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≡ The Oxford Handbook of
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and Wynne 1996). Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons argue that this scholarship in science studies demands that scientific authority find a different footing. It must be localized and contextualized, rather than universalized. It is precisely when knowledge is linked to the particular circumstances of a particular case that it can uphold its claims (Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons 2001).

The insights of science studies link knowledge to the practices in which it is produced. Latour's *Science in Action* can be read as an argument against cognitive explanations and in favor of a form of practice-based reasoning (Latour 1987). He describes how new ideas about the natural and social order are not cognitive or discursive productions but are co-produced by the very techniques and practices that made them conceivable. Scientific knowledge, then, no longer provides a way to "stop" a debate by invoking the external authority of scientists, but comes to be seen as the product of an interaction in which (a variety of) scientific inputs help guide policy deliberation.

As knowledge and policy become more intertwined, conducting policy work in the old institutional set-up becomes counter-productive. Both environmental impact assessment and regulatory standard setting in the USA have long histories in which "advocacy science" has escalated in the context of legal forums, producing ever thicker analyses that diminished in value as they grew in volume. Similarly, it is easy to see how as seemingly straightforward a technique as cost-benefit analysis can contribute to the reproduction of one way of conceiving of value (Porter 1995) that features some aspects but at the cost of others. Here the very settings influence the knowledge that can be meaningfully produced; or to put it differently, practice guides knowing. Policy practitioners have responded by designing institutional settings in which knowledge can be negotiated directly in the context of a case.

Policy makers also confront the heterogeneity of science in conventional settings. The disciplinary organization of science, criticized by Lasswell in the early postwar years (Lasswell 1951), frustrates practitioners who start from a concern with problems that raise recurring concerns about how to "integrate" the relevant knowledge of, say, hydro-geologists, soil scientists, and ecologists, as well as economists and sociologists. Concerns about knowledge integration have even begun to be reflected in patterns of organization within universities where programs and centers organized around functional problems like migration, labor, sustainability, or transportation anticipate the demands of policy makers by bringing together researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds and, in the best cases, addressing the problems of knowledge integration this creates.

When it comes to policy problems, scientific work is nearly always heterogeneous. Consequently, the complexity of delivering useful knowledge requires cooperation. If we want to give the idea of science-for-policy a new lease for life one needs to be able to think how meaningfully coordinated communication is possible. Transdisciplinarity was an effort to tie integration across disciplinary boundaries (Weinberg 1972), but there is an extra value in case-based, problem-driven conversations "between science and society" (Scholz and Tietje 2002). Recently, the science studies literature

has highlighted how “methods” are used to translate between divergent viewpoints and diverging social worlds. Leigh Star’s “boundary-objects” facilitate those sustained efforts to develop a conversation using an array of knowledge inputs. Such boundary objects “have different meanings in different social worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation” (Star and Griesemer 1989). Later the concept has been applied in a more diverse way, pointing at the material components that are featured in this practice and by which this integration of insights takes place (be it a map, minutes, a text that is drafted). These objects guide cognition and influence the ultimate success of a particular initiative.

Policy analysis as a form of “problem-oriented” learning is well embedded in the “policy science” perspective promoted by Lasswell (Lasswell 1951; Torgerson 1985). It not only problematized the disciplinary organization of knowledge, but extended the search for workable solutions to include the participation of actors who bring domain-specific “contextual” knowledge to the table. Finding a way to engage the managers, production workers, and tradespeople who have detailed knowledge about the systems in which change is being pursued is a key challenge for policy practitioners. The insights of such practitioners, rather than just the commitments of top-level executives, are essential to achieve policy goals like reducing the use of toxic chemicals in manufacturing, managing agricultural waste, or providing greater security in the food system. Case reports of patients are essential (if often neglected or disdained) in recognizing and reasoning about threats to environmental health; the participation of citizens who can speak knowledgeably about the “habits” of inner city residents, particularly prominent ethnic subgroups, is likewise found to be essential to promoting environmental health (Ozonoff 1994; Corburn 2005). This broadening of the “peer community,” to the “policy community” and the emergence of practice as the container for the complex conversation that takes place, raises both epistemological and practical questions that have become prominent concerns in the contemporary design of policy-making arrangements (Nicolini et al. 2003).

The sociological scholarship on “risk” in modern society has brought these issues into sharp relief. Work on “risk society” demonstrates the limits on our ability to “know” dangers and capture risks analytically. Knowing, the argument goes, is always related to not-knowing and to reflexivity about the conditions under which beliefs are developed (Lash et al. 1996). The considerations that generate these demands are not limited to the kind of probabilistic statements about outcomes that have characterized decision making under uncertainty. Rather than thinking about “residual” risk and “acceptability levels” the awareness of uncertainty (in this broad sense) informs policy-making arrangements. Uncertainty thus ceases to be the kind of marginal concern signified by error bars and becomes a constitutive characteristic of knowledge and of policy choices. This holds on a grand scale for projections about the scale and distribution of the impacts of global warming, but also for efforts to understand the effects of chronic low-level exposure to air pollution on respiratory function and the impacts of offshore windmills on birds and fish. As authors like Brian Wynne have shown, policy and science in these settings (alone and together)

do not give attention to sources of uncertainty broadly, but typically elevate attention to a limited domain of uncertainties and neglect others (Wynne 1996). These questions become practical considerations when the behavior of, say, radiocaesium in the Cumbrian soils of the United Kingdom does not meet expectations, upsetting the organization of policy arrangements. Or, with a disastrous consequence in the case of BSE (the disease that devastated the UK cattle population in the 1990s), when policy advice is sound, but simply does not consider what it will mean to implement recommendations in a local setting. In the BSE case, the crucial problem arose in slaughterhouses where the recommended strict separation of spine tissue and red meat was hardly implementable because the spine was used as a “clothes hanger” in the carving process.

Natural resource managers increasingly view policy choices in similar terms as “genuine projections into the unknown” (Piore 1996), where management regimes address systems that are too complex to allow any confidence in the prediction of future states, where the systems are already in flux, and where management, no matter how responsible, contributes to this uncertainty. In these settings questions about knowledge become centrally questions about the relationship between different ways of knowing, the shadow cast by not knowing, and the organization of the settings in which these questions can be analysed, debated, and provisional decisions and judgements can be reached. A primary response to this is either to make the negotiation of knowledge explicit or to build a “vital social discourse” around the employment of knowledge in policy practice (Functowicz 1993).

It is where the literature on policy practice has been heading for a while. “Rather than asking how organizational practitioners might make better use of normal social science, or how normal social scientists might make their research results more palatable to practitioners, I have considered these practitioners as causal inquirers in their own right and asked how a different kind of social science might enhance the kinds of causal inquiry they conduct in their everyday practice” (Schön 1995, 96).

4. DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE

The initiatives of policy practitioners have generally raised questions about the legitimacy of policy. Discretion is a practical necessity, but the same judgements of practitioners that are necessary to make policy work strain the roots of state legitimacy in representative institutions. Recent developments in democratic theory provide a new take on these relationships. Instead of asking how can the provisional legitimacy of administrative action be enhanced, they raise the question of how

policy practice can contribute to the broader legitimacy of the state and buttress the increasingly provisional legitimacy of representative institutions.

This reorientation is often preceded by a historical analysis that emphasizes the limits on the effectiveness and legitimacy of the modern representative welfare state, occasioned by the globalization of economic institutions that limits the ability of the state to manage production and provide security for workers, and the increasing diversity of the social basis of association and patterns of associative activity (Cohen and Rogers 1995). The reorientation itself hinges on two shifts. The first begins with a restatement of democratic legitimacy as arising from the collective authorization of citizens (Cohen 1997). It is completed with an account of collective authorization through a process of reciprocal reason giving, as opposed to voting or preference aggregation (Cohen 1989). The second is to see in the interaction of policy practitioners, citizens, and other stakeholders over how to act on policy goals the potential for democratic conversations that can meet the test as deliberation (Gutmann and Thompson 1996). The process of making policy workable and more effective could also provide an avenue to enhance the legitimacy of the state. The combination of these shifts produces a directly deliberative vision of democracy in which policy practice plays a foundational, rather than derivative role (Cohen and Sabel 1997).

This vision is persuasive in part because it refuses to accept the distinction between theory and practice that has long characterized the discussion of policy practice. This is possible in part because “[t]he gap between the theory and practice of deliberative democracy is narrower than in most conceptions of democracy. To be sure its highest ideals make demands that actual politics may never fulfil. But its principles modulate their demands in response to the limits of political necessity: they speak in the idiom of ‘insofar as’ or ‘to the degree that’ ” (Gutmann and Thompson 1996). Moreover, “the theory of deliberative democracy partly constitutes its own practice: the arguments with which democratic theorists justify the theory are of the same kind that democratic citizens use to justify decision and policies in practice. In contrast to some forms of utilitarianism, deliberative democracy does not create a division between reasons that are appropriate in theory and those that are appropriate in practice. In contrast to some other conceptions of democracy, deliberative democracy does not divide institutions into those in which deliberation is important and those in which it is not. This continuity of theory and practice has implications for the design of institutions in modern democracies” (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 357–8).

In the context of this close association between theory and practice it is natural to see a potential “communicative power” in the interactions among practitioners and citizens and to wonder whether it might “pick...up some of the work of the administrative state” and in the process start to rebuild the ties of solidarity that have atrophied in the face of broader structural shifts (Cohen and Rogers 1995). This focuses attention on trying to understand these policy practices as a form of deliberative organization that might “harness ... the distinctive capacity of associations to gather local information, monitor compliance, and promote cooperation among private actors by reducing its costs and building the trust on which it typically

depends” (Cohen and Rogers 1995). While the solidarity developed through these problem-oriented interactions would differ from the more organic sources found in family, in shared culture, and even in the shared economic and social circumstances that tied workers together, “the bonds arising from participation in such arenas in the solution of large and commonly-recognized problems, need not be trivial or weak” (Cohen and Rogers 1995, 148). Indeed, if the prescription is apt, the solidarities arising from these particularistic interactions might “comprise . . . a form of solidarity operative in civil society; transparently not ‘natural’ or ‘found’ or particularistic, not based in direct participation in the national project of citizenship, but definitely founded on participation in deliberative arenas designed with a cosmopolitan intent” (Cohen and Rogers 1995, 148–9). This rendering has fixed attention on practices as forms of democratic experimentalism that can be analyzed as institutional designs (Fung and Wright 2001) and has further problematized the organizational boundaries between governmental practices and other settings in which citizens engage one another and other policy actors (Mansbridge 1999).

5. CONCLUSION

The developments highlighted in the preceding sections will, at least in part, be familiar to many students of policy making and reflective practitioners. The role of networks, the shift from government to governance, the problems with a straightforward science-for-policy scheme, the emerging practices of deliberative democracy, and the way in which a deliberative rendering opens a direct link between policy studies and democratic theory are all widely narrated and discussed. We have tried to connect these discussions to the long-standing policy concern with policy practice. The fluidity of organizational relationships, the importance of repeated and overlapping forms of interaction among diverse and changing groups of actors, the potential for learning inherent in these relationships, the need to negotiate knowledge *in situ*, and the democratic character and significance of the interactions that occur around action, are already available in the experience of action and the domain of practice. In general terms, the concept of practice highlights the *negotiated character* of public policy and does so in a way that relates individual action to institutional contexts.

These discussions also suggest that the concept of practice may allow for a better grasp of the “units” at which learning and innovation take place: where results can be secured and monitored and where we should locate the flexibility and robustness of a deliberate response to public problems. We have also tried to highlight how the concept of policy practice actually helps understand how to conceive of public policy

making in an unstable world. If we can usefully reconceive the world of standing organizations in terms of the networks of practices that essentially exist in and between these organizations, then perhaps the understanding of policy practices as the locus of public intelligence can also help find solutions that lie beyond the reach of isolated institutions.

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CHAPTER 20

POLICY NETWORK ANALYSIS

R. A. W. RHODES

Tis all in pieces, all cohærence gone.

(John Donne (1611), “The First Anniversary. An Anatomy of the World,”
1985 edition, 335 line 213)

1. INTRODUCTION: THE UBIQUITY OF NETWORKS

Network analysis comes in many guises. It is common to all the social science disciplines. The vast literature ranges from social network analysis (Scott 2000) to the network society created by the information revolution (Castells 2000), from the actor-centered networks of technological diffusion (Callon, Law, and Rip 1986) to cross-cultural analysis (Linn 1999). This chapter focuses on that species of network analysis most common in political science—policy network analysis.

Few social science disciplines can ever agree on the meaning of an idea. So, a policy network is one of a cluster of concepts focusing on government links with, and dependence on, other state and societal actors. These notions include issue networks (Heclø 1978), iron triangles (Ripley and Franklin 1981), policy subsystems or sub-

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governments (Freeman and Stevens 1987), policy communities (Richardson and Jordan 1979), and epistemic communities (Haas 1992). I discuss these terms below. All are varieties of networks, so I use “policy network” as the generic term.

This buzzing, blooming confusion of terms has not detained us for long. Defining policy networks will take no longer. Policy networks are sets of formal institutional and informal linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared if endlessly negotiated beliefs and interests in public policy making and implementation. These actors are interdependent and policy emerges from the interactions between them. There could be many qualifications to this definition, but it will do as a starting point for my exploration.

Section 2 of this chapter reviews the literature on policy network analysis, distinguishing between descriptive, theoretical, and prescriptive accounts. It identifies three descriptive uses of the term: networks as interest intermediation, as interorganizational analysis, and as governance. It then summarizes the two main theoretical approaches—power dependence theory and rational choice—before looking at the instrumental, interactive, and institutional approaches to managing networks. Section 3 looks at the debates and challenges in the literature. It focuses on the difficulties of synthesizing the findings from the proliferating case studies, and on the critics of the “new governance.” It reviews the various answers to the question of why networks change, looking at the advocacy coalition framework, the dialectical model, strategic relational theory, and the interpretative turn. It concludes with the observation that the study of policy networks mirrors general trends in political science in its concern with ethnographic methods and the impact of ideas. Finally, it looks at the problems of managing the institutional void, especially the difficulties posed by mixing governing structures, the diffusion of accountability, enhancing coordination, and devising new tools.

2. THE LITERATURE ON POLICY NETWORK ANALYSIS

The term policy network is used in three main ways in the literature: as a description of governments at work, as a theory for analyzing government policy making, and as a prescription for reforming public management.

2.1 Networks as Description

When describing government policy making, the term policy network refers to interest intermediation, interorganizational analysis, and governance.

Networks as Interest Intermediation

The roots of the idea of a policy network lie, in part, in American pluralism and the literature on subgovernments. For example, Ripley and Franklin (1981, 8–9) define subgovernments as “clusters of individuals that effectively make most of the routine decisions in a given substantive area of policy.” They are composed of “members of the House and/or Senate, members of Congressional staffs, a few bureaucrats and representatives of private groups and organizations interested in the policy area.” The emphasis in this literature is on a few privileged groups with close relations with governments; the resultant subgovernment excludes other interests and makes policy. Some authors developed more rigid metaphors to characterize this relationship. Lowi (1964) stressed the *triangular* nature of the links, with the central government agency, the Congressional Committee, and the interest group enjoying an almost symbiotic interaction. This insight gave birth to the best-known label within the subgovernments literature, the “iron triangle” (see Freeman and Stevens 1987, 12–13 and citations).

The literature on policy networks develops this American concern with the oligopoly of the political marketplace. Governments confront a multitude of groups all keen to influence a piece of legislation or policy implementation. Some groups are outsiders. They are deemed extreme in behavior and unrealistic in their demands, so are kept at arm’s length. Others are insiders, acceptable to government, responsible in their expectations, and willing to work with and through government. Government needs them to make sure it meets its policy objectives. The professions of the welfare state are the most obvious example. Over the years, such interests become institutionalized. They are consulted before documents are sent out for consultation. They don’t lobby. They have lunch. These routine, standardized patterns of interaction between government and insider interests become policy networks.

There are many examples of the use of policy networks to describe government policy making.¹ Marsh and Rhodes (1992) define policy networks as a meso-level concept that links the micro level of analysis, dealing with the role of interests and government in particular policy decisions, and the macro level of analysis, which is concerned with broader questions about the distribution of power in modern society. Networks can vary along a continuum according to the closeness of the relationships in them. Policy communities are at one end of the continuum and involve close relationships; issue networks are at the other end and involve loose relationships (and on the influence of this approach see Börzel 1998; Dowding 1995; LeGalès and Thatcher 1995; Richardson 1999).

A policy community has the following characteristics: a limited number of participants with some groups consciously excluded; frequent and high-quality interaction between all members of the community on all matters related to the policy issues; consistency in values, membership, and policy outcomes which persist over

¹ On Australia see Considine 1994, Davis et al. 1993; on Canada see Coleman and Skogstad 1990, Lindquist 1996; on the UK see Rhodes 1988, Richardson and Jordan 1979; on continental Europe see LeGalès and Thatcher 1995, Marin and Mayntz 1991; on the USA see Mandell 2002, O’Toole 1997.