PART II

INSTITUTIONAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE FIELD

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1. INTRODUCTION

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By most accounts, the academic discipline generally referred to as the study of public policy grew out of the approach called the policy sciences.[1] The policy sciences approach has been primarily credited to the work of Harold D. Lasswell, writing in the late 1940s and early 1950s, most prominently articulated in his essay, "The policy orientation," which was the opening chapter to Lasswell and Daniel Lerner's *The Policy Sciences* (1951*a*; also see Lasswell 1949, 1971).[2] The policy sciences orientation was explicitly focused on the rigorous application of the sciences (hence, the plural usage of "sciences") to issues affecting governance and government. As Fischer (2003: 3) has recently observed:

Specifically, Lasswell wanted to create an applied social science that would act as a mediator between academics, government decision makers, and ordinary citizens by providing objective solutions to problems that would narrow or minimize...the need for unproductive political debate on the pressing policy issues of the day.

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[1] One must immediately acknowledge that this reference, and indeed much of this essay, is "American centric," in that it mainly addresses the contemporary study of public policy in its American context. This emphasis in no way is intended to minimize the contributions of public policy scholars in European and Asian nations, who have made important contributions to the study of public policy.

[2] While this acknowledgement is generally accepted, its recognition is by no means universal; Beryl Radin traces the development of policy analysis in *Beyond Machiavelli* (2000) without mentioning Lasswell; rather, she singles out Yehezkel Dror (see Dror 1971) as the principal early contributor to the field.

In addition, Lasswell and his colleagues (e.g. Lasswell and Kaplan 1950) articulated a clear understanding of the necessity of overlaying the approach with the democratic ethos and processes, or what he defined as the "policy sciences of democracy," which "were directed towards knowledge needed to improve the practice of democracy" (Lasswell 1951*a*, 15). The distinctly democratic orientation grew directly out of Lasswell's animus towards the totalitarian regimes that were present in the world community during the interwar period (see Lasswell 1951*b*).

But if the rigorous study of public policy within the academy to provide advice to policy makers has a relatively short lineage, the concept has a lengthy history. Rulers have been the recipients of advice—often solicited—since at least the recording of history, a veritable cottage industry (see Goldhamer 1978 for details). At times ritualized—a priesthood grew around the prophetic rituals of the Greek Oracle at Delphi—and, more usually, personal or idiosyncratic—European diplomats during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were remarkably cosmopolitan in their allegiances—advisers to whomever was in power were rarely lacking. However, there is a clear distinction between the earlier purveyors of policy advice and the policy sciences, namely that policy advice to rulers rarely relied on extensive research, invariably was not recounted in policy memoranda (nor memoirs), nor subjected to protocols of "scientific" enquiry. A major exception, of course, was the remarkable Italian Renaissance diplomat Niccolò Machiavelli, but even *The Prince* (1950/1515) was more of a generalized set of observations than recommendations to any specific ruler or context. A more modern precursor might have been the "brains trust" assembled by President Franklin Roosevelt to help his administration counter the 1930s Great Depression, but this could easily be attributed to the unique confluence of conditions and personalities.

The turn of the twentieth century saw the beginnings of academic study of issues of public salience within the disciplines of political science and public administration, which some (e.g. Heineman et al. 2002) have suggested were the precursors of public policy studies. Later, political science and public administration perspectives rather naturally were directly extended into the public arena, as were relevant aspects found in the disciplines of law, history, sociology, psychology, public health (for instance, in the field of epidemiology), and anthropology. However, the policy sciences approach and its authors have deliberately distinguished themselves from these early academic contributions by posing three defining characteristics that, in combination, transcend the contributions ascribed to the individual disciplines:

1. The policy sciences are explicitly *problem oriented*, quite consciously addressing public policy problems and recommendations for their relief, while openly rejecting the study of a phenomenon for its own sake; the societal or political question of "so what?" has always been at the heart of the policy sciences' approach. Likewise, policy problems are seen to occur in a specific context, a context that must be carefully considered in terms of both the analysis and subsequent recommendations. For these reasons,

2. The policy sciences are distinctively *multidisciplinary* in their intellectual and practical approaches. The reasoning is straightforward: almost every social or

political problem has multiple components that are tied to the various academic disciplines without falling clearly into any one discipline's exclusive domain. Therefore, to gain a complete appreciation of the phenomenon, many relevant orientations must be utilized and integrated. Finally,

3. The policy sciences' approach is consciously and explicitly *value oriented*; in many cases, the central theme deals with the democratic ethos and human dignity.[3] This value orientation, first argued during the emphasis on behavioralism, i.e. "objectivism," in the social sciences, recognizes that no social problem nor methodological approach is value free. As such, to understand a problem, one must acknowledge its value components. Similarly, no policy scientist is without her or his own values, which also must be recognized, if not resolved, as Amy (1984) has discussed.[4] This realization will later surface at the heart of the post-positivist orientation.

Moving the policy sciences from the halls of academe to the offices of government largely occurred on the federal level during the 1960s (see Radin 2000), such that by the 1980s, virtually every federal office had a policy analysis branch, often under the title of a policy analysis and/or evaluation office. Since then, many states (including those with memberships in interstate consortia, such as the National Conference of State Legislatures) have moved in a similar direction, with the only constraints being financial. In addition, for-hire "think tanks" have proliferated seemingly everywhere (and of most every political orientation). Every public sector official would seemingly agree that more pertinent information on which to base decisions and policies is better than less. As such, there has seemingly been a widespread acceptance of the public policy approach and applications.

Concomitantly, virtually every American university has developed a graduate program in public affairs (or retooled its public administration program) to fill the apparent demand for sophisticated policy analysts. Yet the turn of the twenty-first century has hardly ushered in a Golden Age of Policy Advice. With every nook and cranny of government engaged in policy research and evaluation, why do policy scholars often voice the perception that their work is not being utilized? Donald Beam has characterized policy analysts as beset with "fear, paranoia, apprehension, and denial" and states that they do not "have as much confidence...about their

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[3] H. D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan (1950, pp. xii, xxiv) dedicate the policy sciences to provide the "intelligence pertinent to the integration of values realized by and embodies in interpersonal relations," which "prizes not the glory of a depersonalized state of the efficiency of a social mechanism, but human dignity and the realization of human capabilities."

[4] A moment should be set aside to distinguish "policy analysis" (and the policy analyst) from the "policy sciences" (and its analogous policy scientist). Many (e.g. Radin 2000; Dunn 1981; Heineman et al. 2002) prefer the former. DeLeon (1988, 9; emphasis added) indicated that "Policy analysis is the most noted derivative and application of the tools and methodologies of the policy sciences' approach...[As such], policy analysis is generally considered a more discrete *genus* under the broader umbrella of the policy sciences *phylum*." For the purposes of this chapter, they are largely interchangeable. Fischer (2003, na. 1 and 4, pp. 1 and 3, respectively) is in agreement with deLeon in this usage.

value in the political process as they did 15 or 20 years ago" (Beam 1996, 430–1). Heineman and his colleagues (2002, 1, 9) are equally distressed in terms of policy access and results:

despite the development of sophisticated methods of inquiry, policy analysis has not had a major substantive impact on policymakers. Policy analysts have remained distant from power centers where policy decisions are made . . . . In this environment, the values of analytical rigor and logic have given way to political necessities.

We need not necessarily agree with all of these claims, but, in general, one can assert that the Lasswellian charge for the policy sciences has not been realized. This chapter attempts to understand this shortfall by tracing the political and cognitive evolutions of the policy sciences, and, in tandem, to offer some advice as to how the policy sciences might achieve some of their earlier goals. To these ends, let us first review the development of the policy sciences' approach, followed by an understanding of the disjunction between the goals of the policy sciences and the policy world, and, lastly, indicate some ways in which the two can become more in tune with each other.

2. The Development of the Policy Sciences

In general, two paths have been proposed to outline the development of the policy sciences. Although they do not stand in opposition to one another, the respective chronologies of Beryl Radin (2000) and Peter deLeon (1998) offer contrasting emphases. Radin (2000) draws upon the heritage proffered by American public administration; for instance, in her telling, policy analytic studies represent a continuation of the early twentieth-century Progressive movement (also see Fischer 2003) in the United States, in particular, its emphases on scientific analysis of social issues and the democratic polity. Her depiction particularly characterizes the institutional growth of the policy approach, metaphorically relying on the (fictional) histories of an "old school" economist cum policy analyst (John Nelson) juxtaposed with a "younger," university-trained policy analyst (Rita Stone). Through them, she casts an institutional framework on the policy studies approach, indicating the progression from a limited analytic approach practiced by a relatively few practitioners (nominally from the RAND Corporation in California, which was the training ground for defense-turned-health analyst Nelson) to a growing number of government institutions and universities. Radin notes the emergence of analytic studies from the RAND Corporation to Robert McNamara's US Department of

Defense in the early 1960s under the guise of "systems analysis" and the Programmed Planning and Budget System (PPBS).[5]

From its apparent success in the Defense Department, PPBS, under President Lyndon Johnson's executive mandate, spread out into other government offices, such as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in the mid-1960s. Although PPBS never again enjoyed the great (and, to be fair, transitory) success that it did in the Defense Department (see Wildavsky 1979a), the analytic orientation was soon adopted by a number of federal offices, state agencies, and a large number of analytic consultant groups (see Fischer 1993; Ricci 1984).[6] Thus, Radin (2000) views the growth of the policy analyses as a "growth industry," in which a few select government agencies first adopted an explicitly innovative analytic approach, others followed, and an industry developed to service them. Institutional problems, such as the appropriate bureaucratic locations for policy analysis, arose but were largely overcome. In much the same theme, Gilmore and Halley (1994) address policy research issues as a function of intergovernmental relations. However, Radin's (2000) analysis pays hardly any attention to the hallmarks of the policy sciences approach: there is little direct attention to the problem orientation of the activity and the normative groundings of policy issues (and recommendations) are largely overlooked. As such, her analysis describes the end product of a movement towards institutional analysis, generally portraying a very positive image of the dissemination of the profession and its practitioners.

DeLeon (1988) offered a parallel but somewhat more complicated model, in which he linked analytic activities tied to specific political events (what he terms "supply," that is, events that provided analysts with a set of particular conditions to which they could apply their skills) with an evolving requirement for policy analysis within political circles and government offices ("demand," which represents a growing requirement for the product of policy analytic skills). His underlying assumption was that "supply" and "demand" are mutually dependent and, if the study of public policy is to be intellectually advanced and be utilized by policy makers, both must be present. In particular, he suggested the following political events as having been seminal in the development of the policy research, in terms of "lessons learned:"[7]

The Second World War, during which the United States marshaled an unprecedented number of social scientists—economists, political scientists, psychologists, etc.—to support the war effort. These activities established an important illustration of the ability of the social sciences to focus problem-oriented analysis on urgent

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[5] See Hitch and McKean (1960) for an authoritative explanation.

[6] Radin (2000, 55) traces the development of the policy orientation through six "representative" analytic offices, chosen specifically to reflect the divergence of the approach: the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the US Department of Health and Human Services; the California Legislative Analyst's Office; the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities; the Congressional Research Service; the Heritage Foundation; and the Twentieth Century Fund.

[7] These are elaborated upon in deLeon 1988.

public issues, in this case ensuring victory over the Axis powers. In fact, Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan spent the war employed by the Library of Congress studying the use of propaganda techniques. This realization led directly to the postwar formation of the National Science Foundation (although more concerned at first with the physical sciences) and the Council of Economic Advisors, as well as research facilities such as the RAND Corporation (Smith 1966) and the Brookings Institution (Lyons 1969). However, in general, while the "supply" side of the policy equation was seemingly primed, there was little activity on the "demand" side, perhaps because of the post-Second World War society's desire to return to some semblance of "normalcy." As a result, the policy approach was more or less quiescent until the 1960s, and President Lyndon Johnson's declaration and implementation of

The War on Poverty. In the early 1960s, largely spurred by the emerging civil rights demonstrations, Americans took notice of the pervasive, debilitating poverty extant in "the other America" (Harrington 1963) and realized that, as a body politic, they were remarkably uninformed. Social scientists moved aggressively into this knowledge gap with unbridled enthusiasm but lacking consensus, producing what Moynihan (1969) called "maximum feasible misunderstanding." A vast array of social programs was initiated to address this particular war, with important milestones being achieved, especially in the improved statistical measures of what constituted poverty and evaluation measures to assess the various anti-poverty programs (see Rivlin 1970) and, of course, civil rights. Walter Williams (1998), looking back on his days in the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), has suggested that these were the "glory days" of policy analysis. Other OEO veterans, such as Robert Levine (1970), were more reserved, while some, such as Murray (1984), went so far as to indicate that with the advent of the anti-poverty, anti-crime, and affirmative action programs, the American poor was actually "losing ground." At best, policy analysts were forced to confront the immense complexity of the social condition and discover that in some instances, there were no "easy" answers. DeLeon (1988, 61) later summarized the result of the War on Poverty as "a decade of trial, error, and frustration, after which it was arguable if ten years and billions of dollars had produced any discernible, let alone effective, relief."[8] One reason for the noted shortcomings was that the attention of the American public and its policy makers was sorely distracted by

The Vietnam War. In many senses, the Vietnam War brought the tools of public policy analysis, including applied systems analytic techniques, to life-and-death combat situations, a condition exacerbated by the growing civil unrest as to its conduct of the war and, of course, the loss of life suffered by its participants. The war was closely monitored by the Defense Secretary McNamara's office, with intense scrutiny from Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon; these analysts were, in the words of David Halberstam, "the best and the brightest" (1972). But it became increasingly obvious that analytic rigor—specified in metrics such as "body counts," ordnance expended, and supplies moved—and "rational" decision making were not only misleading in terms of the war's progress, but were surely not indicative of the

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[8] For details regarding the War on Poverty, see Aaron 1978; Kershaw and Courant 1970; Nathan 1985.

growing rancor that the war generated among American citizens. Too often there was evidence that the "hard and fast" numbers were being manipulated to serve military and political purposes. Moreover, systems analysis was neither cognitively nor viscerally able to encompass the almost daily changes in the war's activities occurring in both the international and the domestic arena. At the time, Colin Gray (1971) argued that systems analysis, one of the apparent US advantages of defense policy making, turned out to be a major shortcoming of the American war effort and was a partial contributor to the ultimate US failures in Vietnam. Finally, and most tellingly, Defense Department analysis could not appreciate the required (and re-spective) political wills necessary to triumph, or, in the case of this war, outlast the opponent. Frances FitzGerald's *Fire in the Lake* (1972) foretold the imminent Ameri-can military disaster as a function of the almost unlimited resources (including human lives) that the North Vietnamese were willing to expend in what they saw as the defense of their nation. In the latter years of the war, as the USA struggled to maintain its commitments, the Vietnam policies of President Richard Nixon segued unmistakably into

The Watergate scandals. The sordid events surrounding the re-election of President Nixon in the early 1970s, his administration's heavy-handed attempts to "cover up" the tell-tale incriminating signs, and his willingness to covertly gather evidence on Vietnam War protester Daniel Ellsberg led to the potential impeachment of an American president, averted only because President Nixon chose to resign in igno-miny rather than face congressional impeachment proceedings (Olson 2003). The overwhelming evidence of wrongdoing in the highest councils of the US government clearly brought home to the public that moral norms and values were central to the activities of government; to amass illegal evidence (probably through unconstitu-tional means) undermining those norms was an unpardonable political act. The Ethics in Government Act (1978) was only the most visible realization that normative standards were central to the activities of government, validating, as it were, one of the central tenets of the policy sciences. Regardless, however, few will ever forget the President of the United States protesting, "I am not a crook," and its effect on the public's trust in its elected government, a condition soon to be exacerbated by

The energy crisis of the 1970s. If the early 1960s' wellspring of analytic efforts was the War on Poverty and the late 1960s' was Vietnam, the energy crises of the 1970s provided ample grounds for the best analytic efforts the country could bring to bear. With highly visible gasoline shortages and record high energy prices throughout the nation, the public was inundated with multiple policy descriptions and formulas as to the level of petroleum reserves (domestic and worldwide) and competing energy sources (e.g. nuclear vs. petroleum vs. solar), all over differing (projected) time horizons; finally, as a backdrop framing these issues, hung the specter of threatened national security (for example, see Deese and Nye 1981; Stobaugh and Yergin 1979). With this plethora of technical data, seemingly the analytic community was prepared to bring light out of the darkness. But this was not to be the case; as Weyant was later to note, "perhaps as many as two-thirds of the [energy] models failed to achieve their avowed purposes in the form of direct application to policy

problems" (quoted in Weyant 1980, 212). The contrast was both striking and apparent: energy policy was awash in technical considerations (e.g. untapped petroleum reserves and complex technical modeling; see Greenberger, Brewer, and Schelling 1983) but the basic decisions were decidedly political (that is, *not* driven by analysis), as President Nixon declared "Project Independence," President Carter intoned that energy independence represented the "moral equivalency of war" (cattily acronymed into MEOW), and President Ford created a new Department of Energy (see Commoner 1979). There was seemingly a convergence between "analytic supply" and "government demand," yet the inherent complexity of the issues effectively resolved little, that is, no policy consensus was achieved, a condition that did little to enshrine the policy sciences approach with either its immediate clients (government officials) or its ultimate beneficiaries (the citizenry).

Since these historical events were first proposed as events that shaped the development of the policy sciences (deLeon 1988), there have been more than twenty-five years in which numerous political events have occurred that, in retrospect, might have affected the development of public policy studies. These include at least three declared wars in which the United States military has invaded nations, revolutionary legislation to reform regulatory and welfare policies, and a presidential impeachment by the US Congress. While one might make cases for these and (possibly) other events, sufficient evidence and analytic "distance" need to be accumulated before these can be examined through the "supply" and "demand" metaphor.

To summarize: These larger constellations of public events have manifested themselves in a general constellation in the way in which the American people view their government and its processes and, as a result, the role that public policy research could play in informing government policy makers. From the immense national pride that characterized the victory over totalitarian forces in the Second World War, the American public has suffered a series of disappointments and disillusionments in the public policy arena, ranging from what many consider to be a problematic War on Poverty to an ongoing policy stalemate in energy policy to a failed war in South-East Asia to the resignation of a twice-elected president. Thus, there should be little surprise when scholars like E. J. Dionne write *Why Americans Hate Politics* (1991) or Joseph Nye and colleagues edit a book *Why Americans Don't Trust Government* (1997). Most damaging, of course, to the policy sciences' tradition is Christopher Lasch's pointed and hardly irrelevant question: "does democracy have a future? . . . It isn't a question of whether democracy *can* survive . . . [it] is whether democracy *deserves* to survive" (Lasch 1995, 1, 85; emphases added),

One needs to be balanced. The picture of post-Second World War American public policy hardly represents a crown of thorns. In many ways, the American quality of political life has benefited directly and greatly from public policy making, ranging from the Marshall Plan (which effectively halted the march of European communism after the Second World War) to the GI Bill (which brought the benefits of higher education to an entire generation of American men) to Medicare/Medicaid (1964) to the American civil rights movements to a flowering of environmental programs to (literally) men on the moon. However, as Derek Bok (1997) has pointed out,

American expectations and achievements have hardly produced universal progress compared to other industrialized nations, with crime, the environment, health care, and public education being only four examples. What motivated the spread of the public policy orientation was the expectation that well-trained, professional analysts, appropriately focused, would produce an unbroken succession of policy successes. As Richard Nelson (1977) wondered, if America could put a man on the moon, why was it unable to solve the problems of the urban ghetto? Nelson suggested, and the narratives above second, that the promise of the policy sciences has not been fulfilled. All of which leads one to ask a series of questions, assuming, naturally, that this promise is still worthwhile, i.e. not impossible: Why are some examples of policy research more successful than others? Or, is there a public policy "learning curve?" What does it resemble and to whom? What is its trajectory? And where is it going?

Finally, it is important to observe that political activities and results are not synonymous with the practice of the public policy or the policy sciences. But they certainly reside in the same policy space. For the policy sciences to meet the goals of improving government policy through a rigorous application of its central themes, then the failures of the body politic naturally must be at least partially attributed to failure of, or at least a serious shortfall in, the policy sciences' approach. To ask the same question from an oppositional perspective: Why should the nominal recipients of policy research subscribe to it if the research does not reflect the values and intuitions of the client policy maker, that is, in their eyes, does not represent any discernible value added? To this question, one needs to add the issue of democratic governance, a concept virtually everybody would agree upon until the important issues of detail emerge (see deLeon 1997; Barber 1984; Dahl 1990/1970), e.g. does direct democracy have a realistic place in a representative, basically pluralist democracy?

3. "... Miles to Go Before I Sleep"

Robert Frost, in his "Stopping in the Woods on a Snowy Evening" (published in 1923), was certainly not concerned with the relevance of the public policy in general and, in particular, the institutional viability of the policy sciences. Still, in writing

> The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
> But I have many promises to keep
> And miles to go before I sleep,

he does provide an allusion to what ails the contemporaneous relationship between policy makers and their would-be advisers, a relationship tempered by the history of the policy sciences and their applications, one rife with institutional complexity, with much to promise, and "miles" to go before those promises are realized. What

necessary services or goods are policy makers asking from their policy advisers and how can the policy scientist best (as a function of quality and integrity) respond? Inherent in this question is a principal assumption: policy advisers, in the words of Aaron Wildavsky (1979b), must "speak truth to power." That is, without access to and the ear of policy makers, the policy sciences lose their sine qua non; they have been, from their earliest iteration, an applied (inter)discipline: if they need to re-ask Robert Lynn's question, *Knowledge for What*? (1939); if the study of public policy becomes irrelevant through lack of application or, to borrow deLeon's metaphor, if (policy) advice does not match (political) consent, then—let us be candid—the policy sciences have failed to meet the challenges spelled out by Lasswell, Dror, and the other pioneers in their efforts.

There are two possible explanations that might address this worrisome condition. The first, and more optimistic reading is that the policy research community is still maturing in terms of a necessary set of skills and applications. Brewer and Lövgren (1999, 315) allude to this possibility during a Swedish symposium on environmental research:

While the demand for interdisciplinary work is large and apparently growing, our capacity to engage in it productively is not keeping pace. This is not to say that genuine knowledge about complex problems and the requisite theories, methods, and practices to confront them is unfamiliar. Instead, we seem to be facing numerous challenges   intellectual, practical, and organization   that impede our efforts to engage problems effectively.

This explanation suggests that with a bit more theory and practice, typically through a greater application of interdisciplinary activity, more receptive client organizations, and a few more tractable problems, there is little wrong with the policy sciences approach that a normal cognitive maturation process might not remedy. However, in fairness, this promise was laid out by the policy sciences' originating fathers (and others; see Merton 1936) more than a half-century ago and is still awaiting consummation. Moreover, the extant public policy theories are at best only "under construction" rather than in the testing stage (see Sabatier 1999). Few public policy scholars today deride the value of an interdisciplinary approach (e.g. see Karlqvist 1999 and Fischer 2003); in the hands of a careful student of democratic practices, like Robert Putnam in *Making Democracy Work* (1993), it clearly is of great worth and value. However, even if this interdisciplinary possibility is widely seen as both valid and persuasive, then it is still imperative to measure out other ameliorative elements of the policy sciences besides an interdisciplinary approach, a compliant client, or a few more methodological tools.

An alternative (and admittedly more pessimistic) reading is that the policy sciences approach is losing whatever currency it once held among policy makers, policy scholars, and the cognizant publics. If so, one needs to explore possible reasons. To borrow a phrase used by Martin Rein and Donald Schön (1993), in a political system characterized by pluralism, there is an inherent-bordering-upon-intractable problem in reaching a consensus on "framing" the analysis (also see Schön and Rein 1994). In Rein and Schön's (1993, 146) description, "framing is a way of selecting, organizing,

interpreting, and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analyzing, persuading, and acting." John Dryzek (1993, 222) agrees with Rein and Schön in terms of framing's centrality but also comments on the difficulty in framing policy discourse: "each frame treats some topics as more salient than others, defines social problems in a unique fashion, commits itself to particular value judgments, and generally interprets the world in its own particular and partial way. . . . . [Not surprisingly] frames are not easily adjudicated." (A thought problem for the enthusiast: How have "framing" problems affected the US commitment to the recurrent Middle East crises, to say nothing of the shortcomings of the American public education system or US environmental/energy policy?) In an American political and social system often defined by polar politics and overwhelming complexity that result in a general lack of consensus, reaching agreements on how best to frame policy issues could be tantamount to impossible or, more likely, something to be "put aside" until the next political crisis forces a temporary consensus, which, of course, dissipates when the crisis passes. To pose the question frankly: again, in an applied context, what "value added" does the study of public policy and the policy sciences bring to a political policy-making process that is often and decidedly un-analytic?

Once we have asked these questions, of course, we should not necessarily subscribe to a counsel of despair or unnecessarily rend our collective sackcloth. But it is important to recognize that the policy sciences as a fruitful exercise for future policy makers is not a foregone conclusion, as we have enumerated above, and not necessarily as it has been traditionally presented. If for no other reason, time and conditions have changed. In all likelihood, Lasswell and his colleagues never considered their framework to be forever sacrosanct or beyond amendment. Douglas Torgerson (1986, 52–3; emphasis in original) speaks to this issue:

The dynamic nature of the [policy sciences] phenomenon is rooted in an internal tension, a *dialectic opposition between knowledge and politics*. Through the interplay of knowledge and politics, different aspects of the phenomenon become salient at different moments . . . the presence of dialectical tension means that the phenomenon has the potential to develop, to change its form. However, no particular pattern of development is inevitable.

What then might be some signposts for the continued development and application of the policy sciences, or what Dan Durning (1999) has described as "The transition from traditional to postpositive policy analysis?" A more precise criterion as well as introducing a new approach is offered by Maarten Hajer and Hendrik Wagenaar (2003*a*: 4; emphasis in original): "*What kind of policy analysis might be relevant to understanding governance in an emerging social network society?*" Furthermore, Hajer and Wagenaar (2003*a*: 15) speak directly to the normative compass of the policy sciences: "Whatever we have to say about the nature and foundation of the policy sciences, its litmus test will be that it must 'work' for the everyday reality of modern democracy." Who and what, in Laurence Lynn's (1999) expression, warrants "a place at the [public policy] table" and why? One can posit that the traditional public policy analytic mode, primarily based on a social welfare model (for example,

see Weimer and Vining 2005) has not proven particularly successful when applied to the political arena (as, indeed, the post-positivists argue; see below), an arena marked more by backroom compromise than theoretic-elegant solutions. Thus, we are enjoined to consider a broader set of approaches and methodologies beyond those adopted whole cloth from microeconomics and operations research. As such, we need to examine thoughtfully various aspects of the post-positivist research orientations.

Hajer and Wagenaar (2003a) have presented an innovative central concept to the policy sciences methodological tool kit; that is, the idea of *social networks* under a democratic, participative regime.[9] This orientation is reflected in three conditions. First, increasingly, observers of public policy issues no longer look at specified governmental units (say, the Department of Commerce for globalization issues or the Department of Education's mission to "leave no child behind") per se. Rather, they tend to examine *issue* networks, including governmental units on the federal *and* state *and* municipal levels; these are constantly seen to be interacting with important non-profit organizations (NPOs) on both the national and the local levels, and various representations from the private sector as well (Heclo 1977; Carlsson 2000). Research in health care, education, social welfare, the environment, indeed, even national security (in terms of protecting the citizen against terrorist threats; see Kettl 2004) suggests the rise of the social network phenomenon. All of these actors are engaging in what Hajer (1993) called "policy discourses," hopefully, but not always, of a cooperative nature. Second, of equal importance to the policy sciences, they must continue to expound a democratic orientation, or what Mark Warren (1992) has termed an "expansive democracy," one featuring an enlarged component of public participation, often in the direct democratic vein and, more commonly now, without the traditional political party serving as an intermediary; the alternative is what Dryzek once balefully referred to as "the policy sciences of tyranny" (Dryzek 1989, 98), when bureaucratic and technological elites assume governance roles (see Fischer 2003). Third, and in conjunction with the first two, the policy sciences need to assimilate the decentralization tendencies of political systems that are so vital to contemporary public management processes, often under the heading of the "new" public management (e.g. Osborne and Gaebler 1992), but also an integral part of the participatory policy analysis themes (deLeon 1997; Mayer 1997; Fischer 2000).

In many ways, the inclusion of a post-positivist orientation in public policy theory and practice could mark a fractious transition within the community of policy researchers, for a number of reasons. There is the potential for an internecine brouhaha between the positivist and post-positivist advocates. Historically, the public policy "track record" has characteristically been based on a social welfare economics, i.e. a largely empirical, analytic approach; there are significant intellectual investments (to say nothing of a large education infrastructure) supporting this endeavor. However, there are numerous scholars who suggest that the prevailing quantitative orientation is precisely the problem and the positivist approach should

[9] Scott (1991) and Wasserman and Faust (1994) offer thorough introductions to social network analysis.

be held intellectually accountable for the shortcomings observed. Many scholars of the post-positivist bent—Frank Fischer (2003), John Dryzek (1990, 2000), Ronald Brunner (1991), Maarten Hajer (1993; with Wagenaar 2003a)—have identified what they claim to be serious epistemological failures of the positivist approach, assumptions, and results, offering historical examples (above) that seem to be supportive. Dryzek (1990, 4–6) has been particularly scathing in his assessments of positivism, especially what he (and others) call "instrumental rationality," which, he claims:

destroys the more congenial, spontaneous, egalitarian, and intrinsically meaningful aspects of human association . . . represses individuals . . . is ineffective when confronted with complex social problems . . . makes effective and appropriate policy analysis impossible . . . [and, most critically] is antidemocratic.

But, as Laurence Lynn (1999) has convincingly argued, many lucid and powerful (and in some cases, unexpected) insights have been gleaned from the collective analytic (read: positivist) corpus conducted over the past fifty years (such as in the field of criminal justice, public transportation, and social welfare policy) and there is little reason to suspect that future analysts would want to exorcize these modes. Alice Rivlin (1970) suggested years ago that we might not have arrived at many definitive answers to vexing public problems, but policy research has at least permitted us to ask more appropriate questions. This capability should not be treated lightly, for asking the right questions is surely the first step in deriving the right answers.

Neither side of this divide, then, is without valid debating points as they set forth the future directions for the study of public policy. More important, however, is that the scholars of the positivist and post-positivist persuasions should not intellectually isolate themselves from one another. Few social welfare or health policy economists would deny that there are important variables outside the economic orbit in most social transfer equations; why else would they concern themselves about issues of equity? Similarly, few proponents of an "interpretative analysis" would simply eliminate the calculation of expenses deriving from differing bond rates underlying urban renewal opportunities from their analysis. The policy problem—as any analyst of most any stripe will agree—must be defined in terms of what methodologies are relevant by the context (see deLeon 1998), not by an analyst's preferred methodologies, as Lynn (1999) implies in his criticism of the post-positivist approach. The alternative diagnosis comes dangerously close to Abraham Kaplan's (1964) famous "law of the instrument:" when all you have is a hammer, the whole world looks like a nail.

In this case, social network theory might not only describe a new conceptual approach to viewing the policy world, but it also provides an intellectual bridge that both sides of the positivist–post-positivist divide can accept. And, to be sure, there are already some "bridging" methodologies, such as Q-sort (Durning 1999) and social network analysis, that both camps can possibly share.[10] But the key to the continued development of the policy sciences and public policy research community in general is the ability to countenance and assimilate new concepts as *a function of the problem*

[10] Steven Brown (1980) is arguably the best reference for those wishing to engage in Q sort analysis.

statement, i.e. the problem context, as their analytic lodestone. This suggests a willingness to utilize whichever approach is best suited for the analysis at hand. A favorable harbinger in this regard is the recognition of a more ecumenical set of methodological approaches and the importance of process *and* substance, as evidenced in the more recent policy analysis textbooks (e.g. Weimer and Vining 2005; MacRae and Whittington 1997).

The democratic theme, a central part of the policy sciences' Lasswellian heritage, has been emphasized of late in terms of "participatory policy analysis" (PPA), or the active involvements (or "discourse" or "deliberation" or "deliberative democracy") of citizens in the formulation of policy agenda.[11] James Fishkin (1991, 1995) has engaged in a series of carefully structured public deliberations as a means to bring public awareness and discursive involvement to political policy making. But the deliberative role in public policy making has also been derided as being simply "too cumbersome" or "too time intensive;" in the problematic search for consensus, its products are too ambiguous; some characterize it as little more than a publicity exercise in which the opposing group that has the more robust vocal chords or tenacity or resources is the invariable winner; deLeon (1997) has suggested that there are contingencies in which technical expertise and/or expediency are crucial for decision making; and, as Lyons and his colleagues (1992) have written, participatory policy analysis does not necessarily result in greater citizen participation, knowledge of the problem, or even satisfaction; indeed, James Madison's *Federalist Papers* (number 10) carefully warned about the dangers of popular participation in government.

There are, in short, many obstacles to participatory policy analysis that would caution its universal dissemination. However, it does need to be recognized that there have been some instances in which PPA has performed admirably, mostly, of course, on local levels (for examples, see Kathlene and Martin 1991; Gutmann and Thompson 1996; deLeon 1997) and in many cases of environmental mediations (Beierle and Cayford 2002; Fischer 2000). In short, the democratic ethos is such a fundamental bedrock of the American polity that it is difficult to countenance an ideology or orientation that could supplant it (Dahl 1998). In that regard, there appear to be ample grounds for a more systematic examination and application of PPA.

Lastly, in both the public and private sectors, the American polity is undergoing the decentralization of the nation's political processes. The current literature on public management talks extensively about the "devolution" of power from the federal government down to state and municipal governments, a phenomenon manifested by the Welfare Reform Act and the Telecommunication Act (both 1996). To some, for instance, centralized government regulation has become little more than an antiquated (perhaps dysfunctional) concept, as easily abandoned as the bustle. If these trends continue, various aspects of the policy sciences—such as PPA and social network theories—are certain to become more pivotal in addressing the potential effects of decentralized authority; e.g. what measures would be necessary to ensure public accountability? One obvious concern is that policy researchers will

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[11] See Dryzek 1990, 2000; Renn et al. 1993; Elster 1998; Forester 1999; Fischer 2003; deLeon 1997.

need to assimilate a new set of analytic skills dealing with education and negotiation and mediation, that is, helping to forge policy design and implementation rather than advise policy makers, which raises another recurring dilemma, impartiality.

4. CONCLUSION

The policy sciences were developed in part as the "policy sciences of democracy… directed towards knowledge to improve the practice of democracy" (Lasswell 1951*a*, 14) and in recognition of providing "intelligence pertinent to the integration of values realized by and embodied by interpersonal relations [such as] human dignity and the realization of human capacities" (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950, 15). These represent their conceptual bedrock. But, having said this, the world has surely changed since the early 1950s. With these changes, it would be quixotic to suggest that the policy sciences as an intellectual orientation have remained somehow constant. To this end, we have offered some new approaches that could be readily incorporated into the body of the policy sciences' approach.

As we have pointed out, then, some changes are necessary to "improve" the policy sciences' processes and the results; stasis is hardly an option. However, to surrender the hallmarks of the policy sciences' approach would be tantamount to giving up the (relevance) candle to satisfy the (Lasswellian) flame. For these reasons, a continuing dialogue is necessary to assure that both the candle and the flame will endure and shed light on their appointed subjects.

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