1 The Policy Sciences at the Crossroads

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INTRODUCTION

From the time of Harold Lasswell's (1951) first articulation of the policy sciences concept, the benchmark of their field of inquiry was relevance to the political and social worlds. Responding directly to the questions posed by Robert Lynd's (1939) *Knowledge for What?* and John Dewey's relentless pressing of pragmatism (deLeon and Vogenbeck 2006), both its salient theories and real-world applications were at the center of the policy sciences. It was, in many ways, seen by the academic and the administrator as the ultimate culmination of the town and gown orientation.

Seemingly, as the world's problems have become increasingly complex, this orientation should be likewise even more central, as it tries to resolve the problems pressing society and its governments. And, indeed, over the past few decades, virtually every governmental bureaucracy or agency (as well an numerous nonprofit groups) has established some sort of analytic charter and attendant desk (especially those dealing with policy analysis and/or evaluation) to underpin its administrative decisions and agenda (see Radin 2000). At the same time, however, others have described the general abandonment in political circles of rational, analytic thought, with policy scholars often voicing the perception that their work is not being utilized. Donald Beam (1996, 430–431) has characterized policy analysts as fraught with "fear, paranoia, apprehension, and denial" and that they do not "have as much confidence . . . about their value in the political process as they did 15 or 20 years ago." Heineman and his colleagues (2002, 1 and 9) are equally distressed in terms of access accorded policy research and its 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.

More recently, author Ron Suskind described a meeting with an official of the George W. Bush White House; that official's comments directly affect the ways in which policy scholars address their stock and trade:

> The aide said that guys like [Suskind] were "in what we call the reality-based community," which he defined as people who "believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality." I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. "That's not the way the world really operates any more," he continued. "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And

> while you're studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to study what we do." (Suskind 2004, 51)

To this observer, a prescriptive policy analysis was being subverted to a descriptive and mostly irrelevant historical or after-the-fact analysis.

Still, to be fair, the history of post-WW II American public policy represents numerous important achievements. In many ways, the American quality of political life has benefited directly and greatly from public policymaking, ranging from the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan (that effectively halted the march of European communism after WW II) to the GI Bill (that brought the benefits of higher education to an entire generation of American men and, with it, the broad dissemination of higher education into the fabric of the American society) to the original Medicare/Medicaid policies (1964) to the American civil rights movements to an 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 K-12 education being only four of the United States' shortcomings, thereby recalling Richard Nelson's (1977) trenchant question, "if we can put a man on the moon, why can't we solve the problems of the urban ghetto?" All of which leads one—roughly fifty years after Lasswell's initial articulation of the policy sciences—to ask a series of critical evaluative questions as to their continued vitality: Why are some examples of policy research more successful than others? Or, is there a policy sciences' learning curve? What represents a success and what is its trajectory? Can we calculate the respective costs and benefits? And, ultimately, how do we evaluate the policy sciences in terms of both process and results?

To understand the validity of these concerns, it is necessary to place them in the context of the development of the policy sciences. This chapter examines the political, methodological, and philosophical underpinnings in the development of the policy sciences to trace out their role in the contemporary political setting. It also permits us to propose ways in which the policy sciences might be amended.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE POLICY SCIENCES

For the sake of the discussion, let us quickly set out the central touchstones of the policy sciences approach.[1] The policy sciences approach and its advocates deliberately distinguished themselves from early scholars in (among others) political science, public administration, communications, psychology, jurisprudence, and sociology by posing three defining characteristics that, in combination, transcended the individual contributions from those more traditional areas of study:

1. The policy sciences were consciously framed as being *problem-oriented*, quite explicitly addressing public policy issues and posing recommendations for their relief, while openly rejecting the study of a phenomenon for its own sake (Lasswell 1956); the societal or political question—So what?—has always been pivotal in 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 the analysis, methodology, and subsequent recommendations. Thus, necessarily, the policy approach has not developed an overarching theoretic foundation.
2. The policy sciences are distinctively *multi-disciplinary* in their intellectual and practical approaches. This is because almost every social or political problem has multiple compo-

1. Greater detail and explanation can be found in deLeon (1988); "archival" materials might include Lasswell 1951a, 1951b, and 1971; Lasswell and Kaplan 1950; Dewey 1927; Merriam 1926; and Merton 1936.

nents closely linked 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. Imagine, if you can, policy research in urban redevelopment (or, for that matter, international terrorism) that did not entail a constellation of disciplinary approaches and skills.

3. The policy sciences' approach is deliberately *normative* or *value oriented*; in many cases, the recurring theme of the policy sciences deals with the democratic ethos and human dignity.[2] This value orientation was largely in reaction to behavioralism, i.e., "objectivism," in the social sciences, and in recognition 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/his own personal values, which also must be understood, if not resolved, as Amy (1984) has discussed. This theme later achieved a central role in the policy sciences' movement to a post-positivist orientation (see, among others, Dryzek 1990, and Fischer 2003).

Beryl Radin (2000) and Peter deLeon (1988) have both described the institutional and political evolutions of the policy sciences.[3] Although they are not in obvious opposition to one another, their respective chronologies offer contrasting emphases. Radin (2000) argued that the policy analysis approach knowingly drew upon the heritage of American public administration scholarship; for instance, she suggested that policy analysis represent a continuation of the early twentieth century Progressive Movement (also see Fischer 2003) in particular, in terms of its scientific analysis of social issues and the democratic polity. Her narrative particularly focused on the institutional (and supporting educational) growth of the policy analysis approach. Radin suggested a fundamentally linear (albeit gradual) progression from a limited analytic approach practiced by a relatively few practitioners (e.g., by the Rand Corporation in California; see Smith 1966) to a growing number of government institutions, "think tanks," and universities.

Following the introduction and apparent success of systems analysis (which many see as the direct precursor of policy analysis) in Secretary Robert McNamara's Department of Defense in the early 1960s (see Smith 1966), its applications spread out into other government agencies, such as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in the mid-1960s, with the explicit blessing of President Lyndon Johnson. Although systems analysis never again enjoyed the great (and, to be fair, transitory) success that it did in the Defense Department (see Wildavsky 1979), the analytic orientation soon was adopted by a number of federal offices, state agencies, and a large number of analytic consultant groups (see Fischer 1993, and Ricci 1984). Thus, Radin (2000) viewed the development of the policy analysis 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. However, this narrative pays scant attention to three hallmarks of the policy sciences approach: there is little direct attention to the problem orientation of the activity, the multidisciplinary themes are largely neglected, and the normative groundings of policy issues (and recommendations) are often overlooked. As such, Radin's very thoughtful analysis described the largely successful institutional (but basically apolitical) process of formal policy research finding a bureaucratic home in governments.

2. In one of its earliest founding declarations, H. D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan (1950, xii and xxiv) dedicated 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 depersonalize state of the efficiency of a social mechanism, but human dignity and the realization of human capabilities."
3. For the present purposes, let us assume that the policy sciences rubric encompasses the differences described by the terms "policy analysis," "systems analysis," and "policy sciences." Fischer (2003, fns. 1 and 4, pp. 1 and 3, respectively) is in agreement with deLeon (1988) in this usage.

DeLeon (1988) offered a parallel but somewhat more complicated model in which he links analytic activities related to specific political events (what he terms *supply*, that is, events that supplied analysts with a set of particular conditions to which they could apply their skills, a learning activity, if you will) with an evolving requirement for policy analysis within government offices (*demand*, i.e., a growing requirement for analytic skills). In particular, he suggested a series of five political events as having been pivotal in the development of the policy sciences, in terms of lessons learned:[4]

The Second World War. The United States assembled an unprecedented number of social scientists—economists, political scientists, operations researchers, psychologists, etc.—to apply their particular skills to further the Allied war efforts. These activities established an important precedent, illustrating the ability of the social sciences to direct problem-oriented analysis to urgent public issues, in this case, assuring victory over the Axis powers. Indeed, Lasswell and his policy sciences collaborator Abraham Kaplan spent the war studying propaganda techniques employed by the Library of Congress. These collective efforts (and their apparent successes) led directly to the postwar establishment of the National Science Foundation (admittedly 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 battle-tested and ready, there was little on the *demand* side from the government, perhaps because of the post-WW II society's desire to return to normalcy.

The War on Poverty. In the early 1960s, largely fueled by the emerging civil rights demonstrations and the new visibility of major nonprofit organizations (e.g., the Ford Foundation) on the U.S. political scene, Americans finally took notice of the pervasive, demeaning 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 enthusiasm but little agreement, 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 (i.e., the 1964 Civil Rights Act). Walter Williams (1998), reminiscing about his earlier days in the Office of Economic Opportunity (O.E.O.), has suggested that these were the "glory days" of policy analysis. Other O.E.O. 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 antipoverty, anticrime, 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."[5]

The Vietnam War. The Vietnam War brought the tools of policy analysis to combat situations, a massive analytic exercise that was exacerbated by the growing domestic unrest as to its conduct and, of course, the loss of lives suffered by its participants. The war was closely monitored by Secretary of Defense McNamara's office, with on-going scrutiny from Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon;[6] these participating personnel, in the words of David Halberstam (1972), were "the best and the brightest." But it became increasingly obvious that analytic rigor—specified in terms such as

4. These are elaborated upon in deLeon (1988). Fischer (2003) and Dryzek (1993) have adopted much of his interpretation.
5. For details regarding the War on Poverty, see Aaron (1978), Kershaw (1970), and Nathan (1985).
6. As was reflected by the publication by the *New York Times* of the McNamara review of the Vietnam commitment, widely known as The Pentagon Papers (Sheenan 1972).

body counts, *ordnance expended*, and *supplies moved*—and rational decision making were largely rendered irrelevant by the growing public sentiment against the war often critically described in the American media, and finally reflected in the 1972 American presidential elections. Too often there was evidence that the hard and fast numbers were being purposively manipulated to serve military and political ends. Moreover, even on its relatively good days, systems analysts were not intellectually able to encompass the almost daily changes in the war's activities occurring in both the international and domestic arenas. At the time, Colin Gray (1971) argued that systems analysis, one of the apparent U.S. advantages of defense policymaking, turned out to be a major shortcoming of the American war effort and was a partial contributor to the ultimate U.S. failures in Vietnam. Finally, and most tellingly, Defense Department analysts could not reflect the (respective) political wills necessary to triumph, or, in the case of this war, outlast the opponent. Cost-effective approaches against the North Vietnamese did little to diminish their war-fighting capacity (see Gelb and Betts 1979), until U.S. troops were finally literally forced to abandon the nation they had sacrificed over fifty thousand lives to protect.

The Watergate Scandal. The most troubling activities surrounding the re-election of President Richard Nixon in the 1972 campaign, his administration and the Committee to Re-elect the President's (CREEP) heavy-handed attempts to "cover up" the tell-tale incriminating signs, and his willingness to covertly prosecute Vietnam war protester Daniel Ellsberg led to impeachment charges being leveled against an American President, which were only averted because President Nixon chose to resign in ignominy rather than face congressional impeachment proceedings (Lukas 1976; Olson 2003).[7] The undeniable evidence of culpability in the highest councils of the U.S. government led to the clear recognition by the public that moral norms and values had been violated by the associates of the president with the almost sure connivance by the president himself. These unsanctioned activities of government, e.g., the amassing of illegal evidence (probably through unconstitutional means) undermined the public norm and constituted an unpardonable political act. Indeed, many observers have argued that President Gerald Ford (who, as President Nixon's appointed vice president, succeeded him) lost to candidate Jimmy Carter in the 1976 presidential election because he chose to pardon President Nixon, thus protecting him from possible criminal prosecution. Few can look back on the Watergate scandal without reflecting on its effect of the public's trust in its elected government. Jimmy Carter's remarkable campaign pledge that "I will never lie to you" and the Ethics in Government Act (1978) were only the most visible realizations that normative standards were central to the activities of government, validating, as it were, one of the central tenets of the policy sciences.

The Energy Crisis of the 1970s. If the early 1960s' wellspring of analytic efforts was the War on Poverty and the late 1960s' was the Vietnam engagement, the 1970s' energy crisis provided ample grounds for the best analytic efforts the country could offer. Beset with nation-wide high gasoline prices, the public was all-but-awash with descriptions of and recommendations for a national energy policy; its elements might have addressed the level of petroleum reserves (domestic and world-wide) and competing energy sources (e.g., nuclear vs. petroleum vs. solar), all over differing (projected) time horizons (e.g., see Stobaugh and Yergin 1979). With this veritable ocean of technical data, the analytic community was seemingly prepared to knowingly inform the energy policymakers, up to and including the president. 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" (Weyant 1980, 212). The contrast was both striking and apparent: energy policy was replete in technical, analytic considerations (e.g., untapped petroleum reserves and complex technical modeling; see Greenberger et al. 1983), but the basic decisions

7. The impeachment episode was made more sordid by the earlier resignation of President Nixon's Vice President, Spiro Agnew, rather than face charges of political corruption incurred while he was the Governor of Maryland (see Cohen and Witcover 1974).

were decidedly political in nature (that is, *not* driven by analysis)—President Nixon established Project Independence, President Carter declared that energy independence represented the "moral equivalency of war," President Ford created a new Department of Energy (see Commoner 1979), with President Carter expanding the alternatives option by creating the Solar Energy Research Institute (Laird 2001). There was seemingly a convergence between analytic supply and government demand, yet no policy coherence, let alone consensus, was achieved, a condition that did little to endear the policy sciences approach with either its immediate clients (government officials) or its ultimate beneficiaries (the citizenry).

Since deLeon's (1988) analysis, a final historical event seemingly has cast its shadow on the development of the policy sciences, namely *the end of the Cold War*.[8] The Cold War basically dictated American politics from the end of the Second World War until the very end of the 1980s and, in retrospect, was almost as much an analytic activity as it was political.[9] Given that the central occupation of the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), virtually since it was created, was the careful and thorough monitoring of the (then) Soviet Union, it was particularly remarkable that U.S. policymakers were caught almost totally unawares when Mikhail Gorbachev (and later Boris Yeltsin) presided over the demise of the "evil empire," almost as demanded by President Ronald Reagan a few years earlier. Without questioning the personal courage and (later) flexibility of U.S. and Russian leaders, it was telling that neither system seemed to have the analytic wherewithal that was capable of developing friendly overtures toward one another. One standard explanation was that the U.S. defense budget (and its impending arsenal of weapons systems) forced the Soviets into a ruinously costly arms race, a race in which it found itself unable to compete economically, let alone technically. This disparity led the Soviet to abandon the Cold War, even if this meant the certain loss of the Soviet "empire." While not without its merits, this interpretation sorely neglects the effects of the American antinuclear movement (deLeon 1987) on its leaders. In short, the analytic fumblings of the CIA and the mis-estimation of the effects of American public opinion did much to set the existing Cold War in the public's conscience and did little to suggest how it might have ended. That is, the end of the Cold War, however salutary, did not represent a feather in the policy sciences' cap.

We need to observe that while the fruits of the policy sciences might not have been especially bountiful when observed through a set of political lenses, nevertheless, political activities and results are not synonymous with the policy sciences. But it is equally certain that the two are coincident, that they reside in the same policy space. If the policy sciences are 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 and the resulting policy does not reflect the values and intuitions of the client policymaker, that is, in their eyes, does not represent any discernable 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 1970/1990), e.g., does direct democracy have a realistic place in a representative, basically pluralist democracy. Still, this is an issue repeatedly raised by contemporary observers (e.g., Dionne 1991; Nye et al. 1997), none more pointedly than Christopher Lasch: "does democracy have a future? . . . It isn't a question of whether democracy *can* survive . . . [it] is whether

8. Certainly other political events since 1990 have weighed heavily on the American body politics (e.g., the impeachment trial of President William Clinton and the various events surrounding the war on terrorism including the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq), but the historical record on these events, let alone their effects on the policy research communities, have yet to be written.
9. There is a lengthy literature on this monumental topic; see Gaddis (1992) and Beschloss and Talbott (1993) for two timely analyses.

democracy *deserves* to survive" (1995, 1 and 85; emphases added). In light of legislation such as the USA PATRIOT Act (passed in the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 1991 attacks on Washington D.C. and New York City), this question becomes even more germane.

BACKWARD TO THE FUTURE

It is important to realize that the challenges to the policy sciences are not unexpected; any orientation explicitly predicated on normative values is certain to be contentious, just as a range of value issues is fractious. Moreover, the founders of the policy sciences recognized that their approaches were certain to change, as the dilemmas and challenges faced by the policy sciences changed. We can look more closely at two areas in which changes are more likely for the policy sciences, in its interactions with the world of political reality and an expansion of its theoretic constructs.

The first dilemma, one which seems as intractable as the changing political scene would imagine, is reflected in what Douglas Torgerson (1986, 52–53; emphases in original) has depicted as:

> 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.

The described tension is hardly novel; C. P. Snow (1964) described this inherent conflict in terms of "two cultures," in his case, politics and science. What with the increases polarization of the American body politic, almost any given issue is well-fortified with (at least) two sets of orthogonal policy analytic-based positions, each carefully articulated in both the policy and normative modes (Rich 2004). And the growing complexity within policy issues (and between policy issues and the natural environment; see Wilson 1998) only make the roles staked out by the policy sciences more difficult to operationalize. In many ways, the three-tiered characteristics central to the policy sciences' approach that were spelled out earlier have been largely accommodated: the policy focus is increasingly on social problems, however and whoever is defining them; few would argue nowadays that politico-social problems are anything else than grounds for multidisciplinary research, with the only real debate is over which disciplines have particular standing; and most would agree that norms—not "objective" science—are at the heart of most politico-social disputes. For example, nobody would suggest that President G. W. Bush's education initiatives are mal-intended, but proponents and opponents will argue endlessly over the thrust and details of the No Child Left Behind program and, more generally, the role of the federal government in elementary education.

The problem then, lies more in the reconciliation of differing policy research activities. This resolution is often confounded by differing stances and positions, neither of which is particularly amendable to compromise by those involved. The effect of the policy research orientation is that all sides to any given arguments have their supportive analytic evidence, thus neatly reducing the argument to the underlying values. Which, of course, is the heart of the problem. The policy sciences only promised to bring greater intelligence to government; nobody ever made claims that they would *ipso facto* make government and its accompanying politic more intelligent. The intellectual and organizational format, then, is widely accepted but the exact content and the end results remain under almost constant dispute, so participants can argue over the most basic (and often intractable) points, such as the appropriate roles of the federal government and the private market.

The major epistemological thrust that has emerged over the past decade in the policy sciences has been reflected in the transition from an empirical (often described as a "positivist") methodology

to a more context-oriented "post-positivist" methodology, and, with it, a return to the democratic orientation that Lasswell and his colleagues had earlier championed. In many ways, this movement had three components. First, as noted above, the policy sciences' record of historical successes was much less than impressive. Many scholars suggested that the shortcomings of the policy sciences were possibly due to its positivist methodologies, one historically based on the tenets of social welfare economics (e.g., benefit/cost analysis) that were fundamentally flawed; as such, it should not be surprising that the resulting analyses were also flawed. John Dryzek (1990, 4–6) was scathing in his assessments of positivism, especially over what he (and others; see Fischer 2003; Hajer and Wagenaar 2003) referred to "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.

Second, the post-positivist epistemological orientation argued for an alternative policy approach, one that has featured different variations of greater citizen participation (as opposed to technical, generally removed elites), often under the phrase of "participatory policy analysis" (deLeon 1997; Fischer 2003; Dryzek 1990; Mayer 1997) or "deliberative democracy" (see Dryzek 2000; Elster 1998; Gutmann and Thompson 2004). In a more applied set of exercises, James Fishkin (1991; 1995) has engaged citizen-voters in a series of discursive panels as a way of bringing public education, awareness, and deliberation to the political policymaking arena. While many have described these meetings as "new," in truth, they would have been familiar and welcomed to a host of political philosophers as far back as Aristotle (and the Athenian fora) to Jean-Jacques Rosseau to John Stuart Mills to New England town meetings to John Dewey.

Third, policy theorists began to realize that the socio-politico was too complex to be reduced by reduction approaches, and that differing context often required very different perspectives and epistemologies; that is, objectivism was inadequate to the policy tasks. Moreover, many of the perceived conditions were subjectively ascribed to the situation and the participants. If, in fact, the socio-politico context and the individuals within it were a function of social construction, as these theorists (Schneider and Ingram 1997; Fischer 2003; Schneider and Ingram 2005) have contended, then a deliberative democracy model (or some variant) becomes even more essential as affected parties try to forge an agreement, and a benefit-cost analysis (as an example of the historic policy analysis) becomes even more problematic.

But while deliberative democracy or participatory policy analysis has been promising—even illuminating—to many theorists, it has also been severely criticized by others as being "too cumbersome" or demanding too much time or including too many participants to move toward policy closure, especially in today's mega-polities (deLeon 1997); some have characterized it as little more than a publicity exercise in which the opposing group that has the more strident vocal chords or lasting power is the invariable winner. Furthermore, as Larry Lynn (1999) has convincingly argued, many lucid and powerful (and in some cases, unanticipated) insights have been gleaned from the collective analytic (read: positivist) corpus conducted over the past fifty years and there is little reason to suspect that future analysts would want to exorcise these findings or overlook these approaches. Rivlin (1970) observed years ago that policy research has been slow and it might not have arrived at many definitive answers to social problems, but it has at least discerned appropriate questions to be posed. These insights and capability should not be treated lightly, for asking the right questions is surely a necessary step in deriving the right answers. The question then becomes one of problem recognition and when and where to use the methodologies suggested by the problem itself (deLeon 1998).

Some years back, Hugh Heclo (1978) introduced the concept of "issue networks," in which he noted that "...it is through networks of people who regard each other as knowledgeable...that public policy issues tend to be refined, evidence debated, and alternative options worked out—though rarely in any controlled, well-organized way." These horizontal relationships can include individuals, organizations, lobbyists, legislators, or whoever plays a role in policy development. Heclo's work evolved into the concept of *social network analysis* (Wasserman and Faust 1994; Scott 1991), particularly those under a democratic, participative regimen (see Hajer and Wagenaar 2003). This concept is characterized by its use of "networks" as the temporal unit of analysis. That is, public policy issues are no longer the exclusive domain of specified governmental units (i.e., the Department of Commerce for globalization issues or Homeland Security for terrorism) per se. Rather, they tend to reside in *issue* networks, including governmental units on the federal *and* state *and* municipal levels; these are constantly seen to be interacting with important nonprofit organizations on both the national and local levels, and various representations from the private sector as well. Public policies in health care, education, social welfare, and the environment suggest the centrality of the social network phenomenon; President G.W. Bush's programs in "faith-based" initiatives manifest social networks. All of these actors are engaging in what Hajer (1993) called "policy discourses," hopefully, but not always, in a cooperative nature.

Hanf and Scharpf (1978, 12) viewed the policy network approach as a tool to evaluate the "large number of public and private actors from different levels and functional areas of government and society." More traditional forms of policy research have tended to focus on the *hierarchical* policy process. The network approach looks at the policy process in terms of the *horizontal* relationships that define the development of public policies. Thus, Rhodes (1990, 304; also see Carlsson 2000) has defined policy networks as "cluster[s] or complexes of organizations connected to each other by resource dependencies and distinguished from other clusters or complexes by breaks in the structure of resource dependencies." Although there are certainly shortcomings (i.e., for instance, in bounding the scope of the analysis), in many ways social network analysis provides the policy sciences with a methodological approach that is more consonant with the wide range of institutional actors who constitute the policy process than those aggregated under the positivists' approaches.

A final conceptual trend emerging over the past decade has been the movement in most of the industrialized nations toward a more decentralized (or devoluted) polity. While this is most readily observed in the new public management literature,[10] it is easily observed in a host of recent legislation, such as the Welfare Reform Act and the Telecommunications Act (both 1996), as well as in the federal government's recent willingness to defer policy initiatives to the state without sufficiently funding them. In many ways, devolution resonates with a more democratic participatory policy approach, since both are more directly involved with the local units of government and the affected citizen.

CONCLUSIONS

As we have noted above, proponents of the policy sciences can point to a half century of activity, with some success (e.g., the widespread acceptance of the policy approach and its three central conceptual touchstones), some trepidation, or misgivings (what we referred to as the "policy paradox"). Moreover, the importance accorded to the policy analysis processes has implicitly turned policymakers' attention to the more normative aspects of policy, which is ultimately the least amenable to the traditional (read: accepted) forms of policy analysis.

10. "Devolution" became the hallmark of the Clinton-Gore administration and their National Performance Review—largely driven by Osborne and Gaebler's (1992) work—but has continued unabated under the administration of George W. Bush, with the important exception of issues dealing with Homeland Security.

We pose two suggestions to possibly reinvigorate the policy approach. The first has to do with the training of future analysts (also see Fischer 2003), implying that the traditional analytic toolkit is, at best, incomplete or, at worst (in Dryzek's words), "ineffective . . . and antidemocratic . . . " Newer policy approaches—sometimes to compliment, other times to replace the more traditional forms of policy analysis—need to be articulated from the post-positivist epistemologies and the social networks analysis approach. Again, the focus should be on choosing the appropriate approach as a function of the problem at hand, rather than always using the same approach for whatever problem occurs (deLeon 1998). One obvious requirement is that policy researchers will need to acquire a new set of analytic skills dealing with public education and negotiation and mediation, that is, helping to foster new policy design models that are less hierarchical than has been the case, rather than simply advising policymakers.

Likewise, the policy scientist should become more fluent and practiced in addressing the potential effects of decentralized authority, for it is obvious that American government and its offices are moving at the moment toward a more localized, state-centered form of government; indeed, many conservatives (and their policy research efforts) are devising ways to minimize governmental services in general and the federal government in particular. These trends raise troubling issues, such as what measures would be necessary to ensure public accountability? This segues into another recurring dilemma for the policy sciences, namely, how does one insure analyst's impartiality or balance, or, alternatively, are these virtues outmoded in an era characterized by and accustomed to fractious policy debates and interchanges?

One would strongly suspect that Lasswell and Lerner and Merton and Kaplan et al., who first articulated the policy sciences' founding premises, would not have expected them to remain untouched or somehow sacred through the vicissitudes of political events and intellectual challenges. Nor would they have dared to predict a string of unvarnished successes or even widespread acceptance. The challenge, then, for the contemporary policy sciences—if indeed they are at a turning point—is to assimilate how and why the world has changed. With this knowledge in mind, it is imperative that they to re-examine their conceptual and methodological cupboards to make sure they well stocked in order to understand the contemporary exigencies and to offer appropriate wisdom and recommendations. If they falter in those endeavors, then indeed the policy sciences are at a perilous crossroad.

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