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It is a sad reality that public policy as a subfield of political science is something of a poor relation. Although public policy courses are exceptionally popular at the undergraduate level, graduate studies programs within political science tend to exclude public policy from the list of major concentrations. Moreover, while the public policy section of the American Political Science Association has more members than most of the other sections, research performed by this well populated subfield is not well represented in the major political science journals. A number of explanations for this lack of prestige within political science have been offered: the scope of policy scholarship is often too narrow, concentrating in particularly substantive areas such as environment or welfare (Ripley 1991); the descriptive nature of much of the research and the lack of theory (Hill 1997); the managerial and economic perspectives that control the research and teaching in schools of public affairs and public policy that are separate from political science (Smith and Ingram in press); and the longstanding behavioral and critical traditions within political science which have viewed substance or content as mere smokescreens that obscure the more important underlying power contests (Truman 1955; Edelman 1967).

I believe that there is another widespread belief among political scientists that marginalizes those who focus their attention on public policy. The study of public policy is not thought to be "political" as are studies of political parties, the legislative process, voting behavior or international relations, to give some mainstream examples. That is, the big issues of political identity and participation, the mobilization of bias, representation, and accountability that are the organs of democratic politics are considered outside the domain of the policy "wonks" that formulate and evaluate various policy programs.

The core of my argument is that public policy is directly related to the character of democracy and the definition of citizenship. My argument begins with some contextual conditions that I believe strongly argue for increased attention to the linkage between public policy and democracy. It then explores briefly the meaning, characteristics, and necessary condition of democracy, and next posits some hypothetical linkages between democratic conditions and public policy content or design. The bulk of this paper will develop these pathways or linkages as a subject matter for political science. Finally, I will remark upon contemporary political scientists and the opportunities for this fruitful program of study.

Context of the Policy/Democracy Research Agenda

Ignited by Robert Putnam's stimulating thesis in "Bowling Alone" (1995; 2000), political scientists have taken up a renewed interest in the health and vitality of civil society. It is

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generally agreed that a nation benefits from having an extensive and active civil society. Whether or not the longstanding American predilection to join voluntary associations has abated or changed in character, there is little question that public policies can stimulate, dampen, or change the nature of voluntary associations.

Race, gender, ethnic, and religious cleavages mar American democracy despite nearly 40 years of seemingly aggressive efforts on the part of governmental civil rights and affirmative action policies to alleviate them. Rather than disappearing as issues, such cleavages permeate the debates on such diverse subjects as schools, welfare and immigration. Political support is often built by appealing to thinly veiled symbols that represent some groups in highly negative terms as untrustworthy and undeserving. Such portrayals are justification for policies that provide benefits to positively constructed, powerful groups and burdens upon those who are stigmatized as dependent or deviant. Anne Schneider and I call this "degenerative" politics, which is fed by policies that treat different groups of citizens quite differently. The persistence of racial, gender, ethnic, and religious cleavages represents not only a policy failure, but also a perversion of the democratic ideal of equal treatment (Schneider and Ingram 1997).

Governance structures have altered dramatically with decentralization, devolution, and contracting out. Programs in which non-profits play a critical role have replaced governmental agencies in areas as widely divergent as private prisons, charter schools, fire prevention and suppression, substance abuse and environmental cleanup. Political science principles of governmental accountability through elected leaders, and principal-agent theories may operate poorly where lines of democratic control and accountability are different and less direct.

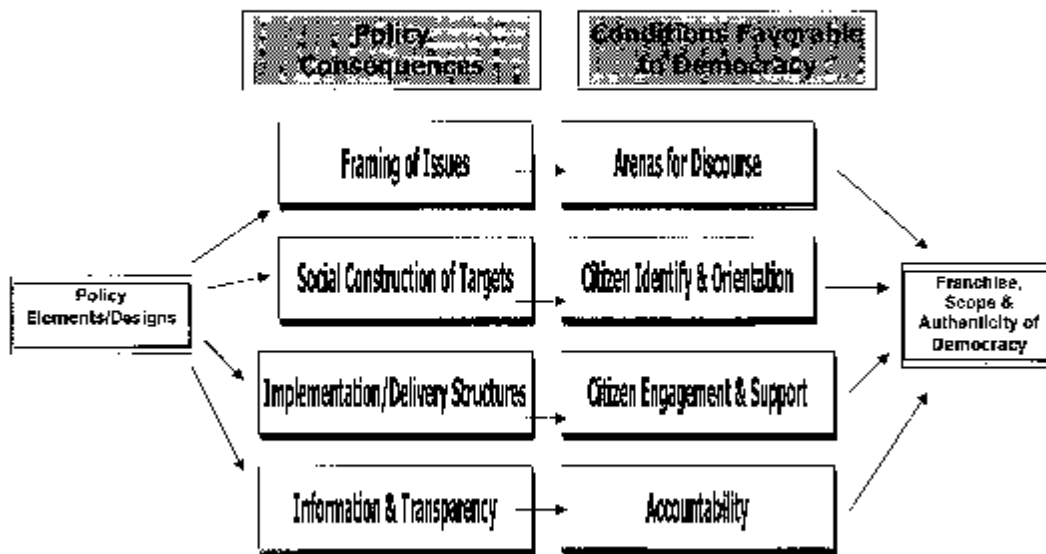
The accumulation of both theory and empirical research linking public policy and institutions with democracy provides a particularly favorable context for further work in this area. Theodore Lowi (1964) and James Q. Wilson (1979) established a foundation for the policy-creates-politics connection upon which others, including Steven Rathgeb Smith, Anne Schneider, Peter May, Carmen Sirianni, and I, have built. Moreover, there has been a recent blending of public policy and new institutionalism in scholarship, which has traced the impact of social welfare policies and institutions upon the construction of citizen identity (Mettler 1998; Soss 1999; Benson-Smith 2000; Newton 2000; Dialto 2000; Jensen 1996). There is now a clear stream of literature to which new scholarship can contribute.

Relationship of Policy to Democracy

American democracy is an unfinished, open-ended project. As John Dryzek (1996) has argued, democratic governance is in large part striving to expand the franchise, scope, and authenticity of democracy. Franchise refers to the number of active participants in any political setting. Scope concerns the domains of life under public control. Authenticity is the degree to which democratic control is substantive, informed, and competently engaged (Dryzek 1996). No one of these proposed enlargements ought to take place at the expense of the other; for example, expanded franchise must not lead to superficial deliberation that hurts authenticity. Of course, there are many forces apart from policy, such as interest groups, political parties, leadership, and the press that affect the democratic enterprise. However, since the important work of Lowi (1964) and Wilson (1979) that connected the content of policy with patterns of politics, substantial literature has developed tracing the consequences of public policies to politics and to democracy. Figure 1 lays out some pathways that I intend to explore here, through which public policy content may influence the character of democracy.

The second set of boxes on the figure identify some critical conditions for democracy: there needs to be open arenas for public discourse in which all relevant points of view are expressed; citizens ought to view their role as citizens as important, as involving obligations as well as rights, and they must be convinced that government has the interest and capacity to solve public problems; citizens themselves should be supportive of policies and positively involved in producing shared goals; and there must be means to hold government accountable for its actions. These important conditions for democracy are directly related to consequences flowing from policy designs: the framing of issues; how targets are constructed; the structure of implementation and delivery systems; and transparency of governmental actions and citizen access to information. The pathways I lay out here are not meant to be exhaustive, but only suggestive. They reflect strongly my own interest in how policy affects the framing of problems and citizen identities through language, symbols, and discourse. Emphasized as well is my long-term interest in implementation structures and policy tools.

Figure 1. Hypothetical Relationships of Policy to Democracy



Creation of Public Arenas and Open Forums for Discourse

Robust democracy requires open public forums in which citizens can and should be asked to confront policy problems that affect them directly. In such forums people are encouraged to face policy problems not as clients or interest groups, but as citizens who can incorporate the view of others in their own "civic discovery" of what constitutes the collective welfare. Whether or not such arenas emerge is at least in part a function of policy framing and design.

It is a political truism that whoever defines the problem has control of the design of solutions. Problems do not just happen. They are constructed through the interaction of a variety

of political phenomena including existing public policies. The definitions embodied in policies that characterize what are at stake in particular subject areas can lead to processes of democratic discovery or drastically limit participation and debate. Different problem definitions locate political discourse in particular value contexts and elicit particular kinds of participants, participation, and institutional response. According to the way an issue is framed, different boundaries of interest or jurisdiction are created. Different people get involved, for example, when domestic violence is defined as a health rather than criminal justice issue. Different values are at stake when an issue is framed in moral rather than economic terms. Framing also affects participants' empathy or willingness to see other perspectives and the likelihood of compromise.

Because I know water policy well, let me take it as an example. Historians and political scientists in the field have argued that a misunderstanding of Spanish colonial customary law led Western states to adopt the idea that water rights could be owned as property for growing crops, and later for municipalities and industries. It followed that since water was property, water rights holders were the appropriate decision makers. That meant that the arenas constructed for the discussion of water matters became irrigation districts that focused upon questions of allocation and delivery. Left out of such forums were non-consumptive, non-owner users of water such as recreationists and wildlife enthusiasts and others concerned with the myriad ways water affects the environment. As time passed, water policy evolved to give water other associated meanings: water as product and water as commodity. Water reclamation policy treated water as the output of water development processes of dams and diversions designed to reduce risks, to secure supplies and to spread water rights allocations to additional users. The arenas in which water development decisions were made not surprisingly consisted of existing and prospective water rights owners as well as producers and managers of large scale engineering works. Most recently federal and state water policy has redefined water as a commodity to increase flexibility and efficiency of water reallocations. The discourse in arenas so constructed is between willing buyers and sellers. I am not arguing that environmentalists have had no voice in water resource arenas. In fact, they have exerted considerable veto power through policies that require environmental assessments and protect endangered species. However, they have certainly not been participants in public forums with anything like an equal footing largely because of the way the issue has been framed in policy. Moreover, water quantity has tended to be separated from water quality, and other issues such as riparian habitat for birds and other wildlife and the rights of indigenous peoples or even water skiers and powerboat drivers. The importance of water to a sense of community and place has been marginalized.

Over the past decade, a competitive frame for considering water has taken hold, which has variously called itself an ecosystem or watershed approach. The impetus for framing water differently came largely from the grass roots, but supportive embodiments in federal agency programs and policies have been important (Yafee 1998). State level laws authorizing watershed planning, such as the Massachusetts Watershed Initiative and the Oregon Plans, have also been crucial. At present, 17 federal agencies have endorsed ecosystems approaches (Michaels 1999). The most distinguishing mark of this new way of looking at water is that it reintegrates water into the broad ecological and social processes from which it was disembodied by framing water as property, product, and commodity. Watershed planning embraces equal concern between healthy ecosystems and communities, and envisions them as closely related (Johnson and Campbell 1999). Watershed associations, the arenas for public discourse associated with this emergent framing, involve a wide range of stakeholders including local property holders and citizen coalitions, county state and federal agencies, scientists, corporations, environmental

organizations, and the general public. Boundaries for involvement are broadly open and inclusive, encompassing all those who are affected by and have knowledge about particular watersheds. Decision rules vary, but emphasis is placed on consensus building. Those involved accept the equal standing of different kinds of information ranging from laboratory science to detailed experiential understanding based upon longstanding familiarity with place. The watershed management vision includes: specific attention to representation; assistance for weaker parties'; full and fair opportunity to participate in the negotiation processes, and respect for cultural values (Johnson and Campbell 1999). Whatever the ambiguities of the watershed approach (Bloomquist and Schlager 2000), the consequence to democracy appears to be quite positive.

Another example of how a policy can frame an issue in a way, which has adverse effects on discourse, is the Superfund legislation. Mark Landy (1993) has argued persuasively the goal of the act, which insists on cleaning up all toxic and hazardous waste dumps to all applicable standards, does not encourage people to think intelligently about the issue. It appears to establish a total freedom from risk, but there are far too many sites and the cost of cleanups are too high for this goal to be obtainable. Because federal dollars, supposedly recovered from polluters, carry most of the burdens, citizens are not encouraged to deliberate over which allocations of cleanup efforts are most desirable. As a consequence, precious environmental protection resources are misallocated and citizen cynicism that laws do not live up to promises is perpetuated (Landy 1993; Hird 1994).

One proposal to redefine the issue and encourage deliberation begins by making distinctions between different kinds of inactive and abandoned hazardous waste sites (Hird 1994). Older sites at which dumping was legal at the time and there are no strong connections linking the site to original polluters should be removed from Superfund jurisdiction and made eligible for funding from a National Environmental Restoration Fund. Such sites along with other salient environmental problems, such as asbestos removal, radon or lead remediation, or other environmental hot spots, are to be relabeled and reframed as environmental restoration problems. Such reframing allows numbers of chronic, long-term risks to community and health to be seen in the same light and considered together. Hird argues that a new kind of arena for discourse then becomes possible. Each state, according to the proposal, would establish a committee of citizen representatives, some of whom live near the waste sites, but also including governmental officials, and scientists to decide how the fund allocated by the federal government to the state would be spent (Hird 1994). Citizens would be encouraged through this policy change to engage in discourse about relative risk and values of restored lands in different places. Rather than asserting some absolute right, citizens would deliberate about the value added to different areas by different kinds and levels of restoration.

These two examples of how policy designs affect framing and discourse only hint at the large number of similar issues begging for intelligent policy analysis. What is the impact of the creation of special districts for particularized service delivery? What are the impacts of the policy change from geographically based to service based jurisdictional lines? What are the implications of the growing policy emphasis on neighborhood associations? For instance, the new Los Angeles City Charter has set up a Department of Neighborhood Empowerment intended to support the emergence of neighborhood associations dedicated to identifying community needs. How does the information highway policies affect the framing of issues and the formation of arenas for discourse? There is some evidence to suggest policies established by international

organizations are empowering transnational environmental movements to act in concert through information shared and networks built in cyberspace (Doughman in press; Levesque in press).

Identity and Orientation of Citizens

The skepticism and negative attitudes of citizens toward government and public policy are among the growing challenges to American democracy. While there are many causes, the experiences citizens have with public policy are among them. Public policies do more than simply deliver services or implement goals. They also carry messages. The ways in which various publics are treated by policy - whether their views of problems are recognized as legitimate or ignored; whether they are targeted for burdens or benefits; the rules to which they are subjected such as means testing; and the reception they encounter in interaction with implementing agencies-all teach lessons related to democracy.

There is mounting evidence, particularly from the social welfare field, that implicit messages delivered by policy have significant consequences for the construction of citizenship and the role of government. Policies sometimes implicitly signal who is important to national welfare and who is not. In her book *Dividing Citizens*, Suzanne Mettler (1998) argued that New Deal social policies treated white males very differently from women and men of color. Policy sent messages that white males were the significant economic and political actors. While white males were brought under the mantle of national citizenship through social security, white women were included only as widows. Minority domestics and farm workers were ignored until much later. The welfare of women and children was assigned by New Deal policies to the states with varying levels of benefits and state agencies favoring intrusive, paternalistic rules. As a result, a kind of two tiered, dual citizenship resulted under which women, and men of color were treated as second-class citizens not fully incorporated into the mainstream of economic and political life.

Policies carry messages by socially constructing the intended targets in positive and negative terms. In our writing, Anne Schneider and I have argued that different targets for policy are treated differently and come away with quite distinct identities as citizens and sharply contrasting orientations toward government. Advantaged populations are powerful and positively constructed as good and deserving citizens. They mainly receive benefits from government, and they are treated with respect and governmental outreach so that their interests are portrayed as the same as public interests. Advantaged populations view themselves as efficacious and their participation is reinforced. In contrast, other groups whose constructions are not so positive receive fewer benefits and more burdens and pick up messages that their problems are not public but private or of their own making. Only conditional benefits are allocated to them by government, and then only upon successful application. Government is likely to treat them with pity, disrespect, or hostility.

Contemporary experience with welfare policies suggests that the messages damaging to democracy persist. One study of some welfare mothers in Phoenix, whose comments in focus groups were recorded, illustrates messages sent and orientations toward government affected (Luna 2000). Slow and unreliable service, and seemingly capricious decisions, led welfare clients to believe that agency officials regarded them as unimportant, dishonest and unworthy. For example, one mother said:

"They're telling me 'you have 30 to 45 days to get your case done'. I told her I have rent to pay. I need my necessities. They can't understand that. They shrug

their shoulders and say, 'well you still have 30 to 45 days, and they have other clients'. I understand that, but I complied and I did my part like you wanted me to. I was pre-approved. All you need to do...They're the ones who have the computer. You just put it in and send it. But they want to prolong it." Another woman added: "They act like it's coming out of their pocket. They act like when they get their check, they are going to each of their clients' houses and say, 'ok, here's your fifty, here's your fifty,' and they ain't giving me a dime."

These comments echo many heard by Joe Soss who interviewed clients in a mid-size Midwestern city (Soss 1999). He found that clients of the means-tested program, then the AFDC, believed by overwhelming percentages that government employees are autonomous, that is "Governmental officials do whatever they want, whenever they want" (Soss 1999). In addition, he found that only 8% of AFDC recipients believe that government listens to people like them. Such attitudes substantially affect willingness of target groups to participate in politics. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) found that public assistance clients were under represented in every political activity measured. There is real evidence, therefore, that the social constructions built into policies contribute importantly to the existing democracy gap. Those who would seem to have most to gain from participation in the design of the welfare system are the least likely to become engaged. Moreover, the differences in messages received from policy by different racial and gender groups fuels the cleavages within American society and lowers the possibility of the citizens' empathy which is important to democratic discourse.

Engagement and Support

Public policies that serve democracy need to garner support, stimulate civic engagement, and encourage cooperation in the solution to problems. It is impossible for public policies to achieve goals without sufficient support. Hostile legislators and in-compliant agents and targets can easily thwart policy intent. Further, the extent of policy support is an important measure of representation and responsiveness. Policies also can greatly affect the extent of civic volunteerism and civil society. Governmental action can displace private charities and crowd out community problem solving.

The structures of implementation and service delivery embodied in policy have a profound impact upon citizen engagement. The dangers of large scale bureaucracy to democracy have been thoroughly researched and are widely appreciated: the substitution of organizational goals in the place of policy intent; the dominance of expert knowledge over ordinary grass roots experiential knowledge; the emphasis on process over content and the proliferation of red tape; and the establishment of narrowly based, self serving iron triangles among narrow legislative interests, particular agencies and their clients. Partly under the banner of strengthening democracy, decentralization, devolution and contracting out predominate in contemporary policy designs. While these designs are suppose to bring implementation and service delivery structures closer to local people, their actual impact upon democracy varies widely.

Studies of partnerships between government and nonprofits and their effects upon the authenticity and responsiveness of volunteer organizations deliver mixed results. Some scholars provide examples of governmental actions that spur citizen mobilization and voluntarism (Gonzales-Baker 1993; Marsten 1993). Service learning programs can facilitate civic engagement and support. In the case of Americorps, students prepay some of their college tuition while at the same time becoming actively engaged in community problem solving. The

evaluations of the impact of Americorps upon participant's attitudes and behavior are still preliminary, but there is some evidence that service increases the propensity of Americorps' alumni toward greater participation in voluntary associations (Simon 2000).

Others find that government funding of nonprofits leads to professionalization of staffs, lowered dependence upon volunteers and community ties, and competition among nonprofits for particular service niches (Smith and Lipsky 1993; Smith 1998). Much would seem to depend upon the particular policy design and the resulting nature of the public/private partnership within particular contexts.

Partnership approaches have been used in some instances to facilitate cooperative problem solving and to avoid prolonged and debilitating conflict. The Environmental Protection Agency, for example, used a tool described as "civic environmentalism" to avoid a superfund designation which might have put an end to a revitalization plan in downtown Wichita, Kansas. A plan was negotiated between state and local government officials, the business community, and residents to allow the city to take over clean up operations of a contaminated site involving many businesses and large acreage. Banks agreed not to deny loans based solely on the contamination of property; the city's liability was limited to what it could collect from responsible parties and property taxes; the polluter agreed to pay for part of the clean up; and the state government agreed to pass a law creating a special redevelopment district (Klopman, Megan and Landy 1999).

Contracting, vouchers, and other partnerships are often successful in building public support for services to dependent groups lacking in political power. Contracting for services with private organizations continues to expand throughout the country. The contract agency provides a service for government using government funds. In the process, the contract agency becomes a client of government with keen interest in perpetuating and raising funding for the program. Providers band together in supportive associations and supporters also include board members and staffs of private organizations. Since service providers have roots in the community, local support for programs often rises. Similarly, housing vouchers often win the support of landlords for low-income housing programs, which they bitterly opposed when delivery was through public housing (Smith and Ingram in press).

Accountability

Accountability is critical to democratic governance, and is quite different from political support. The traditional notion of accountability through politically elected and appointed officials operates poorly in an era of decentralization, devolution, and public/private partnerships. In these new patterns of governance, the public must become more directly involved in holding governance structures accountable. There must be accountability built among partners in complex implementation or service delivery relationships. This implies transparency in transactions and full disclosure of interests. From the perspective of democracy, it is important that actors be held accountable not just for the delivery of programmatic goals, but also for fair and equitable actions.

Accountability of the contemporary implementation and service delivery structures is especially difficult because of the complexity of structures, the diffusion of responsibility, lack of understandable information, and competing values among implementers. As the implementation literature makes clear, slippage occurs in long policy delivery chains (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973). It is possible for the proximate beneficiary of policy to gain resources

such as funds for job training, drug treatment, or health services, without delivering full value to the ultimate targets. Child welfare agencies, for example, provide keen support for the programs through which they get funding, but have resisted evaluations and performance measures and this remains a deeply troubled area of public policy around the country (Smith and Ingram in press).

There are ongoing experiments to improve accountability in the emerging organizational context. The Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act of 1986 introduced an interesting model for lowering the transaction costs of obtaining information critical to citizen education, mobilization, and participation. Under the legislation, industries must make public the amounts and location of releases of a large number of potentially damaging toxic substances. The Act is not without flaws, but it has spurred citizen protests and helped to create a sense of community with common stakes among all residents affected by exposure to dangerous substances. "Bench marking" is a technique increasingly used to improve non-profit performance in delivery of services. It entails discovering the "best practices" in a particular area and then using them as criteria to measure performance. "Organizational report cards" have been used to provide information to the public in modes that are easily understandable (Smith and Ingram in press). The extent to which such accountability mechanisms actually work in practice is in need of analysis.

There is likely to be a direct relationship between the social construction and power of the target groups and the imposition of successful accountability mechanisms. For instance, it has been forcefully argued that the social construction of criminals as deviants suggests those attempts to hold private prisons accountable will be difficult. There is simply insufficient interest in the welfare of, or fairness to, inmates (Schneider 1999). Moreover, it is probably easier to hold implementation structures accountable for efficiency and effectiveness than for democratic values such as due process, openness, and diversity of clients served. It is much simpler to hold charter schools to some standard of student performance on tests than it is to assure that such schools reflect the diversity of value perspectives in American society.

Opportunities for Political Science

The core of my argument here has been that studying public policy and doing good political science are entirely compatible, widespread contrary opinion notwithstanding. Rather than distracting political scientists from their core concerns as has widely been feared, the study of public policy provides a useful vehicle through which to examine the enduring issues of democracy and citizenship that undergird the discipline. At bottom, political science has always had a strong normative bias towards openness, fairness, and due process. Exploring the pathways through which public policy designs may affect democracy invites more explicit and conscious consideration of these value issues.

Moreover, public policy provides a means through which political science subject matter becomes both positive, constructive, and relevant. The ancillary effects of public policies upon democracy become matters of central concern, instead of being overlooked or examined only superficially as they often are by policy analysts not trained in political science. Political scientists take on an important role in unmasking problem frames and social constructions of targets that are degenerative and damaging to democracy. Political scientists may also suggest alternative policy tools, rules, and implementation structures that facilitate the conditions for democracy.

Exploring the linkages between public policy and democracy engages the well practiced interviewing and quantitative skills already valued within political science. The proposed research program welcomes the use of other methodologies and approaches, including ethnographic and participant observation, narrative analysis, and institutional and policy histories that involve decades-long periods of record. This research agenda also welcomes comparative analysis across different policy areas and policies in different political regimes. The only scarcity of note in the research area I have sketched out here is a paucity of participants.

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