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# POLICY ORIENTATION AND ETHICS — HOW INCOMPATIBLE AND WHY?

## Policy orientation

The upswing of the policy analysis research trend is part of the more general expansion of policy oriented, "applied" social sciences, which reached a peak in the 1960s. The strengthening of socio-technological policy orientation can be seen as one aspect of a more general coevolution and deep structural transformation of science and society after the second world war. Historically, the policy orientation has its roots in the beginnings of modern disciplinary social sciences in general. As Wagner (1989) and Wittrock (1989) have argued, the emergence of the social sciences should not be seen in a simplistic manner as the result of societal modernization but as a process, which was related to certain cognitive, institutional and political determinants and which ultimately can be interpreted as a struggle for discursive hegemony in society (see also Cagnon, 1989).

In the classical period the social sciences were devoted to the "social question". Early social scientists were oriented to social criticism and reform and challenged the dominant political interpretations of social problems. The development of policy orientation has meant a deep-going change from criticism toward discursive incorporation into the socio-economic establishment (Wagner & Wollman, 1991; Nowotny, 1990). At the background of this turn there was a remarkable change in the conceptualization of society. Society was increasingly seen as a product of mass behaviour. This view was incompatible with the thinking of classical sociologists such as Durkheim. Also Weber was reinterpreted and reduced to a proponent of pure formalism (Wagner, 1989: 515; 519–520) .

The change in the social vocabulary can be linked with the "methodization"  of the social sciences. It was generally thought that the social sciences had become methodologically mature, so that human relationships could be examined scientifically using models from the natural sciences. It was believed that finding regularities in social behavior would open the way to rational social plan-

ning and policy (Rothwell, 1951: viii; Lasswell, 1951: 5–7). The methodological change meant the rapid popularization of survey methodology and techniques. This methodology offered the main tools for applied social science research in universities and for the professional work of a rapidly increasing number of policy analysts in the public planning and policy sectors.

The discursive transformation of the social sciences was an important element in the development of interventionist state ideology and a politico-administrative system in which a scientifically informed elite interpreted the needs of the masses and realized social reforms. This discursive coalition, which reflected a reformistic welfare state ideology was not, however, able to preserve its vitality but transformed into a large scale bureaucratic apparatus which also used behavioral information in securing its power for control and domination. The latter conception and practice came to dominate the political context of empirical social research. (Wagner, 1989; Wagner & Wollman, 1991; Alestalo,1991)

The conceptual and political shift in the early period of the social sciences and later during the 1960s can be seen as a general background for the modernization process of the social sciences through which they have become more and more policy-oriented. The policy orientation can be characterized (1) by substantive focus of different sectors of public (or sometimes private) policy, (2) by a conceptual perspective on the functioning of goal-oriented organisations, often guided by a functionalistic and system perspective, and (3) by an actor-orientation at policymakers acting at the steering level of the goal-oriented organisations (Wagner 1989: 523–524; Wagner & Wittrock 1987). Epistemologically the policy science practice is mainly linked with a positivistic and behavioral conception of science (e.g. Brunner, 1991; Ascher, 1986).

A special policy science model has been formulated by American sociologist and early behavioral scientist Harold D. Lasswell. According to Lasswell (1951) the policy orien-

tation was a counter tendency to the excessive specialization development in science. A versatile, multi-discipline research approach was required, which is directed at the policy process itself on one hand and where on the other hand knowledge from the most varied disciplines is needed as an informative background. A unifying factor, and the central ethical justification for such a multi-discipline policy orientation, was found in the efforts to improve decision-making through its rationalization and through making it more efficient. A largely obvious starting point was the rationalistic paradigm of "scientific" planning which was experiencing an upward trend in America (and in the industrialized countries in general) during the 1950s and 1960s. Policy analysis was considered highly relevant at all stages of rational planning.

In the 1970s and 1980s the policy science model, as well as applied social sciences in general, met with ever increasing accusations of lack of relevance and with criticism of the legitimation of the central starting points of the model as well as the rationalistic planning and welfare state ideology behind it. As one critical trend within the policy science movement emerged the "more ethical policy analysis" (MEPA) criticism, which claimed, among other things, that policy scientists had misleadingly presented themselves as politically and ethically neutral "social engineers" and (partly for that reason) neglected a systematic consideration of the central normative questions of the policy process.

The criticism seems justified but in part also unspecific and one-sided. I will first attempt to relate the claims in question to the classical formulations of the policy science model. I shall argue that they were not so far from being ethical as one might conclude from later criticism. It is a different matter altogether to what extent the "promises" of the early period have been realized in later practices of policy analysis. This essential question will be discussed in the latter part of the article. There, I shall examine the question why the discussion – as Amy (1987) admits – has lost its edge as a critical self-

reflection of the policy science movement. Instead of seeking any clear-cut answers I see more fruitfulness in trying to clarify and to evaluate the perspectives from which the problematic relationship between ethics and policy orientation have been conceptualized.

## Classical formulations vs. ethics and normative analysis

Lasswell seems clearly to have supported an explicitly value-oriented policy science model which does not have an immediate instrumental relationship with the policy process as its starting point. He criticized the confusing of policy orientation with social scientists' total dedication to practical policy or concentrating on consulting decision-makers in their immediate questions. He considered it more fruitful to direct the increased resources of social sciences at the basic conflicts of culture and to choose really fundamental problems for research (Lasswell, l951: 8). In addition, Lasswell was against adopting the quantitative methods of the social sciences uncritically, and emphasized that they do not offer a sufficient basis for the study of human relationships (see also Ascher, 1986).

The value orientation represented by Lasswell – which many policy scientists have later adopted – comes out in his "policy science of democracy" ideal (Lasswell, 1951; 1970). Its starting points were liberal-democratic values and its ultimate noble goal the fuller realization of human dignity. Elsewhere Lasswell refers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a starting point for the operationalization of that goal and emphasizes that the main task of policy science is to expand the freedom of choice and not just simply predict (see Brunner, 1991: 81). As a paragon of value-oriented policy research Lasswell mentions Gunnar Myrdal's "An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy". The aims of the study were to clarify the actual state of things, find explanations in backgrounds and stimulate policies to decrease discrimination.

Lasswell (1951: 10–11) clarifies how "objective" science and a scientist's explicit value orientation can be realized simultaneously without conflict. A researcher is value-oriented in choosing a relevant research topic on the basis of his own (social and political) values. This does not happen objectively and scientifically. But once, so the argument goes on, the choice has been made, the study itself is conducted objectively (and thus with as much value freedom as possible) using all the scientific methods available.

Lasswell's value orientation is clearly a solution based, at least partly, on the classical methodological model of Weber (1988a, 1988b, 1987). Weber did not deny the value relevance of social research or the influence of the researcher's values on the choice of research topic. He specifically emphasized that the final justification for the pursuit of value freedom and for scientific activity in general lies in its meaning for society and human life. Therefore, his concept of science and the value-freedom principle as part of it, should not be seen only in an epistemological or methodological (cf. Bruun, 1972; Wagner & Zipprian, 1989) context but also in connection to a historical, philosophical and socio-cultural frame of reference (Runciman, 1969; Lord Simey, 1967; Brugger, 1982; Keat & Urry 1982: 196–204). Weber's model combined social value relevance (or value orientation) and the methodological principle of value freedom in the same way as with Lasswell. This thinking made possible (for the proponents of the model) socially and politically value-committed and critical research activity without having to abandon the objectivity and value-freedom principle of the research process itself. In later criticism – as well as in uncritical research practice – this has often been misunderstood (or forgotten) when arguing that social scientists must be politically neutral and accept any values without criticism as given starting points, i.e. that the methodological value-freedom principle is also equal to or presupposes social neutrality (see Verhoog, 1981, 1988; Kuitunen, 1991).

For classical formulators of policy science

the Weberian "social epistemology" did not seem to cause any problems. Gans (1971: 14) is one of those who also admits clearly that policy research is not a politically neutral activity but is always linked to the service of certain values whether they be conservative, liberal or radical. Unlike academic research which concentrates on what is (or what will be), policy science must be concerned with what can be or should be, and is thus unavoidably normative. This normativity has a specific form (similar to Lasswell's): —"once the policy researcher has made the value commitments inherent in policy research, he must follow the same norms of rigor and objectivity in data collection that obtain in the academic sphere" (Gans, 1971: 19). Like Lasswell, Gans emphasizes that one of the prime values underlying policy-oriented social science must be democracy. According to Gans, the policy researcher, like the policy designer, should be responsive to the values and aspirations of the people for whom they are designing policy. He specified that policy research and design must be predicted on the notion of planning with – not for – people.

Claims that policy science neglects the systematic dealing with values and normative questions are unspecific in so far as this need and possibility has been clearly stressed in early programs. Dror, as one further example, has underlined that although policy science focuses on instrumental-normative knowledge or deals with means and intermediate objectives and not with absolute values it tries "to contribute to value choice by exploring value implications, value consistencies, value costs and the behavioural foundations of value commitments". For that reason "policy sciences should break a breach in the tight wall separating contemporary social science from ethics and philosophy and build up an operational theory of values (including value morphology, taxonomy, measurement, and so forth, but not the substantive absolute norms themselves) as part of policy science" (Dror, 1971a: 84–85; 1971b: 52).

Dror's characterization refers not only to the importance of ethical analysis as part of policy science but also to a set of epistemological principles, on the basis of which this was considered possible. The analysis of values was done using methods of value-free scientific research. This made it possible to study critically the internal logicality, logical and empirical consequences etc. of value commitments, without taking a stand on intrinsic values, which would have meant – according to the thinking in question – leaving the area of scientific competence and stepping into the field of irrational choices. The normative analysis of policy science was thus defined in the Weberian way as technical and instrumental rationality. But what is essential is that the possibilites of normative analysis within the framework of this setting were not interpreted as narrowly as in later practice (and partly in its criticism).

Finally, let us consider the fairly early characterization by Merton and Lerner of the normativity of policy science. According to Merton and Lerner (1951) the ethical and technical duty of a policy researcher is to clarify the value foundations of a policymaker in order to be aware in advance of the limits set to the research by the values. They do not believe that the reseacher is limited to the role of a technician who accepts the values as given. The authors specify that it is also possible to orient oneself socially in such a way that the researcher's values contribute to the specification of the problem, the lines of the research and policy recommendations. Social scientists can – Merton and Lerner emphasize – try to convince policymakers of goals of a new kind and be active themselves in formulating goals. They do not accept the reduction of policy science to activity which adapts to the hectic tempo of the policy process and resorts to hasty, untheoretical reports, where it is seldom possible to bring out noteworthy new points of view. In the role of a mere bureaucratic technician, policy scientists cannot question policies, state problems and formulate alternatives. Instead – of which there are too many examples according to the authors – they commit moral suicide.

Merton's and Lerner's socio-ethical orientation is clarified by their appeal according to which social scientists' ability to serve the human dignity of the world community depends in the first place on restoring their freedom in relation to goals and values, policies and decisions as well as means. Furthermore, they challenge researchers to critical self-evaluation of the achievements and failures of applied social science, which would give social scientists a better basis for deciding who their clients will be and how to serve them better. Merton's and Lerner's critique is one further example of how in the early stages of policy science it was not found necessary in principle to deny normativity or even restrict it very narrowly to only goal-clarification and operationalization (see also Gans, 1971a).

References to classical (or at least early) formulations of policy science thus reveal that to the classics ethics and dealing with normative questions were not alien or incompatible with the model. This makes one suspect that mainly reasons other than epistemological ones connected with formulations as such are behind the neglect of ethics in the practices of policy science. Before considering this question we must first take a look at the history and trends of the MEPA project.

## The "more ethical policy analysis" criticism

The rise of "more ethical policy analysis" (the MEPA) movement is connected with the relevance crisis of policy science and applied social science in general, i.e. the increase of criticism in the 1970's and observations that the influence and use of policy relevant research in decision making is in general small. This was a serious blow to the core of the legitimation of the policy science model, the promise of relevance and better decision making: "... the main test of policy sciences is better achievement of considered goals through more effective and efficient

policies..." (Dror, 1971a: 85). According to the critique this failure was a disaster for the positivist and socio-technological policy science conception. More generally it was seen as a sign of a crisis of the dominant planning paradigm and overall politico-societal view of society (see e.g. Sullivan, 1983: 299).

The reaction to the crisis among policy scientists was twofold. First, the study of knowledge utilization appeared as an extensive trend, where the main idea was that the pursuit of more relevant policy knowledge presupposes systematic research on the linkages and diffusion processes between knowledge production and knowledge utilization. Questions of the relationship of policy science to the politico-administrative system – sometimes more widely to society – meant the movement approached empirical research of the sociology of science or merged into it. The trend has revealed the diversity of the use and diffusion of knowledge and proved the one-sidedness of the instrumental utilization concept. Utilization researchers began to emphasize the indirect enlightenment function of social science research, i.e. impacts on the interpretations of social questions and decision environments (e.g. Nowotny & Lambiri-Dimaki, 1985; Bulmer et al., 1986; Wingens, 1988; Nilsson, 1992; Lampinen, 1992). The research trend has created more and more sophisticated formulations and taxonomies of the different types of utilization and conditions under which social research can be useful and may have maximal impact on policy process (e.g. Weiss, 1991). The evident complexity of the utilization and diffusion processes as well as the policy process itself, functioning not only on the basis of research information but essentially according to ideological and power interests (e.g. Weiss, 1983), has obliged researchers and policy analysts to reject many of the simplistic tendencies of the earlier rationalistic utilization concept.

The MEPA movement was another reaction to the relevance and legitimation crisis. An increasing number of scholars and practitioners of policy analysis began to argue that ethics – in the sense of systematic anal-

ysis of the normative policy dimension or (later) normative discourse – should have an important role in the practice of policy evaluation (see Amy 1984a, 1987; Fischer & Forester 1987b).

The critique focused at first on the limitations of the methods used by policy analysts, such as cost-benefit analysis (see e.g. Tribe, 1972). The research team of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences also explored why policy analysis tended to be not very useful for policymakers and the public. The study group noted in its report "When Values Conflict" that conventional methods of policy analysis assumed general consensus of social values, which was no longer self-evident in the turbulent politics (in the United States) of the 1960s (Amy, 1987: 46–47).

Rein's (1976, 1983) critique traced the background of the relevance crisis to analysts' inability to deal with the crucial normative dimension of the policy process. The main cause of this inability was the positivist value-neutral epistemology and methodology. Rein argued that the value-free position of the analyst simply means that he ignores the normative issues, considering them not amenable to scientific analysis. This was founded on value-noncognitivist ethical theory, according to which basic values are subjective and emotive and as such outside the competence of scientific rationality. Rein claimed that within the framework of positivist epistemology the analyst must be either a value-neutral technician or a value-committed advocate of his own values. (We have seen above that this Weberian position was, in fact, not so limited as many policy analysts – including Rein – have believed.) In either of these positions the analyst was  unable to criticize those values. Rein's own solution was the rejection of a positivist conception of values and its strict fact-value dichotomy. The main function of his "value criticism", conversely, was to submit the policy goals to systematic and critical review. The approach raised basic epistemological and methodological issues. The crucial task for normative and critical policy science was to establish a systematic meth-odology able to link factual description and normative understanding (Rein, 1976: 42). This challenge has been taken seriously by Fischer (1980, 1990) and some other normative or "critical" policy scientists (see Thogmorton, 1991: 164–166).

The necessity of normative analysis was also demonstrated by other views of criticism. One of them was related to revealing the ideological bias and non-objectivity of conventional "value-free" methods. This philosophically oriented criticism was deeply concerned with the basic ontological and epistemological assumptions of the social sciences in general. On the other hand, the impossibility of totally value-free social research and policy analysis was proved by empirical sociological studies (including utilization studies of policy sciences) on the practices and contexts of scientific activity. Basically the same notion of the value-laden and non-technical nature of activity was generally made concerning bureaucratic functions of public administration. Partly for that reason some ethicists also began to be concerned with public policy questions. Many of them abandoned ethical decisionism and argued that certain rationality (essentially not scientific rationality in the sense of positivism) and systematic analysis could be introduced into the discussion of ethical issues. In the ethical good-reasons approach (e.g. Paul Taylor and Stephen Toulmin) it is believed that moral statements are neither factual nor emotive. The (autonomous) moral agent can put forward justifying reasons for what ought to be done in a particular situation having moral aspects (Verhoog, 1988: 4). This rejection of the Weberian (and Lasswellian) "scientific" rationality and ethical irrationality model has been important for the development of the MEPA movement. Fischer (1980 and 1990) has systematically applied the good-reasons-approach to the policy science context.

The rejection of strict value-noncognitivism and the instrumental conception of rationality was also a crucial precondition for the "forensic approach", which consists of an organized debate or practical discourse

among various analysts, policymakers and lay people with differing normative perspectives on a policy issue (see Amy 1987: 52; Brown 1976: 339–340). Essentially, this means a step toward a model of policy evaluation which would be less technocratic or less elitistic and more responsive to ordinary people. In that sense it was a reaction against the transformation of the classical model of policy "science in service" (of liberal-democratic values) to elitistic "science in power" and a step from the "systems perspective" to the "lifeworld perspective" (see Verhoog, 1988).

## The institutional resistance of a MEPA

The MEPA criticism reported above has been primarily an ethical-methodological project. A different, institutional approach has been demonstrated by Amy (1984a, 1987). He thinks that the ethical-methodological critique has succeeded in proving the relevance of ethics in policy analysis. He, therefore, shifts the focus to the question why ethical analysis is still rarely practiced in the professional activities of policy analysts. The problem, for Amy, is the lack of institutionalization of ethics in policy analysis. What are the institutional obstacles resisting MEPA? Does understanding them provide any relevant suggestions of ways to encourage MEPA? In the following I will summarize the main results of Amy's (1987) analysis.

According to Amy the obstacles of MEPA are not primarily intellectual or epistemological but rather professional, political and psychological. Policy analysis always means work for someone. Most analysts work in government bureaucracies. Within that institutional setting, analysts have direct contacts with the political powers and have a strong professional interest in maintaining good relationships to their superiors. Ethical questioning almost inevitably raises critical arguments against reigning policies and the pursuit of dominant values, and is therefore considered a serious risk for the career of the analyst. The bureaucratic culture and its internal technocratic ethos encourage analytical work within the consensus of ongoing lines of policy. It is safe simply to accept the client's normative perspective as given.

This professional image of an instrumental and value-neutral technician or social engineer is deeply rooted in the original (political) legitimation of analysts as part of the political-administrative system. Neo-positivism has essentially provided an intellectual basis for this socio-technological role. But despite later intellectual attack (including the MEPA movement) against positivist epistemology and the illusion of value-free technical expertise, it is nevertheless still "useful" because it provides a number of professional advantages. Despite the illusion of the nonpolitical nature of bureaucratic policies (see e.g. Weiss 1983) also policymakers protect themselves against political and career risks by maintaining the technical image of their decisions. Amy sees, therefore, an intimate connection between a positivistic fact-value (or means-ends) dichotomy and the professional roles of analysts and policymakers. This means quite paradoxal an ideology (cf. Tribe, 1972): the rhetorics of value-free analysis functions as legitimation for the practical politics of expertise.

According to Amy academic policy research institutions offer more freedom to ethical analysis with less professional risks involved. But here he underlines psychological obstacles. It is psychologically difficult to engage in questioning deeply held moral commitments, including one's own values. Moreover, ethical evaluation often raises more questions than gives answers and leads to the level of basic philosophical assumptions – the level of reflection, which is almost totally lacking from conventional policy research.

As Amy demonstrates it is important for the MEPA movement and policy analysts in general to become more conscious of the evident institutional and political realities of policy analysis. The main conclusion seems to be that belief in the functioning of positivist methodology and technical role is either naive or, perhaps in most cases, cynical and

morally questionable. Thus, is it not also naive to believe in a MEPA?

## Still toward a MEPA?

The intellectual interest in MEPA has lost its momentum after representing (according to Amy) a major intellectual force for several years in the field. Amy's explanation for this is that the movement has not simply become outdated, but that the reason is to be found in the politics of policy analysis methodology. This politics actively discourage the incorporation of ethics into policy analysis. For this reason it is naive to expect the realization of MEPA in professional practices.

By demonstrating the contextual limitations to the MEPA, Amy makes plain the inevitable shift of focus from purely ethical-methodological analysis to a contextual level. But at the same time, it seems to me, he builds a paradoxal situation in which it is difficult for Amy to see any hopeful future for the MEPA either on an epistemological or a contextual level, despite some reassuring suggestions of what can be done and a desire to take a realistic rather than a pessimistic view. Are Amy's conclusions to be interpreted simply as a deadlock of the MEPA movement? In order to consider this question we can look at and evaluate Amy's own arguments for answering "no".

Amy does not believe (which is a logical result of his two essays) in conventional ways of increasing the supply of ethical analysis: to include courses of ethical analysis in training, to point out the relevance of ethical analysis for analysts in their work, etc. He prefers to increase the demand of MEPA by getting the clients of policy analysis to demand more serious ethical analysis. The problem, then, is how to motivate administrators to ask for it. Amy does not see very much hope in appealing to the moral sense of policymakers or in arguing that MEPA is in their interest and would help to produce better policy decisions. Yet he sees the use of political pressure from the public as a necessary strategy. Then, perhaps, administra-

tors would regard ethical issues as politically more relevant. As a concrete example of positive uses of the strategy he provides the increase in hospital ethics committees. The basic point underlying Amy's suggestions is the notion that policy analysis is a part of the larger political context. The hope for a MEPA, therefore, depends on "the political struggle in the halls of power and in the streets of the nation". Amy's message is rather pessimistic and also partly quite naive. Despite his "optimistic suggestions", it seems to me, he is obliged to raise his hands. Nevertheless, Amy's analysis may give some hope to the future of the MEPA movement.

Amy's analysis is useful for the MEPA movement in the sense that he points out the need to enlarge the frame of reference in the discussion. He implicitly argues that considering a MEPA as a solution to the relevance crisis of policy science is too limited a focus. "Relevance" should be extended to embrace much more than direct usefulness of policy advising. The restriction of one's frame of reference to that conventional practice and its internal technocratic ethos means inevitably the rejection of ethics and the ethical responsibility of a morally sensible human actor. Amy's essays have crucial meaning in proving that the conventional restriction of ethical questioning is not caused only by epistemological principles but is more evidently a conscious, cynical and, thus, immoral choice determined by short-sighted professional and political self-interest rather than by a genuine moral point of view.

This situation, which is clarified by Amy and also by the critics in the MEPA movement more generally, can be seen as a "fruitful impasse" for the movement. The myth of the conventional legitimation of policy analysts is demystified. One has to make an explicit moral and political choice between the old practice and the rejection of its intellectual and ethical restrictions. The former does not necessarily give up the ideals of a MEPA but it is obliged to realize the idealism of the pursuit of "institutionalizing" ethics. And this kind of "idealism without realism" will have difficulties in surviving. The

latter perspective will demand, at least part-
ly, the rejection of conventional commitments
and – if we want to see that as a logical fu-
ture for the MEPA movement – the philo-
sophical and practical deepening and radi-
calization of the movement.

For this Amy does not, indeed, provide
much insight. It seems to me that he does
not have enough courage to draw clear con-
clusions on the essence of his analysis for
the MEPA movement. In the backgroud there
seems to be a conventional commitment to
a limited planner's and policymaker's per-
spective – without reflection on its broader
(than internal) social contextuality – and a
loyalty toward the manipulative administra-
tion as well as an uncritical belief in the func-
tioning of formal democracy.

Amy points in the direction of a more gen-
eral political system and of the role of citi-
zens only tentatively. He does not specify
how to mobilize public pressure and what the
relationships of academic researchers to the
public and politics are. In other words, Amy's
analysis does not extend the scope of re-
flection beyond the conventional policy sci-
ence practice and does not use valuable crit-
icism of the whole project of policy sciences
and their socio-cultural contexts (despite his
references to "post-positivist" reorientation
efforts which allow also critical questions
about the validity and desirability of our so-
cio-economic systems; see Amy, 1984b).
Through this lack of vision the author implic-
itly answers his own question of why the
MEPA movement has lost its intellectual
force.

## Practical social science – toward a MEPA in a radically different form

As one example of profound philosophical
(and political) criticism we could name the
claims according to which the social scienc-
es should be seen and practiced as practi-
cal (moral) sciences (e.g. Haan et al., 1983;
Jennings, 1983; Bellah, 1983b). This orien-
tation starts essentially where Amy stops. It
is deeply conscious of the ideological pow-
er-commitments and also of the institutional
functions of socio-technological (policy) sci-
ence, which has provided legitimating con-
ceptions for the modern state and for new
professional groups to implement the wel-
fare state (see Bellah, 1983a: 51). Thus, it
has clearly realized the same politics of pol-
icy science epistemology as Amy.

The orientation is also deeply conscious
of the moral problems of social technology
and its science. Ultimately the moral prob-
lem is the commitment to the basically tech-
nocratic, anti-democratic (or inhuman) ten-
dencies of dominant social systems. The in-
sistent restriction of one's perspective nar-
rowly to the efficiency of the system and the
role-responsibility as technician (or as nar-
row client-advocate) means the rejection of
a broader socio-ethical responsibility (see
Kuitunen, 1991; Verhoog, 1988).

The rejection of genuine morality can also
be understood as a "natural" element of our
technological culture at large. Conventional
policy science practice is itself a part of the
scientific and instrumental ethos of industri-
alized culture, as Sullivan (1983) remarks.
He also underlines that the debate on poli-
cy science is not only epistemological or
conceptual but "In question is a vision of
society, all human action, and ultimately, how
life is to be lived and understood". Accord-
ing to Sullivan

"The dominance of a utilitarian instru-
mental mode of thinking about social life
inherited from classical liberalism has
made the articulation of critical positions
not so much impossible as professional-
ly and often politically unacceptable and,
therefore, often unheard. A social inves-
tigation that aims ... at insight and self-
awareness runs the risk of cognitive
illegitimacy. It cannot readily be fitted into
the channels of communication or prac-
tices of investigation established by
existing professional social science. ...
Awareness of the limitations and p r e -
tensions of established social forms and
social thinking becomes valuable and
makes sense only in a context in which
human beings live more than instru-

mental, strategic lives" (op. cit.: 305–306).

For Sullivan, critical and morally reflective science would ultimately demand critical and morally reflective human life. Through that kind of life, Sullivan seems to think, it is possible to further social and human self-understanding and to commit oneself to a different, more participatory and morally responsible understanding of the relation of social inquiry to people and public policy (op. cit.: 315).

It seems to me that this kind of criticism represents a more reflective way than Amy's of saying that ethics and social technology (or policy science) are incompatible. This thinking is conscious of the limitations of policy science but, unlike Amy's, it also has relevant ways of thinking and acting differently. The institutionalization of ethics into the dominant social science or even into the dominant social systems is not, naively, its major starting point.

Bellah (1983) sees that a kind of technological science will continue to be necessary, but he demands a crucial shift in the prevailing dominance of these two different paradigms. The dominance of a manipulative, technological and scientific orientation should be replaced by a more communicative, practical and ethical mode of social science. This means a shift from the dominance of technical interest to the dominance of practical interest, from techne to praxis, from control to communicative action. "The purpose of practice is not to produce or control anything but to discover through mutual discussion and reflection between free citizens the most appropriate ways, under present conditions, of living the ethically good life. To that end technological knowledge may be helpful provided that it is used in the context of practical – that is ethical and political – knowledge that has precedence over it" (Bellah 1983a: 55).

This kind of shift means that decisions and commitments have to emerge from the practical context of communicative action, from the mutual understanding and participation of people's living practices ("knowing with").

It means a deep reorientation in understanding the social world. Such an understanding would – according to Bellah – move both policymakers and professionals in a more democratic and less technocratic direction. The chief audience of practical science is not policymakers but the public. Its major impact on social policy is through influencing public thinking and discussion, ultimately through promoting social self-understanding (op. cit.: 61). The main function is not bound to professional, technocratic practices or to the direct information demand of policy programs.

As a deep reorientation practical science is, naturally, utopian in nature. It is utopian because it presupposes deep structural changes in prevailing science and society. For example the notion of an informed and active public is utopian under present conditions. To practical social science it is not, however, a hopeless deadlock but a practical challenge. Social scientists can, for example through the revival of the tradition of practical social science (e.g. C. Wright Mills), try to promote public life through inspiring the common vocabulary of a free justice society as its language.

I think a certain utopian (theoretical and political) perspective is an inevitable intellectual and ethical precondition for a critical evaluation of contemporary science, society and culture. And despite the utopian nature of moral society at large it is not impossible to use moral language and to commit oneself to a moral, practical life. Thus, one would be able to learn better to use this language and to see and practice "science" in a different way in a different contextuality. Then, the utopian perspective is, indeed, "praxis".

The utopian criticism can be seen as a much more realistic and forceful prospect for a MEPA than the nonutopian "incompatible-realism" and naive optimism Amy seems to represent. Consequently, a radical shift is inevitably needed if one wants to continue the MEPA-movement in any reasonable form. It will demand a shift from interpreting a MEPA purely as a strategy for overcom-

ing the crisis of relevance to seeing the pursuit of knowledge in a much more general social and human context. The main concern for social sciences is the pursuit of relevance not only for policymakers and bureaucratic systems but for ordinary people and their life-worlds. A radical shift in orientation will make possible the critical normative questions concerning both decision making and policies and also the practice of social systems in general, the systems which conventionally have been taken uncritically and/or cynically as given. The reorientation can be regarded as a reaction against technocratic and other inhuman tendencies of society and human life and a step toward socio-ethically more responsible activity. Then, MEPA – if somebody still wants to use those letters – could mean for example "more ethical public (and personal) action".

We may conclude that a crucial question in understanding the obstacles of an ethical analysis and a moral point of view in "policy analysis", both in government institutions and academic research, is the scope of our frame of reference in conceptualizing these obstacles. As Sullivan (1983: 300) has underlined, seeking "more ethical" alternatives for the socio-technological policy orientation cannot be articulated at the ahistorical, "conceptual" level which is typical of policy science discussion; it presupposes more reflective discussion about the societal and cultural conditions of more responsible scientific activity. Thus, it is inevitable to move from the epistemological and institutional level of conceptualization to more general socio-cultural perspectives of criticism. Recent trends in policy research strategies and contexts (see Holzner, 1991) seem to justify the claim that the pursuit of a broad human contextuality is ever more actual today.

## Socio-ethical contextuality or a new managerial ethos?

One topical question is to what degree the recent re-emergence of environmental concern in the social sciences will provide "cul-tural space" for going beyond the conventional policy orientation and for extending the scope of criticism. Cagnon (1989: 559, 561), for example, has called attention to alternative research activities, which are not oriented one-dimensionally to the service of established power coalitions but rather criticize them. The critique challenges the prevailing societal and political interpretations of environmental problems and policies, allying often with alternative political movements and constituting secondary discursive coalitions which, in certain situations, can obtain remarkable prominence and may expand the scope of expertise. The public competition of different "truths" demystifies the myth of neutral technical expertise and, thus, may justify a kind of representational system of comparing scientific findings (see Nowotny 1990: 112–113) and advocating different societal and political orientations.

On the other hand, also conventional policy research has been more openly politicized because of the neo-conservative turn in the political climate (Wollman, 1984; Cagnon, 1989: 562–564) and in science policy and because of the recent scarcity of resources in social science research. – Could this polarization tendency augur a general rejection of the "neutral" policy research model as public image and legitimation basis and a gradual shift to explicitly politically oriented, competing argumentation? Then, the notion of neutrality and policy research "as science" or "as data" would be replaced by the concept of research as an active formulator of politico-administrative strategies – research "as advocacy" or "as argument" (see Weiss, 1991) – or, alternatively, as a pursuit of democratic interpretation ("as councel", see Jennings, 1983). This tendency, if real, would be indicative of an essential shift in the basic structures of the conventional policy science model. It might possibly allow normative argumentation and also give some space for alternative post-positivist epistemology and critical socio-ethical perspectives, albeit this still presupposes taking some career risks and using intellectual courage (see Brunner, 1991: 80–83). In

the atmosphere of open normative argumentation the question of social commitments and their ethical grounds would be highly relevant.

Some discussants have wanted to stick to the ideals of truth seeking and neutrality. Bodde (1986), for example, fears that the advocacy model will lead to the promotion of narrow interests. But he does not relate his claims to the wide criticism according to which the neutrality principle itself has essentially been used as an excuse to forget other than powerful interests. The argumentation which Bodde represents does not accept the epistemological and political critique of "truthlikeness" in social sciences and seeks to connect the ethical problems to the lack of moral backbone or an ethical code (see Benveniste, 1984). The solution would, then, be the restoration of the conventional "as science" model or the pursuit to methodize procedurally the advocacy model in order to reach "scientific" standardization.

It is doubtful that radical shifts in standard practices would be very easy to bring about. In most cases the change can be seen as lifting the curtain of neutrality in the situation where the "epistemic drift" has gone on long enough so that neutrality is not needed in the rhetorical vocabulary (see Simons, 1989) of research. The status and legitimacy of social research and of the university must then be reached by more visible participation in the development of immediate politico-economic strategies of current societal projects. Then, the change could be illustrated by the claim that the commitments which have previously been adopted and taken as given behind the curtain of neutrality can nowadays be adopted more openly. But the proponents of alternative epistemological and socio-ethical commitments – fortunately – still claim to be self-critical and are thus obliged to justify their conduct.

The "managerial conception of science for public policy", presented by Nowotny (1990: 116–118), may offer one tentative explanation for the obvious shift in the rhetorics of policy orientation. According to Nowotny's scheme, the new managerial ethos rejects the old scientistic model based on a clear-cut separation of science from policy and is aware of the limitations of a utilitarian-instrumental mode of societal problem solving. When the social justification of science as an automatic source of rational control and social welfare is not accountable because of unknown, harmful and unintended effects, it is reasonable to switch the rhetorics from problem-solving to managing problems. This turn has been essentially facilitated by the growing awareness of the complex and vague nature of modern environmental problems.

Nowotny argues that the shift in rhetorics also means a remarkable change in the conception of responsibility. It is characterized by a "multi-level hierarchy of responsibility" instead of individual responsibility. This is connected to a more general restructuration of public accountability. It is now based on managerial or corporative systems' loyalty with a built-in hierarchical structure of duties, rather than a conventional political demand of responsiveness in the sense of Western democracy. Thus, the collective responsibility does not mean democratic, civic control but, rather, shared interests of actors within a corporative management system.

As Nowotny predicts, the "full membership" of the "company" to be managed will be an "elegant solution", a new way towards relevance and professional identity. The managerial ethos gives policy scientists a new style of legitimation strategy, which reduces the old tradition of "boundary work" between science and policy into irrelevance, "since by definition scientific management of policy problems stands above the need to protect science from political intrusion" (op.cit.: 118). Accordingly, full-scale incorporation into the social management system and its ideology will secure a relatively high degree of "autonomy" to scientific managers.

One obvious sign about the new visionary rhetorics which perfectly reflects today's science and technology policy and political climate is Newby's (1992) interactive model

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of social science, technology and society. He emphasizes that "social science is an integral, and not merely a marginal, activity in understanding the process whereby scientific excellence and technological innovation may lead to economic and social well-being" (op. cit., 13). The synergic union of the natural and social sciences into the "one Wissenschaft" and its integration to the pursuit of new technological innovation, cultural attitudes and social organisation may together improve economic competiteveness and effifiency to be sustained. Social sciences should, therefore, be integrated into the (study of ) "the very processes themselves". The interactive reformula of the interlinkages of science, technology and society is a logical result of the long development in which science has become much more like other institutions in modern society: in its moral standing, institutional norms and its affinity towards economic and political influence – the fact which has been demonstrated systematically by sociologists of science and other STS researchers. Consequently, if science is not so special, it has serious difficulties to form legitimate demand of privileged status for funding and political support. What, then, is a reason not to aim at the more systematic integration of social sciences to the general, public "needs" of "one society"?

Some features of the managerial style illustrated by Nowotny may be found in the recent rise of the ideal and procedures of "strategic planning". For instance, in the case of the Dutch Fourth Report on Physical Planning, the planning process was characterized by a managerial intertwinement of research, policy design, and plan negotiation (see ter Heide, 1992). From the very beginning, the (expert) visions of the future, identifying the main long-term trends in society and determing relevance for physical (spatial) planning, directed the collection and interpretation of knowledge needed in the process.

Thus, as the procedural description (and prescription) of ter Heide shows, the expert knowledge was an intimate part of an essentially political planning process which happened under the visionary umbrella produced by "managerial" actors. The visions were not intended to be produced "objectively" but the policy goals were, at least provisionally, structuring the "hypotheses " of the future (ter Heide, 1992: 34–35, 40). Available "in -stock knowledge" used and "quick & dirty" information produced for the specific needs of the process were both strategic elements in the negotiation process aiming at consensus in terms of values and vested interests between different actors (government and municipal authorities, various "target groups" – including large private companies and academics – and the cabinet). The strategic scheme provided legitimating demand of strategic and permanent research activity. Because of the rapid tempo of the planning and policy negotiation process there was little time (although it took in fact quite a few years) for new strategic research and, therefore, available in-stock knowledge produced by the physical planning agency was considered highly relevant. This experience was seen as an imperative for the stimulation of new large-scale research programmes (op. cit.: 39).

Surely, the general commitment to the managerial ethos will have strong attraction as a "new" strategy for policy research. Aiming at a critical distance from the given visions inevitably presupposes socio-cultural perspectives which go beyond the given cognitive maps, and are able to clarify the restructuration processes of discursive coalitions in the "modern company". Ulrich Beck's recent work can be seen as an effort in that direction. If his description (Beck, 1990; 1992) of the "organized irresponsibility" in societal (risk) management is a "real picture" of the structure of the "shared responsibility" in the technocratic system, then we may not have very much cause to applaud the new managerial solution. It may satisfy professional interests, but the basic choice between mere "systems loyalty" (technocracy) and the pursuit of more general responsibility for the citizens remains a classic moral issue. Beck's analysis demonstrates, in a

paradoxical way, both the need for citizen control and the diffiulty to transfer it into the pervasive complexity of "the risk society" to be managed. As Nordin (1991) has argued in an interesting way, the symbiotic relation between the established technocratic "parapraxes" and political leaders leads to a monopolistic situation where there is little room for alternative views on society and for questioning the technological/political mixture of the argumentation itself. Thus, the very concepts of political as well as ethical responsibility seem to be in an actual need of reconceptualization; they have to meet the complex situations and ethically "unsustainable" tendencies of the modern world (cf. Jonas, 1984; Engel & Engel, 1990).

The recent changes in policy reseach contexts do not mean that Lasswell's (1970) question "Must science serve political power?" – and his answer to it – are obsolete, but that they have to be linked with current discursive coalitions – and their "managerial power structures". Then, essentially, it is not only a question of the responsibility of policy science and scientists but of the structuration of social (ir)responsibility in the "modern project" more generally.

A broad understanding of human contextuality and responsibility can be seen as a classic intellectual and moral task of critical social researchers, including "policy scientists", but it does not, indeed, belong to the internal ethos of professional – or occupied – system-managers. From the managerial perspective it is difficult to find reason to hope that Lasswell's contextual vision (see Torgerson, 1985) is "less incompatible" today than over twenty years ago when he stated

"The conclusion is that science and scientists in the aggregate need not serve political power in the future as they have in the past. It is possible to weaken and eventually to overcome the parochialism of perspective that has restricted the universalization of science and laid scientists open to the charge of giving disproportionate service of militancy and oligarchy. By working together inside the insti-

tutions of knowledge, and as participants in public associations, men of knowledge can assist in modifying the traditional reliance of society on coercive political power. They can do so in the course of discovering how to obsolesce the institutions of militancy and oligarchy and to cultivate institutions of civic order." (Lasswell, 1970: 123)

We could conclude that a critical socio-ethical perspective of social researchers is not less needed today but, rather, vice versa. Accordingly, if the vision of "more ethical public (and personal) action" is still essentially utopian in nature and if a broad theoretical and moral point of view is now incompatible with the dominant social paradigm, it should not be considered as a reason for rejecting them. On the contrary, it will provide support for an actual need for broadening our perspectives beyond a narrow contextuality and the narrow interests of narrow men. That is why Habermasian and other efforts to analyze the interlinkages of knowledge, power and democracy as well as to produce alternative normative perspectives on democratic citizenship and discourse are highly important (cf. Premfors, 1992; Beck, 1992) also for the evaluation of policy oriented activities (cf. Fischer, 1990; Torgerson, 1992). Such efforts can at least help to realize that the conceptions of social "good" and "bad" are not so easy to take as given. They also may promote the reflection process in which policy orientation and ethics are not seen as hopelessly or cynically incompatible, and in which more fundamental questions arise about the obstacles to "more ethical" knowledge and action.

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