy scenarios, while also comparing the outcomes of actual policies and programmes, with the counterfactuals. These computerized models can explain not only what happened as a result of a given policy, programme or project, but what would have happened had the policy, programme or project not been implemented. This modelling draws on the DDP, a web-based data tool that provides access to statistics from more than seventy-five key databases. Users can also access record-level data and documentation from over 3,000 household surveys. The DDP micro-data incorporates both innovative IT design and development and a substantial effort to locate and format household survey data.

As a matter of fact, this brief analysis of the World Bank's underlying principles regarding the role of knowledge in policy-making shows its normative options in the use of social science methods, particularly relating to neoclassical economics and functionalist sociology, but also covering

econometrics and statistical modelling. The appeal to quantitative methods and the production of empirical evidence stem from the fundamental notion that evidence-based public policy is rooted in research that has undergone some form of quality assurance and scrutiny. This is the kind of social science research that is supposed to bear the monopoly scientific and methodological rigour.

Indeed, such 'scientific' developments in the field of policy research aim to 'modernize' government by making greater use of evidence, especially evidence from the social sciences. Evidence-based policy-making strives to use only the best available evidence to inform policy. This evidence is rated in terms of its quality and the use of a relevant research design, and is mainly quantitative. O'Dwyer (2004) says that evidence is broadly defined as research conducted systematically using scientific principles, but there are differing interpretations of the strength and quality of findings produced by different types of research methods. Availability and validity are key issues.

What is not recalled in policy briefs or institutional reports is that there is some disagreement in the literature about whether or not 'evidence-based' policy-making is better than other forms of policy-making. They also do not point out that evidence-based research policy reflects a conception of the kind of linkage that can be set up between social science research and public policies. Institutional research reports do not mention, moreover, that it is generally recognized in the literature that evidence is not the only factor influencing policy-making (O' Dwyer, 2004). Knowledge (and evidence is also knowledge) also comes with diverse degrees of uncertainty which are seldom acknowledged by international agencies. Policy-making, as politics, is present everywhere. Its context and conditions are often very distinctive. As Choucri (2007) says, that is why knowledge management focusing on policy issues can seldom assume that 'one size fits all'.

Case four: the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the field of education

In 1968, the OECD Directorate for Education's Section on Research and Knowledge Management set up the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), whose main mandate is to promote studies on research, innovation and knowledge management. A new research focus emerged in 2003, building on recommendations by the CERI Governing Board, which stressed that 'evidence-based policy research is a vital complement to other practical and innovative processes in teaching and learning and should not be neglected by policy-makers as a source of

innovation'. The project has centred on a series of workshops (see Table 10.1) which brought together researchers, experts and policy-makers to exchange experiences and practices. These workshops have reviewed the main aspects of evidence-based policy research (methods, transaction costs and capacities), and have also discussed what constitutes evidence for research in education, how that evidence can best be used, and how to identify best practices in the field. As a result of these workshops, in June 2007 CERI released a book entitled *Evidence in Education: Linking Research and Policy*. At its very introduction the book states the following: it is crucial that educational policy decisions are made based on the best evidence possible.

Several documents made available by CERI on the internet reiterate that evidence-based policy is defined as 'the conscientious and explicit use of current best evidence in making decisions and choosing between policy options'. Evidence-based policy research (EBPR) is thus defined as the research that is used to produce evidence-based policy. This seems obvious, but it creates at the same time an important differentiation, since EBPR is distinguished from 'purely scientific research' in that the former is oriented to informing action while the latter is oriented towards developing theory and testing hypotheses. Both types of research cannot be considered mutually exclusive; however, the formal justification given in OECD's documents for setting up such a distinction is the following: 'burdens and standards of proof of causality are very different and in many cases evidence-based policy is obliged to use the best available evidence at a given moment in time' (see Burns and Schuller, 2006).

Of course, one cannot separate this formal distinction from the reasons motivating OECD's member states and CERI to invest (time, funds, expertise) in EBPR in the field of education. In the reports and internet material I have consulted, OECD's fundamental working principles are outlined:

- There is a growing concern with accountability, transparency and effectiveness of educational policies and educational research in OECD countries.
- The information readily available for policy-making is often unsuitable, either because the rigorous research required for policy needs has not been conducted, or because the research that is available is contradictory and does not suggest a single course of action.

- OECD countries share a belief that education and knowledge are increasingly important factors in innovation and economic growth.
- There is a need to set up a clearer definition of educational research, and more consistent support for it.
- It is necessary to shift from a linear to an interactive model of research utilization, for instance, by means of employing teachers as researchers and identifying the knowledge needs of stakeholders.

TABLE 10.1 CERI workshops on evidence-based policy-making in the field of education

Workshop	Date	Location	Main questions and focus
First	April 2004	Washington D. C.	What constitutes evidence?
Second	January 2005	Stockholm	How diverse are stakeholders (researchers, policy-makers, practitioners and the media)?
Third	September 2005	The Hague	What are the effective mechanisms for mediating between research and policy/practice?
Fourth and final	July 2006	London	How to implement evidence-based policy research? The focus was on implementation, scaling up and sustainability.

On the one hand, what such principles reaffirm is evidently relevant from the viewpoint of micro relations within the world of educational research: *inter alia*, the way research is conducted, who it involves in its methodological development and scientific process, the scientific opening to demands stemming from policy-makers, policy epistemic communities, and non-formal groupings. At the same time, no one would currently dare say that policy-makers need not be accountable for their actions and decisions in relation to civil society organizations and citizens. On the other hand, what such tenets seem to ignore is the contextual reality within which we need to situate the dialectical, contradictory and political relationships between social science research and policy-making. These principles do not integrate questions of political autonomy (of individuals, associations, NGOs), funding, institutional development, training capacities and public–private tensions that are fundamental variables in today's analysis of science–policy relationships under a mode of regulation and a discourse that tends to privilege an ethics of the market over an ethics of the public good.

It is true that experts participating in the series of workshops organized by CERI acknowledge that EBPR is a complex and potentially contentious issue which generates serious political debate. They recognize that it is unlikely that there will be a set of conclusions or recommendations which will sit comfortably with every OECD policy regime. Among the most important reasons for the lack of success of EBPR in education, OECD's experts have pointed out the following:

- short-term politics: there is no time to include the present EBPR results in the practice of the political decision process
- there are no structural links between research and schools
- misinterpretation of research by media and politicians
- lack of interaction between research, policy and practice
- research results often do not fit into policy's agendas or interest
- absence of suitable mechanisms or incentives at school level to feed evidence into classroom practice
- teachers have to respond to immediate classroom needs and cannot wait for research results
- at present EBPR does not provide sufficient classroom tools to play an important role
- researchers and practitioners do not speak the same language and operate in isolation from each other
- negative evaluation results can be interpreted (by public and politicians) as proof of bad policy
- politicians often have their specific ideas and are frustrated when evidence tells them that they are wrong.

These explanatory factors apply to the reality of OECD countries in the field of educational policies, and demonstrate that there can be no single best method or type of EBPR. National contexts are variable, and the key is for research and policy communities to deploy appropriate and contextual combinations of approaches and methodologies which match the characteristics of the policy issues under consideration. They must also have the capacity to select, implement and evaluate these combinations. Governance (including types of political arena, backgrounds of political

culture, the meaning and importance of authority, and institutional mechanisms of policy dialogue) between these two epistemic communities (the science community on one side, and policy community, on the other) is central in the definition of future scientific and political cooperation schemes.

How does OECD attempt to foster these dialogues? Of course, it does so through some traditional mechanisms embedded in international cooperation (policy briefs, workshops, publications, which we have already mentioned in the analysis of other multilateral organizations), but also with the support of brokerage agencies, such as the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre) within the University of London,[56] the Knowledge Chamber of the Netherlands,[57] the Danish Knowledge Clearinghouse, What Works Clearinghouse (USA), the Canadian Council on Learning, and the Social Care Institute of Excellence (United Kingdom). Many of the agencies have been created as a result of the OECD/CERI workshop series (see Table 10.1). These brokerage agencies are also distinguished in their goals and means, with New Zealand's Best Evidence Synthesis Programme providing an example of a brokerage programme within the ministry, whereas the Canadian Council on Learning, although also federally funded, is separate from the provincial ministries. The US What Works Clearinghouse functions in collaboration with a number of other institutes and subcontractors, and also conducts consumer surveys and questionnaires to ensure that the service it provides is meeting the demands of the users (researchers, practitioners, policy-makers and so on).

With the support of relatively well-funded external agencies, CERI has, for instance, been able to establish a series of criteria for what it considers to be sound, rigorous and relevant EBPR. It is worth noting that all these criteria deal with methodological issues only, as follows:

- Causality claim: to what extent does the research method ascertain whether a causal effect happens or not?

56 Formed in 1993, EPPI-Centre works on health and education policy-relevant research. For details, see http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk. There one can read the following definition: 'research evidence is knowledge and understanding developed by empirical and conceptual research. There are many types of research, all with their own methodology for creating and evaluating evidence.'

57 Established in June 2006, the Knowledge Chamber of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is a meeting point for senior staff of the ministry and knowledge institutes, such as advisory councils and planning offices. It formulates subjects on which more knowledge is needed. Knowledge questions here feed back into the process of evidence-based policies.

- Explanation claim: to what extent does the research method explain how or why the causal effect is happening?
- Transportability: how far is the evidence such that the results can be applied to most (or all) of the relevant field in different settings of time or space?
- Stability: will the evidence be reasonably stable over time in its application?
- Validity: does the research use instruments that measure what it is intended to measure?
- Variability: to what extent does the research method involve or permit variation in the type of intervention?

Such questions are thought-provoking in the understanding of the research–policy linkages. CERI has set up these (methodological) criteria focusing on a very particular field of action (educational policies), based on social realities of OECD countries and available macro-educational indicators that allow for such a generalization. What is the reality of other countries and regions in the world? Moreover, experts involved in EBPR tend to share a certain number of philosophical principles (the role of social science research, the distinction between theoretical research and EBPR, the acceptance of current governance structures that lead international relations and so on) and training backgrounds (levels of expertise, experience and practice in the field of EBPR), thus they constitute a quite homogeneous epistemic community. Again, what are the differences amidst stakeholders in terms of intellectual involvement and experience with issues relating to the policy–research nexus in other settings?

In the first section of this chapter, the aim was not to undertake a thorough evaluation of science–policy linkage programmes being implemented by multilateral and bilateral organizations; rather, the aim has been to introduce briefly some practices and understand (both contextually and ontologically) the main tools that are highlighted in their communication strategy as a means to foster the dialogue between social science research and public policy formulation. In sum, the first part of this chapter has shown a profound sense of continuity and regularity in the way programmes and activities are thought of and implemented by the four selected international organizations. To a larger extent, irrespective of their diverse foundational philosophies, these organizations share the need

to invest in EBPR, and promote policy dialogues as an instrument to build a broader consensus on the role of empirical evidence in policy research. Regardless of their cultural differences and specific political mandates, they all disseminate policy briefs, build databases and promote policy forums.

THE CASE OF USAID AND THE PROBLEM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN BRAZIL (1994–2004)

The history of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) goes back to the Marshall Plan and the need for Europe's reconstruction after the Second World War. Since its creation in 1961, USAID has been the main US agency, together with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (set up by George W. Bush in 2004), in the promotion of US cooperation for development and technical assistance worldwide. According to data made available by OECD's Development Cooperation Directorate, between 1994 and 2004 the United States was the main contributor to official development aid (ODA) in absolute terms, which increased from approximately US$10 billion to US$19.7 billion. However, in 2004 this represented only 0.17 per cent of US GDP.[58]

USAID is an independent federal government agency, but it receives foreign policy guidance from the secretary of state. Therefore, it goes without saying that North American foreign aid policy also works as an instrument of 'soft and cooptive power' in the maintenance of American political status in the international system (Nye, 1990). In the case of Latin America, for instance, aid policy is nowadays officially designed to support governments in their fight to strengthen liberal democracy, create long-term stability for economic growth, and promote security – one of the US government's priorities since 2001. Currently, the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean oversees sixteen bilateral missions, four regional programmes, and a Washington-based programme for Cuba, with an overall budget of approximately US$963 million (USAID, 2009).

In 2004, the main Brazilian bilateral partners were Japan (51 per cent of total ODA), Germany (18 per cent), the United Kingdom (13 per cent), France (9 per cent), Canada (5 per cent) and the United States (2 per cent). Today the US bilateral programmes include a variety of themes, such as economic growth and youth employability, environmental

58 Data from www.oecd.org/dac

protection and energy development, corporate social responsibility, as well as public health. USAID in Brazil states its objectives as follows: to preserve natural ecosystems, promote sustainable forest management, mitigate climate change, and promote clean energy technologies; to support efforts to prevent and control tuberculosis and malaria; to promote economic empowerment and social inclusion for disadvantaged persons (including those living with HIV/AIDS); to foster trade-led micro and small enterprise development to expand economic opportunities to disadvantaged people, and build partnerships with public and private sector entities to achieve development goals. In the particular case of public health goals, USAID has been working closely with the Brazilian National Sexually Transmitted Diseases and AIDS Programme in order to promote quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS, to expand HIV testing and counselling, and support training and capacity-building activities particularly through NGOs.[59] It was in 1994 that USAID started its first activity in the field of protection of children and teenagers in situation of social vulnerability, and launched the POMMAR programme (Prevenção Orientada a Meninos e Meninas em Risco) in the field of prevention for boys and girls at risk.

In the 1990s, the international cooperation agenda was more open to the integration of 'soft issues' such as environmental protection, social and cultural dimensions of development, human rights and urban planning. In a less obstructed political context where transnational networks of activists could expand more freely, there emerged the theme of global public action against the sexual exploitation of children. Thus, in 1996 the governments of 122 countries, together with NGOs like the End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) campaign, UNICEF and other agencies within the family of the United Nations, gathered together in Stockholm for the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. They stated that, according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 'the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, and their rights are to be enjoyed without discrimination of any kind'. The commercial sexual exploitation of children was then considered a fundamental violation of children's rights: it comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person. That means that the child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The commercial sexual exploitation of

59 See USAID (2009).

children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children, and amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery.[60]

Domestically, mainly because of wealth concentration, socio-economic disparities, practices of violence within families, and social values and myths related to gender, race and the status of women and children in society, Brazil had at this time one of the worst child prostitution problems in the world. In addition, a thriving sex tourism industry had developed in more impoverished federate states, such as Ceara, Bahia, Mato Grosso do Sul and Amazonas. A survey undertaken in 1997 identified sixty-five localities of prostitution in six cities in Mato Grosso do Sul, and many of the prostitutes were young girls. In fact, Brazil is still one of the favourite destinations of paedophile sex tourists from Europe and the United States. In Sao Paulo, 64 per cent of denunciations of physical aggression against children are related to domestic violence, and the majority of children who live on the streets do so because of family violence. Moreover, child sexual exploitation often implicates public figures and political leaders.[61] In Brazil it is still extremely difficult to quantify sexual violence against children and adolescents because of problems related to impunity and the invisibility of these clandestine and criminal practices, but also because of the lack of official statistics and prevailing social taboos. In 2000, there were approximately 50,000 annual cases of sexual violence against children and adolescents, according to data reported by the Ministry of Justice. The Brazilian Multiprofessional Association for the Protection of Childhood and Adolescence (ABRAPIA) reports that seven children or teenagers are sexually abused every hour in Brazil (Koshima, 2006, p. 232).

How and why has this startling social problem been incorporated into the national public policy agenda? In brief, Table 10.2 outlines the main domestic and international events that contributed to the agenda-setting of public policies related to sexual violence against children and adolescents in Brazil from 1994 to 2004.

60 First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children 1996, Declaration and Agenda for Action.

61 Brazilian Ministry of Justice, UNICEF and the government of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul (1997). See also ALC News Service (1998). Many reports can also be found at www.cedeca.org.br.

TABLE 10.2 Domestic and international chronology of events regarding public policy on sexual abuse against children and adolescents in Brazil, 1994 to 2004

Date	Event
1988	Brazilian Republican Constitution (Title VIII, Chapter VII, art. 227, paragraph 4).
1989	International Convention on the Rights of the Child (articles 19, item 1 and 34).
1990	World Summit for Children (Special Session on Children), held at New York (United Nations headquarters).
	Brazilian law no. 8069 on the rights of children and adolescents, known as the ECA ('Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente'). The ECA foresaw the creation of participatory councils at national, federate state, and municipal levels as a means for the follow-up and monitoring of legal measures.
1991	Creation of the National Council on the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CONANDA), where governmental representatives and non-governmental members are equally present.
	Establishment by thirty-one NGOs of the Centre for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (CEDECA, Bahia).
1993	National Parliamentary Commission on Prostitution of Children and Adolescents (CPI).
2000	National Plan to Fight Sexual Violence against Children and Adolescents (approved by CONANDA).
2003	First National Interministerial Meeting that sets up this social problem as a national public policy priority.

Source: adapted from Koshima (2006).

These national and international events have directly contributed to the emergence of children and adolescents as new social subjects, and also as subjects of rights, thus building the contours of a distinctive paradigm in the development of their socio-political status in Brazil. The 1993 Parliamentary Commission was a cornerstone in the dissemination all over the country of the need for urgent public measures to protect these rights. Among 930 municipalities where situations of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents were identified (including trafficking, pornography, sex tourism and prostitution), 292 (31.8 per cent) were located in the north-east, 241 (25.7 per cent) in the south-east, 161 (17.3 per cent) in the south, 127 (13.6 per cent) in the centre-west, and 109 (11.6 per cent) in the north region of Brazil. Before the 1990s, this type of sexual violence was narrowly considered as a private and family matter.

National and international civil society organizations and social movements have also played a key role in bringing into the debate a broader human rights approach and a public good perspective. As a result, in 2003,

for the first time in Brazilian political history, President Lula recognized the fight against these violent crimes as a national policy priority, setting up an interministerial committee which was eventually made responsible for the development of the first national programme in this social sector. In 2004, combating sexual violence against children and adolescents was institutionalized as a national public policy priority, which however does not mean that the social problem has so far been solved.[62]

In such a process of institutionalization and legitimation of the rights of children and adolescents as a national public priority, what has been the role of USAID and POMMAR in terms of policy development? Koshima (2006) asserts that there are three phases in the development of POMMAR: mapping (1994 to 1997), mobilization (1998 to 2000) and policy dialogue (2000 to 2004). In 1993 a first socio-economic survey designed by USAID revealed that an impressive number of children and adolescents were at risk of social and sexual violence, particularly in three cities in the north-east (Fortaleza, Recife and Salvador). POMMAR was launched immediately after that, in 1994, in the wake of the National Law 8069 (ECA) and as a result of a demand mainly put forward by many of those NGOs that had been set up in the beginning of the 1990s, and were thus still in search of their real social goals. Such organizations considered the ECA as a key political instrument in order to promote public policy changes and define new measures of social assistance. USAID/POMMAR gave support to these NGOs, and organized a First Seminar on Street Children in Brazil, counting on the participation of more than fifty governmental organizations and NGOs. At the end of this seminar, it was decided that POMMAR should work as a clearing house and a network builder, and also give support and technical assistance to innovative pedagogical experiences (POMMAR, 2004). In 1998 POMMAR received new funding from USAID, which allowed it to consolidate its thematic areas (such as art education) and emphasize the need for decentralization of its projects (culminating with the establishment of two new offices in Fortaleza and Salvador). In its third phase POMMAR gave impetus to the economic dimension of the problem of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, and worked hand in hand with governmental organizations and NGOs in the eradication

62 According to the National Human Rights Secretariat (SEDH), in 2009 there were 15,345 reports of sexual violence against children and adolescents through public telephone calls. The 100 phone number had been created in 1997 by NGOs, and was integrated by the federal government as a public service in 2003 (with free calls). In January 2010, the federal government announced a public expenditure of approximately US$51 million for this policy priority (the highest amount since 2003). See www.direitoshumanos.gov.br

of child labour in urban areas. In 2002 the fight against sexual violence was associated with activities to hamper the trafficking of children and adolescents for sexual purposes. In its third phase, POMMAR opened an office in Brasília as a means to foster political articulation with ministries, public governmental programmes and national forums.

TABLE 10.3 USAID/POMMAR's institutional, financial and methodological support

Number of organizations	Thematic area
36	Education and professional development (art education, child labour)
8	HIV/AIDS assistance and prevention
14	Sexual violence and trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes
6	Health, family support and advocacy

Source: Koshima (2006, p. 121).

One key aspect of USAID/POMMAR's involvement in this policy area in Brazil between 1994 and 2004 was the financial, technical and methodological support given to governmental organizations and NGOs, thus contributing to the development of a national policy network capable of designing public policies to fight against this kind of sexual violence (see Table 10.3 for a summary of actions and organizations supported between 1994 and 2004). POMMAR worked together with the North-American NGO Partners of the Americas, and gave support to a series of national NGOs through a ten-year budget of approximately US$11 million. In spite of lacking consolidated data and nation-wide evidence on the issue of sexual violence against children and adolescents, POMMAR decided to fund the participation of partner organizations in national and international events as an instrument for building national capacities in this policy area (for instance, capacities in terms of management, monitoring and evaluation), and for contributing to the institutionalization of the fight against this kind of sexual violence as a public priority in Brazil. Of course this avenue of cooperation between USAID/POMMAR and NGOs was also traversed by some obstacles, such as the 2003 reaction of Brazilian governmental organizations and NGOs to political changes in the Bush administration's strategies in the field of HIV/AIDS.[63] However, as can be seen from Table 10.4, USAID/POMMAR

63 In February 2003 the US secretary of state (Colin Powell) instructed USAID to promote sexual abstention and not the distribution of condoms in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Social projects dealing with sex workers, harm-reduction or abortion should also be avoided. The reaction in Brazil resulted

was able to politically build its legitimacy during these ten years of intense activities as a result of its acknowledgement by both governmental organizations and NGOs working in this field in Brazil.

TABLE 10.4 USAID/POMMAR's participation in key events

Year	Activity	I	F	T	FO	FR	L
1994	First metropolitan conference on prostitution of girls and adolescents and public policies	X					
1995	Seminar on the exploitation of girls in Brazil	X					
1995	Parliamentary front for the end of violence, exploitation and sex tourism against children and adolescents (C&A)	X					X
1995	First seminar on the exploitation and sexual abuse of C&A in north-east metropolis		X	X	X		
1995	Launching of the first national campaign against sexual exploitation of C&A			X	X		
1996	Seminar against sexual exploitation of C&A in the Americas				X		
1996	Stockholm First World Congress				X		
1997	ECPAT First Meeting		X	X	X		
1998	ECPAT Second Meeting		X	X	X		
2000	Establishment of the National Day to fight against sexual violence towards C&A						X
2000	National plan to fight against sexual violence towards C&A		X	X	X	X	
2001	Yokohama Second World Congress				X		
2002	National research on trafficking of women and adolescents for sexual exploitation purposes			X	X	X	
2003	First national seminar on trafficking and sexual exploitation of C&A			X	X	X	
2003	Creation of the interministerial commission to fight against abuse and sexual exploitation of C&A			X			

Key: ***I*** *(invited only);* ***F*** *(financial support for the activity);* ***T*** *(technical support for the activity);* ***FO*** *(financial support for the participation of NGOs in the activity);* ***FR*** *(fund-raising);* ***L*** *(political lobby).*

Source: Koshima (2006, p. 193).

in the rejection by public authorities and NGOs of the aid package of US$40 million, because the criteria applied by USAID would harm national efforts to control and prevent HIV/AIDS.

TO END WITH A NEW BEGINNING: IS IT ONLY EVIDENCE THAT MATTERS?

In the conclusion to this chapter, I raise some critical issues regarding the reasons that international organizations have been able to reach such a broad rhetorical and normative consensus around evidence-based social research and policy-making – sometimes irrespective of national practices and contexts. I also sketch a series of questions for future research projects (also in Milani, 2005).

To begin with, as Lee et al. (2005) affirm, it should be recalled that social science has, since its institutional development in the nineteenth century, had an 'ambiguous relationship' with social policy. Using the metaphor of a 'tumultuous marriage in which the rules of conjugality were never fully established or agreed to by both parties', the authors recall that the linkages between social science and policies have also gone through the myth that the accumulation of data (usually statistical data) would illuminate the directions in which the state might proceed, by means of various new policies and reforms, in order to alleviate social ills. This was also the influence of a positivist and functionalist problem-solving spirit adopted by natural science, which was transmitted to social sciences in their historical development. During the 1950s and 1960s, this thinking began to become institutionalized essentially in the more industrialized states (the United Kingdom, the United States, later in Australia and Germany). This institutionalization has also reached multilateral organizations, including through the implementation of some of the programmes described in the first part of this chapter.

The idea behind the empiricist creed was that the promotion of social policy was not politically neutral, thus it was more appropriate for social scientists to play a role that would be 'value-neutral' and 'professional'. This gave rise to the waves of programmes on 'applied social science', as opposed to merely theorizing about social relations or merely undertaking empirical research (Lee et al., 2005). To sum up, there were two contradictory positions. In one camp were Max Weber and Robert Merton, proponents of science as truth and the principle of axiologic neutrality, and on the other were thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci and Karl Mannheim who championed critical critical thinking and problem-building theories. Nevertheless, even when research indicates scenarios for practical action, it takes more than knowledge and social science research to make policy. We should recall variables such as social creativity and individual imagination,

and also social mobilization and political support or contestation (in other words, the politics of science–policy).

The relationships between social science and policy-making can be thought of on at least four levels of analysis: the researchers and their methodological and ontological choices, the historical processes of institutionalization of social sciences (nationally and, in more recent times, internationally), the motivations of decision-makers, and finally the structures of political governance that organize the contexts where these relationships and key actors evolve (state, international organizations, brokerage agencies, social movements, NGOs, corporations). These four levels are particularly relevant for a more acute analysis when we note that with globalization, decision-making tends to move beyond the symbolic and material frontiers of the state (from public to private, from national to global). Questions such as 'What is the utility of social science research?', 'Who funds research and why?', 'Who are the decision-makers in policy-making?', 'Who defines the priorities?' and 'How legitimate are influential international agencies in setting up national priorities?' become central for policy debates in democratic societies in both industrialized and developing countries.[64]

This is because globalization is not merely a competition for market shares and well-timed economic growth initiatives; neither is it just a matter of trade opportunities and liberalization. Globalization has also evolved into a social and political struggle for imposing cultural values and individual preferences: the current global economic system optimizes the values and criteria of performance, efficiency and productivity. Being efficient and cultivating performance has become the new global avatar for the myth of progress and development; global performance provides a new sense of universality for national communities. It goes without saying that such an over-estimation of economic performance, which in general one finds in the discourse of many global economic players, has direct implications for democratic life in general, and for the analysis of the science–policy nexus in particular. According to these global market ethics, political negotiations

64 Speaking at UNESCO in 2006, Professor A. H. Zakri (head of the UNU Institute of Advanced Studies) appealed for international help to foster relevant research programmes in the developing world, where 'the pressures are greatest, the need most acute and it is really a matter of life and death'. Nevertheless, instead of pinpointing the inequalities in North–South relations in the field of university and scientific development, Professor Zakri stated that many universities in developing countries are not relevant, affirming that a universal characteristic of university success is 'relevance' or 'research utility'. 'Universities and the research they undertake need to be relevant – to their government's policy, to their people's educational needs and to their community's needs', he said.

must also follow the pattern of efficiency and thus fall in with the market's timetable; there should be no room for doubt and long deliberation in a global risk society (Milani, 2006, pp. 377–83).

As O'Dwyer (2004) asserts, political decisions about social policies are rarely the direct outcome of social science research. They are more usually the result of conflicting pressures by social actors – entrepreneurs, workers' organizations, religious authorities, special interest groups and the media. The study of the role of USAID in Brazil goes in this same direction. Likewise O'Dwyer (2004) shows that there has recently been increasing interest in Australia in EBPM, mainly stemming from new policy developments in the United Kingdom. Multilateral organizations play a major role in disseminating views and methods on how to think and act in the field of the social science–policy nexus, as was described in the first part of this chapter. Based on the Australian reality, the author mentions the international success of an evidence-based approach to health, education, criminology and social work, which has stimulated this change. While the concept of empirical evidence should help to promote more and better use of research findings and a more systematic use of knowledge, it is difficult to produce the necessary kinds of evidence to inform other policy sectors (such as housing and urban policy) in such a way as to label these policies 'evidence-based'. This is principally because of the difficulty in isolating the effects of interventions in housing and urban issues from wider social processes and their geographic variations.

This distinguishes EBPM from public policy based on more conventional policy development processes where intuitive appeal, tradition, politics, or the extension of existing practice may set the policy agenda. EBPM is not synonymous with good policy-making, but EBPM is more likely to be good policy-making in some particular fields. Here, again, excessive generalization (both thematically and across countries or cultural contexts) may be a perilous temptation. It is possible to have bad EBPM if the evidence used is biased, flawed or incomplete. We could also say that, depending on the purposes of data collection, evidence may serve unfair and unjust policy objectives (O'Dwyer, 2004). Statistical data as well as cartography are 'texts', and may be skilfully controlled and technically manipulated.

Some factors influencing the use of an evidence-based approach in policy-making that should also be taken into account are prevailing public opinion, organizational culture, incompatible time frames in policy-making and research, the values and ideology of both researchers and

policy-makers, control of power, political goals, as well as institutional development and the degree of autonomy of the social science community. Carol Weiss (1979) identifies 'four I's' which characterize policy-making in general: ideology (people's basic values – of policy-makers and wider society); interests (personal or organizational, such as personal career aspirations or maximizing budgets), institutional norms and practices (for example, the US Congress works largely through face-to-face contact – reading is not part of the norm and so written research findings are likely to be ignored), and prior information (policy-makers already have information from various sources) (Weiss, 1979, pp. 426–31).

Based on these four 'I's' and because 'research utilization' is associated with a variety of different meanings and interpretations, Weiss (1986) later identified seven different models of research–policy relationships:

- the knowledge-driven model (basic research highlights an opportunity; applied research is conducted to define and test these findings; appropriate technologies are formulated; application occurs
- the problem-solving model (evidence is produced in a particular field in order to solve or shed light on a particular policy problem)
- the interactive model (information for policy-making is not only produced by researchers, but also by planners, practitioners, interest groups, journalists and so on)
- the political model (research is used as a means of legitimization of policy decisions)
- the tactical model (research is an excuse for inaction)
- the enlightenment model (cumulative research and information over time sensitizes policy-makers to new issues)
- research as part of the intellectual enterprise of society (research is not an independent variable affecting the policy process, but rather policy interests often set the parameters of research and the scientific agendas).

The first two models are very linear in their nature, and presuppose relationships between the world of social sciences and policy-making communities that are spontaneous and free from pretension or political calculation. Both share positivist principles in their epistemology and methodology. They seem to inform many policy–research projects

and EBPR programmes such as those analysed in the first part of this chapter. The third model is rooted in a phenomenological understanding of social reality, where human interactions tend to erase conflictual situations, confrontation and absolute opposition. The other four models take the politics of science–policy relationships into account, and suppose different functions and uses of research by policy-makers.

An example of how to understand these models could come from a UNU seminar organized in 2007 on the topic 'Strengthening Linkages between Science and Policy'. This seminar was held as part of the Twenty-First Pacific Science Congress in Okinawa, Japan, in June 2007. The two main questions addressed during this seminar were:

- Why, despite recent advances in biotechnology, nanotechnology, medicine and environmental sciences, do more than 1 billion people around the world continue to live in extreme poverty without access to proper nutrition, safe drinking water and basic medical services, and survive on less than US$2 a day?
- Why, despite unequivocal evidence that global warming will continue to cause dramatic changes in wind patterns, precipitation and extreme weather that will negatively affect human populations, are policies mitigating these effects being debated rather than put into immediate effect?

The main conclusion of this 2007 seminar was that tenuous links between science and policy can be seen as one of the primary reasons why better technologies are not accessible to the poorest people on Earth. The seminar report presents conclusions that may induce an uninformed reader (an uninformed policy-maker?) to think that simply through greater investments in science policy the benefits of technological innovations and economic growth would trickle down to all individual members of a society, regardless of established patterns of domination, exclusion and social reproduction of inequalities.

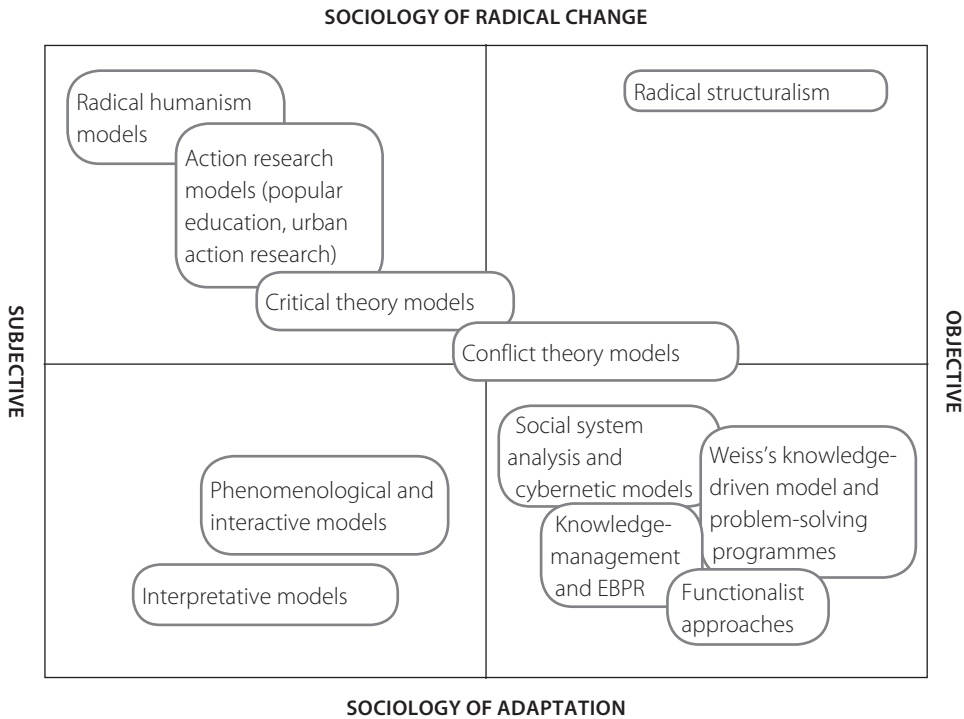
It would be naïve to think of major global ecological crises, world food security and climate change only as problems of access to technology and insufficient investment in sound research-based policies. Building such a simplistic answer to the questions raised during the seminar may also show how the 'narrative of linkage' can be used as an excuse not to tackle power relations that are inherent in society, both nationally and internationally. It would also demonstrate how difficult it may be to set

aside the first three models introduced by Carol Weiss. It seems there is no doubt that a paradigm shift is needed in the way science-based advice (and social science-based advice in particular) is translated into successful policy if we are to achieve environmental sustainability without compromising social justice worldwide.

Based on Burrel and Morgan (1979), let us build a figure (see Figure 10.1) where we can find two analytical dimensions for understanding major premises in building models on social science and policy linkages. The horizontal axis deals with objectivity and subjectivity, and refers to sources used in social science research in order to construct an ideal of social reality. The objectivist approach to social science is rooted in an ontology of realism, a positivist epistemology, a deterministic conception of human nature and a nomothetic methodology. The subjective approach to social science is based on an ontology of nominalism, an anti-positivist epistemology, voluntarism and an ideographic methodology. The vertical axis presents the normative and ontological perspective of social sciences before the idea (or need) of social change: upwards we can situate perspectives of radical change (a sociology of deep social transformations), whereas downwards we find a sociology of regulation and adaptation within the status quo. This second axis corresponds to the role that the researcher may resume in defence of transformative social sciences, including through their relationships with policy networks and non-scholar communities. In this sense, the presentation of intellectual ideas through social science research may threaten a certain notion of truth which has claimed a false appearance of universality.

This figure shows the legitimacy of alternative perspectives. It entails a culture of debate, argumentation and dialogue in the analysis of other models for understanding linkages between social science and policy-making. It is hoped that it will also provide the means for an international organization such as UNESCO to embrace other frames of reference and not worry too much about orthodoxy. Of course, the legitimacy of non-functionalist paradigms is not assured today, and should not be taken for granted. However, unveiling the ontology and epistemology of EBPR models adopted by the large majority of international organizations today may also allow for a more pluralistic debate on the issue of social sciences and public policy linkages.

FIGURE 10.1 Paradigms and models in the analysis of social science and policy linkages



What critical possibilities does this figure offer in the understanding of the role of EBPR promoted by many multilateral organizations? How can it support emancipatory conceptions of the linkages between research and policy? These are difficult but necessary questions. As Lather affirms, the time has come to break out of the regulation, standardization and surveillance of research and the speculation on what it would mean to be a 'mature' or 'objective' science, and move beyond, towards a more complex scientificity, where the empirical becomes more interpretive, not less (2008, pp. 361–64). There is therefore a need to refuse to concede science to scientism, and reopen the debate on when, why and how research matters in policy-making. Statements on how 'rigour' in research is the most direct route to better policies must also be discussed based on the actual policy-making process, and the options made by models presented in Figure 10.1.

There is a clear need to shift the discourse away from the focus on 'objective' and technical questions of research design and methods in order to move towards the analysis of dialectical relationships between research and policy. Questions on method and design are not irrelevant,

but they seem to have erased the key role of political behaviour of political actors in current international programmes dealing with EBPR. As Lather (2008) shows, the interest in research that informs policy and practice is shared across disciplinary boundaries and methodologies and among the 'interdisciplines' that have long characterized the field of education. The 'alternative' models presented in Figure 10.1 may also raise pertinent (and different) questions about the understanding of the linkage problem. One of the issues is how the theory/practice or basic/applied distinctions are to be thought out. Taking the complexity into account entails a more philosophical and less instrumental (re)thinking of the research–policy nexus.

Thus, it is useful to note that research for policy is not so much about providing answers as about changing the way questions are understood, so that people (researchers and policy-makers, but other publics too) can begin to think differently, thus critically building the contours and contents of social problems. Working towards a more complex scientificity entails a sort of 'philosophy of negativity' (Lather, 2008), where modes of contestation would be constitutive of the very scientific field within which we locate our research work. Of course, this would mean shifting the standard of intelligibility for policy research away from the positivism that underpins hegemonic understandings of evidence, objectivity, reason, measurement, value-free facts, research utilization and responsible knowledge production.

As Pawson and Tilley (1996) affirm, in conducting research, and sponsored research in particular, political considerations mitigate reflexive impulses that might undermine the authority of the research. Apart from structural factors building the politics of science–policy relations, what goes on 'behind the scenes' at both meso and micro levels is also a significant aspect of knowledge production. Factors such as professional, situational, cultural and interpersonal relationships between researchers are rarely addressed in methodological sections of research reports or in texts relating to methods. Researchers' attempts to situate themselves in relation to their work signal an awareness of the centrality of research identities to the process of knowledge production, but often do not address the ways in which research relationships and settings shape research findings, analyses and reporting. Research grounded in a commitment to social change inevitably begins with at least a provisional presumption that social difference, inequality and spatial disparity are both organized and knowable (Pawson and Tilley, 1996). Contrary to the positivist and rationalistic creed,

political rationales need not be discarded as criteria for some research and policy decisions.

Another final key aspect that I would like to highlight has to do with the research process itself. Who participates in the definition of the policy research agenda? Whose interests are taken into account? Contrary to the common sense that may prevail in 'participatory projects', it would be naive to think that a history of exclusion can be overcome by 'including' individuals already identified and selected because they are disempowered by those very structures. Calling 'them' empowered is not enough. If we are concerned about issues of voice and exclusion in the production of knowledge, then it is critical to recognize the situated character of the research process itself (Milani, 2008*b*). As Schick (2002) recalls, these conditions of research are at least as influential in shaping the meanings research produces, publicizes and legitimizes as the superficial markers of identity foreseen in the research design. As the reality of public policies related to violence against children and adolescents during the 1990s in Brazil shows, no matter who decides what categories will be used and how they will be defined in principle, in practice, inclusiveness and critical participation are produced in the micro-politics of day-to-day interaction and common production of knowledge and social experience. Indeed, designing qualitative research practices that attend to these relationships more self-consciously and reflexively may offer a more productive challenge to exclusion in knowledge production.

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FIGURES AND TABLES

FIGURES

TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABRAPIA	Brazilian Multiprofessional Association for the Protection of Childhood and Adolescence
ACF	advocacy coalition framework
AEI	American Enterprise Institute
AERC	African Economic Research Consortium
AKNF	African Knowledge Networks Forum
ALLFISH	Alliance for Responsible Fisheries
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CERI	Centre for Educational Research and Innovation
CFSP	(EU) Common Foreign and Security Policy
CGE	computable general equilibrium
CPA	critical policy analyst
CRISP	Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy
DDP	Development Data Platform
DECRG	Development Research Group (of the World Bank Group)
EBP	evidence-based policy
EBPR	evidence-based policy research
EC	European Commission
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism

EERC	Economic Education and Research Consortium
EHS	Institute for Environment and Human Security
EPPI-Centre	Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre
ERA	European Research Area
ERC	European Research Council
ERF	Economic Research Forum for the Arab countries, Iran and Turkey
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ETAN	European Technology Assessment Network
EU	European Union
FAST	Forecasting and Assessment in Science and Technology
FP	(EU) Framework Programme
GDN	Global Development Network
GDP	gross domestic product
GPPN	global public policy network
IAIS	International Association of Insurance Supervisors
IAS	Institute of Advanced Studies
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IMEMO	Soviet Institute of the World Economy and International Relations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMISCOE	International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion
IPTS	Institute for Prospective Technological Studies
ISIS	Institute of Strategic and International Studies
KCP	Knowledge for Change Programme
KNET	Knowledge network
LGA	(UK) Local Government Association
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPA	(US) National Environmental Policy Act
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPM	new public management
ODA	official development aid
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Organization of Oil Exporting Countries
PNAC	Project for the New American Century
POMMAR	Prevenção Orientada a Meninos e Meninas em Risco

PPBS	Planning Programming Budgeting System
PRR	policy research report
PUMA	Public Management Committee of the OECD
SAST	Strategic Analyses in Science and Technology
SSH	social sciences and humanities
TAN	transnational advocacy network
TEN	transnational executive network
TSER	targeted socio-economic research
UN	United Nations
UNU	United Nations University
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WBI	World Bank Institute
WDR	world development report
WIDER	World Institute for Development Economics Research
WLUML	Women Living Under Muslim Laws
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Social Science and Policy Challenges

Democracy, values and capacities

Producing scientific knowledge that can inform solutions and guide policy-making is one of the most important functions of social science. Nonetheless, if social science is to become more relevant and influential so as to impact on the drawing and execution of policy, certain measures need to be taken to narrow its distance from the policy sphere.

This decision is less obvious than it seems. Both research and experience have proved that policy-making is a complex, often sub-rational, interactive process that involves a wide range of actors such as decision makers, bureaucrats, researchers, organised interests, citizen and civil society representatives and research brokers. In addition, social science often needs to defend both its relevance to policy and its own scientific status.

Moving away from instrumental visions of the link between social research and policy, this collective volume aims to highlight the more constructed nature of the use of social knowledge. Hence, it addresses issues pertaining to the epistemology of social scientific research, the role of social interaction and power in the production of knowledge and the institutional links that bridge research and policy. The authors' contributions promote a lively, scholarly discussion on democracy and participation as well as on values and capacities in the scientific making of policy, that will enlighten the interested reader and enrich the academic and policy debates, while suggesting concrete proposals for capacity-building.

RESEARCH & POLICY

UNESCO
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Social and Human Sciences Sector

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