UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

A Reflective Analysis
of
Public Policy Development and Implementation:
A
Career Civil Servant's Strategy
to facilitate
Surviving Major Organizational Change and Rapid Policy Development

by

Gary Ross McEwen

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

in

Educational Administration

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A Reflective Analysis of Public Policy Development and Implementation:
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to identify and relate a useable theoretical context for the development and implementation of public policy with specific reference to public education policy development and implementation.

The role of the State in facilitating the process of public policy was examined in terms of the global challenges of information technology, shifting jurisdictional boundaries, and the changing role of government operation with respect to governance.

The institutional character of a department of education was examined via the process of personal reflection. Decision-making, critical analysis, public discourse, and the emergence of a learning organization as the future of the public service were examined covering a period of 25 years.

The study begins with a discussion of global challenges facing public policy conceptualization. The importance and complexity of policy analysis and policy making is examined emphasizing the role of both public and private sector input.

Policy implementation and policy evaluation chapters highlight the impact of 'new' public management and the involvement of people using alternative evaluation strategies.

The study concludes with a discussion of the future of public policy and the application of the public policy development and implementation theory to the personal experience of the writer.

The study recommends that public input, critical discourse, and collaborative management strategies can ensure the continued improvement of public policy and in the process dramatically improve the operational effectiveness of the State to accomplish the task.

DEDICATION

To

David and Allison, 'thank you' for your interest and support over the past many, many months. Hopefully this document will stand as an acceptable response to your query – what do you do in there anyway?

And specially to

Barbara – your understanding, patience, encouragement and overall support and determination to see the project finished, contributed more than I can ever say to the completion of this project. Now to the other jobs that we have been putting aside awaiting the completion of 'the thing'!

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Context of the Study

> ...organizational leaders struggling to compete in a global marketplace and individuals seeking
> relevance in a time of change must first learn to let go of the comfort of the predictable past
> (Noer, 1993, p.29)

From 1994 to 1999, the political and bureaucratic organizational leaders
responsible for the operation of the Manitoba Department of Education, for the most part,
did break from the 'comfortable past'. The same cannot be said about some individual
bureaucrats. That struggle continued throughout the same time period and may be just
now (1999-2000) achieving a comfort level largely arrived at through a reflective/critical
analysis of organizational change and policy development and implementation
experienced during the same time period.

Educational reform commentators (Sarason, 1990; Barth, 1990), change theorist
(Fullan, 1982,1991) and curriculum development exponents (Pratt, 1980, 1994; Egan,
1979) all advocated a decentralized, that is, school-based, teacher involved cooperative
and reciprocal approach to curriculum (policy) development and organizational
interaction. In that light, Canadian research suggested that the time needed for teachers to
reach the full use/renewal phase of curriculum implementation ranged from five to eight
years (Dow, Whitehead and Wright, 1984). Further, implementation decisions were to be
encouraged by information that described flexibility of methods and materials for
achieving objectives (Leithwood, 1982). As for evaluation and testing, as far back as the
work of Tyler (1949) the notion was that there was no single source of information that
would be adequate. Moreover, the primary aim of testing was to facilitate learning
(Martin, 1983). And, as Pratt (1994) was to reiterate in the 1990s, earlier Canadian
research argued that classroom observation was the most effective and reliable method of
determining student progress in the classroom (Connelly, Dukacz and Quinlan, 1980).
Sergiovanni (1990) said it best, standardization is the great friend of mediocrity but the
enemy of imagination and excellence.

The foregoing was the context or 'comfortable past' known by many at the department of education. As the design of the curriculum had been the responsibility of the state (department), it comes as no surprise that curriculum retains its power to serve as a litmus test of political intervention and intention (Goodson, 1988). Further, Goodson contends that 'curriculum' designates a central mode by which external agencies from the state downwards have sought over time to penetrate and control the 'license' of the individual classroom (Goodson, 1988, p.6). With respect to the position of curriculum as an expression of state policy, most members of the department were cognizant that while it could be deployed as a 'control' incentive, the curriculum could also facilitate quite the opposite. Public school curricula could facilitate, develop, and encourage student critical thinking capacity. That same curricula would have as one of its primary functions the role of encouraging students to develop the knowledge necessary to not only help to ameliorate society but to change it where necessary.

In April 1994, the details that described the Reorganization of the School Programs Division at the department were released. At the same time, while roles and responsibilities of staff were changed rather dramatically, the department began a very ambitious schedule of policy document production along with the complete revision of public school curriculum in the area of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies, Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Known as *New Directions*, the education policy and curriculum developed and released during the six-year period created a whirlwind of policy development activity not experienced previously by the writer during some 18 years as a public servant. This highly centralized and directive approach to policy development and curriculum preparation appeared to be at odds with what the government of the day postulated, namely, veneration of the notion of 'choice' facilitated by a free market philosophy that extolled the virtues of non-government intervention. That this apparent dichotomy created a modicum of confusion in the eyes of some education consultants is perhaps an understatement. Equally disturbing was the realization that alternate viewpoints or attempts to critique *New Directions* were not encouraged. Again, an organizational style that belied one of the fundamental benchmarks of the government in power at the time, namely, free speech unfettered in a free society devoid of as much state intervention as

possible. Indeed, in a discussion about decentralization and centralization assumptions, one author has stated that regarding the nature of organizations, the discussion rests on two assumptions. First, there is a need for some balance between the level of order and disorder. Second, is the locus of knowledge in the structure (Brown, 1990, p. 32). On both counts, a 'time out' was called by at least one bureaucrat. There had to be a theoretical framework/context for the development of state policy that would help the line-bureaucrat address the exigencies of educational policy in the last decade of the twentieth century. A framework that would at least provide alternatives and suggestions for how to cope with major organizational alteration to an institution with an operating history – human and structural.

To the credit of the Government, the Ministers responsible for the education portfolio apparently had little difficulty in discarding the past. That past was the policy and curricula developed by the preceding governments, that is, prior to 1993. The assumption articulated in 1994 was that public school policy and curricula had taken too long to develop and implement. 'Times' had changed. Information technology— supported by dramatic economic, cultural and political globalization—meant that what had taken a decade or more to produce in the past was now going to happen in 'x' number of months. Given the 'sense of immediacy' that globalization can impart, that notion was referenced as the 'way-to-go'! The notion of lengthy periods of policy/curricula development quickly became a part of the 'predictable past'. Hence the launch of *New Directions* in 1993-1994.

Experienced first hand then was not only the production of a plethora of policy, curriculum, and support documents, but also the daily ups and downs of an organization that had its *modus operandi* fundamentally altered. Altered to the point that one could hear as part of the daily social discourse of the organization expressions of passionate enthusiasm by some and animated anger by others toward the tasks at hand. There were incredible workloads for some staff but total misplacement of others including — for a time— the writer. In fact it became a 'badge of honour' to have been noticed as one who 'signed in' to work on a Sunday or one who signed out after 10:00 PM during the week. In short, the workplace had evolved into a production line mentality driven by a process

that thrived on activity but exhibited what Fullan (1999) has cited as two problems that plague public policymaking.

The first is that the state is an incredibly blunt instrument; it gets hold of one overarching idea and imposes it without any sensitivity to the local context. The second is the desperate craving of politicians for a magical solution. And what are the consequences of these political vulnerabilities of large systems? Unrealistic timelines and policy clutter. As Fullan observed, even within the same government, a new policy is introduced on top of yet-to-be implemented previous policies. The overall effect, he continues, is the appearance of constantly unfinished business in a context of fragmentation and incoherence (Fullan, 1999, p.54-55). It is perhaps too early to suggest that Fullan's findings may be used to describe the educational scenario across Manitoba from 1994-1999. That the department has been asked to slow down its educational document production and relax the pace of policy implementation is at least an indication that those in positions of senior management have become cognizant of the situation.

On a quieter more mundane note, the daily working routine at Manitoba Education and Training involves activity that facilitates the implementation of projects that have been developed, approved and identified in the Operational Plan (OP) of the Unit, Branch and Division of the department. The OP doubles as the agenda and template for the respective personnel (professional and support) for the fiscal year operation. The OP states objectives and lists anticipated outcomes for the duration of the projects. While comprehensive and detailed to reflect days of work to be committed to each project and the required budget requirements, the OP cannot anticipate 'other' contingencies that may arise.

Some of the 'other' items that may create anxious moments include

- the preparation of responses to letters for the Minister, Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister and Director's signature
- direct telephone, e-mail, fax inquiries from the public
- direct interaction with public and private interests
- preparation of 'advisory notes' as background for the Minister on a specific topic
- and last but not least, preparation of actual policy documents

Though policy may exist on any number of topics and issues, it has been the experience of the writer that in the process of responding to any one of the above —even

while attempting to interpret the extant policy—what happens often as not is that policy is created 'on-the-spot'. This 'scenario' has happened often during the personal career of nearly 25 years in the public service. Again, operating from a perceived if not actual operational framework for policy development would provide some guidance that would in turn instill a modicum of confidence to do a better job. Such a confirmation would ease some of the organizational stress created by the reorganization of the department announced to the professional and support staff in April 1994. How could one contribute positively toward the development of *New Directions* policy when the organizational culture that enveloped the civil servant bore no resemblance to the experiential base of the bureaucrat?

Purpose of the Study

Given the forgoing context, in retrospect, it has become all too evident that the writer had been trying to survive in the new regimen of *New Directions* by referencing the past (hence familiar) and not embracing the 'new' way. Nor was there much time to dwell thereon as *New Directions* initiatives were being released at an amazing rate. But then this scenario is not exclusive to the 1994-1999 period in Manitoba. Though a civil servant is expected to serve without prejudice whatever government is in power, very little practical support is offered to effect understanding of a transition in government nor are there any theoretical readings suggested to assist in at least providing an 'intellectual' adjustment for the civil servant. What was missing then was a forum designed to deal with not only the organizational change but also any opportunity to critically assess the many policy papers produced over the six-year period.

Tight timelines left little if any opportunity to reflect upon and analyse what had been prepared. Policy analysis at the consultant level was devoid of direction and guidance to support not only 'policy actors' but the intended recipients of the many policy documents—the many teachers and administrators across the province.

How to survive and contribute during a period of major organizational change and rapid policy development became the focus of the study. To accomplish that goal, it became necessary to identify the theory behind public policy development within the context of how the state operates and then reconcile that theory with personal beliefs juxtaposed to what was actually experienced.

Situating the political, social and economic dynamics of the provincial, national and world 'stage' required clarification as so much of what appeared to be the foundational premise of *New Directions* had to be reconciled in order that some 'sense' be made of that policy. In short, what was some of the thinking worldwide about global challenges for the development of public policy during the 1990s, the immediate future, and did that thinking match my own perception?

Global challenges, when matched with provincial and local issues, not only makes policy development problematic but an exciting challenge as well. Incumbent upon that notion is the fact that reflective analysis by individuals and groups from the public and private sector is essential in order to effect the best possible policy development and implementation. Is the notion therefore of spending time to critically analyse state policy (and in particular education policy) before it is 'released' for public scrutiny a process that should be not only retained but also openly encouraged within the public service?

To effect policy discourse within the operation of a department requires a commitment by those involved supported in turn by a 'political' master – the Minister – that is comfortable with such a process. Is policy making best kept to a 'select few' or should it be as open and inclusive as possible?

Policy making and the people involved in the development of public policy collectively has the capacity to encompass the full range of political, economic and social ideology as well as test the full range of human capability to complete the task. That public policy has continually emerged over the decades and continues to do so is a testament to the strength of the policy making process and the people involved in that process. But is it such a static process that regardless of personnel involved or 'political' leadership all will be relatively comfortable with the process and satisfied with having had an opportunity to contribute to the process?

Policy implementation not unlike policy development is inherently a risky business. In short, it involves convincing 'others' that what you have to offer ameliorates their 'lot-in-life'. How one goes about achieving that is of course a contentious question indeed. What I thought was a facilitative approach to implementing education policy based upon theoretical and practical experience garnered through the late 1970s through to the beginning years of the 1990s appeared to be ignored by the principles enunciated in

New Directions documents. Had theoretical approaches to policy implementation so changed that they in effect voided my practical experience of some 20 years in government? Was it 'I' or was it 'them' that had got it mixed up?

Related to the difficult process of policy implementation, policy evaluation may be a perilous adventure because it means that if done with openness and trust what was said by those who were asked to provide the feedback must be considered. And, as obvious as that may be, in my experience, that is not always that straight forward. The data must be thoroughly examined against the intent, rational, goals and aims of the original policy. That is where the process of field validation (pilot testing) is so important for so many aspects of education policy. How 'political' a process is policy evaluation? Can it be conducted to satisfy the comfort level of the experienced public servant but at the same time met the deadlines of a determined Minister? What had been an understanding of how policy was to be implemented and eventually evaluated had to be reexamined given what the writer experienced under the thrust of *New Directions* initiatives from 1994-1999.

Finally, what is the future of public policy? Can government be patient and willing to adapt its own agenda based upon the input of a 'public' that is as volatile and vituperative, as the media seem to suggest? Is there a quieter and more cooperative process to effect the development of public policy that while less vociferous a process to be sure will nonetheless effect resolution to policy issues amenable to all involved?

Significance of the Study

The public policy development and implementation research examined along with a personal reflection with respect to the conceptualization of state public policy has effected the realization that the organization must become a 'learning organization' and that means a concomitant role change for the career bureaucrat. It is the contention herein that where work stress has been precipitated by rapid organizational change and the need to adjust to societal 'forces', it requires time and collegial support to understand that a positive working environment can be realized if the organization encourages an open social and professional discourse that respects risk-taking, invites critique, and learns by mistakes irrespective of what level or rank the mistakes occur within the organization.

The theoretical framework/context for the development of state policy particularly as it relates to public policy for education should

- facilitate an analysis of the local, regional, provincial, national and global economic, social and political environment
- demonstrate policy making strategies that are inclusive and interactive without limit
- facilitate implementation and evaluation of policy that is inclusive, interactive and without limit
- encourage and support initiatives that are risk-taking and adaptive to corrective strategies that learn from mistakes with a view to challenging alternatives that contemplate a positive and proactive future for public policy development and implementation

That it may provide others with a modicum of theoretical support with which to appreciate how public policy is developed and implemented would be contingent upon their relationship to the work on policy development and implementation in Manitoba from 1994-1999.

Organization of the Study

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1 presents the context, purpose, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 opens with a rather large societal challenge; details the impact of a shrinking global social, political and economic community; and closes with a determination that culture and what that means has some relevance to the future of public policy.

Chapter 3 suggests that having a purpose for public policy is paramount. Given a mission and aim, said public policy must be constantly monitored by not only the developer but by the recipient as well. The chapter ends with a declaration that public analysis of policy must be encouraged and honoured by the State.

Chapter 4 acknowledges that the preparation of public policy is difficult and faces seemingly endless challenges both internal and external to the site of its preparation.

Chapter 5 suggests that policy making is a process that requires the adaptive and ever-changing ability of the organizational culture of the institution along with the

concomitant abilities of the policy 'players'. The impact of interests outside the state are further detailed in order to clarify their role in the public policy process. That governance is an issue is also presented in that decision-making roles and responsibilities are so much a part of the operationalization of public policy initiatives.

Chapter 6 introduces the aspect of policy implementation as a critical component and extension of the conceptualization phase. That policy may 'overlap' and be improved by the use of the appropriate 'instrument' is also explored. Along with the importance of policy wording, and the importance of policy release, that is timing, the notion of how the public perceives the 'tenor-of-the-times' via the notion of purportedly 'incorrect' thinking is presented.

Chapter 7 provides a general template for the evaluation of public policy that combines the interesting approach of applying evaluation strategies to both the policy developed and the personnel involved in its preparation.

Chapter 8 begins with the affirmation that while 'opportunity' plays an important role in the success or not of public policy determination, there are some discernable obstacles and ways to improve not only the policy itself but the chance of its adoption as well. Along the way, concepts like 'integrity', "connecting to people', and 'learning' as an organization are highlighted as harbingers of a positive future for the entire process of policy development and implementation.

Chapter 9 concludes the study by presenting two examples of policy development where the writer played a role that has been made clearer in retrospect based upon the theory presented in chapters 2 through 8. It concludes with an affirmation concerning the future of the public service.

CHAPTER 2

GLOBAL CHALLENGES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY

The purpose of this chapter is to identify some global trends and issues that by their very nature will affect the development of public policy.

This chapter has been organized under the headings: "The Greatest Test for Human Society"; "Public Opinion Counts"; Shifting Boundaries – A 'New' Policy Paradigm"; "The State – A New 'Learning Organization"; "The Unmasking of Illegitimate Authority"; " An Alternate View of Public Education"; "Technology – the Dominant, Determining Factor"; "Culture and the Quest for Meaning"; and "Summary".

The Greatest Test for Human Society

Celebrations by some people across the globe to mark the end of the 20th century and welcome the new millennium are being determined by their apprehension concerning a virus called the millennium bug or Y2K. This 'mistake' by computer programmers to not consider the implications of the two digit year for 2000, that is, 00 in computer language, may or may not cause world-wide chaos contingent upon the application being used and whether or not the error has been successfully eradicated[1]. The world reliance upon computer technology for information generation and dissemination for practically all fields of endeavor, hardly decreases that global sense of concern for all that use the technology on a daily basis. Announcements by governments and corporations that they are Y2K compliant may generate a sense of calm and security only in so far as the receiver of the message is willing to accept or trust the sender. The issue behind the apprehension – the increasing world-wide reliance upon the computer and its part in the exponential growth of the use of technology – is and continues to be one of the primary concerns of many observers as they attempt to provide explanations for the extant and future condition of the global village.

Yale University historian Paul Kennedy, for example, suggested that the greatest test for human society as it confronts the 21st century is how to use the power of technology to meet the demands thrown up by the power of population (Kennedy, 1993, p.12). His concern was how to feed the three-quarters of humankind in the developing

world in their plight of malnutrition, resource depletion, unrest, enforced migration and armed conflict. While very large hurdles to overcome, he does argue for a reeducation of humankind, one that develops a deep understanding of why the world is changing; how other cultures feel about change; what we have in common; what divides cultures, classes, nations; and teaches a system of ethics, a sense of fairness, and a sense of proportion (Kennedy, 1993, p.339-340). Although from a very different perspective, Harvard Business Administrator, George Lodge exhorted governments and corporations to demonstrate a much larger global corporate responsibility, specifically:

> Government must see business competitiveness as
> essential to the national interest, and business must make
> satisfaction of community needs at home a priority (Lodge, 1995, p.81)

While perhaps optimistic, in fairness to Lodge, he was arguing for a form of communitarianism that involved notions of consensus, active State planning, community need articulation, rights and duties of community membership, and a notion of holism that fostered harmony between humankind and nature including a consciousness of inter-relatedness. This effort to create an environment where the public and private sectors attempt to address the gargantuan global problems mentioned above, emphasizes even more what economist Jeremy Rifkin posits as the single most pressing social issue of the coming century, namely, the redefinition of opportunities and responsibilities for millions of people in a society absent of mass formal employment (Rifkin, 1995, p.xv). In fact, Rifkin argues that the gap in educational levels between those needing jobs and the kind of high-tech jobs available is so wide that no retraining program could hope to adequately upgrade the educational performance of workers to match the kind of limited professional employment opportunities that exist. What he hoped workers were starting to realize is that while technology and their smart use of it may increase productivity, the result was not more leisure but unemployment lines. His conclusion? "Ironically, the closer we seem to come to the technological fruition of the utopian dream, the more dystopian the future itself appears."(Rifkin, 1995, p.56). Economist Robert Heilbroner provides some perspective to better appreciate Rifkin's concerns.

In his book *Visions of the Future*, Heilbroner contends that although there is a continuing presence of the empowering gift of science; the relentless dynamics of a

capitalist economy; and a spirit of mass politics; these forces he no longer regards as unambiguous carriers of progress (Heilbroner, 1995, p. 69-70). Moreover, our contemporary frame of mind is ambiguous, indeterminate, and apprehensive. No wonder given the past and present concern about the atomic bomb; Chernobyl; storage of nuclear waste; nuclear weaponry and space platforms; and gene cloning. Our trust and hope has changed with respect to scientific enterprize. Though research into the cause and possible eradication of AIDs, Alzheimer's Disease, cancer research and organ transplant may lessen the apparent unease. As for the future of capitalism, its prospects, he argues, have been bolstered by the disappearance of its only economic opponent – the socialist challenge. It is likely, he says, that capitalism will be the principal form of socioeconomic organization during the twenty-first century, at least for the advanced nations, because no blueprint exists for a viable successor (Heilbroner, 1995, p.100). The result is hardly a victory for the capitalists or the rest of the world that is reliant upon its stewardship. Heilbroner contends that at present we do not know how to bring into being the political will necessary to effect what he calls "mutual competitive restraint" (Heilbroner, 1995, p.108). A critically important factor to overcome particularly as it relates to what he defines as developing world's zones of turmoil. If restraint is not effected, the political will of the world's underclass may appear quiet as an undisturbed lake, but it is a lake of gasoline (Heilbroner, 1995, p.110). While crying out for a prediction on the future of capitalism, Heilbroner, beyond the vaguest of visions, abjures speculating on its future in more detail other than stating that it is the most probable political setting for the Western world. Three of his propositions are however relevant and need to be repeated. Humankind must

- achieve a secure terrestrial base for life (water, soil, population, air)
- find ways of preserving the human community as a whole against its warlike proclivities
- give respect for human nature the cultural and educational centrality it demands

Laudable observations indeed! Implementation of all three would surely make the world a more habitable and friendly place to enjoy. State and citizen must work together and that is the crux of the matter.

In his book *The Myth of the Good Corporate Citizen*, Murray Dobbin (1998) clearly states the problem. The social and psychological distance between citizen and

government has become so great that the notion of government as an expression of community is weaker now than at any time in the post-war period (Dobbin, 1998, p.5). The lessening of that distance has become a major plank of some Western democratic governments.[2] Along with governments being challenged by the citizenry at-large for participation in determining policy, huge corporation domination – the advent of so-called globalization – is just the current expression of the historic contest between social classes over the distribution of wealth and power continues Dobbin. His clarion call for active citizens is nothing short of what he refers to as a revolution in citizen consciousness and a massive increase in participation in democratic politics (Dobbin, 1998, p.6). The conglomerate colossus of transnational corporations does not bode well for any citizen much less an active one! Being globally competitive means monopoly control Dobbin reminds us. The overwhelming message of the last ten years of corporate assault on the egalitarian state is that we shall have more choices in the marketplace but less choice about what kind of society we have (Dobbin, 1998, p.51). Freedom is no longer freedom from want, freedom from insecurity. It, too, has devolved. Now freedom means consumer choice (Dobbin, 1998, p.59). Strongly stated to be sure. But the hope for resisting consumerism lies, he argues, in how we become more connected to community, neighbourhood, tradition, family, and history – not a lot different from Lodge's notion of communitarianism. On the issue of the nation-state becoming obsolete in the face of the power of transnational corporations, Dobbin offers the sobering view that such an occurrence is more accurately described as the amalgamation of corporate and state rule. That this may happen or not depends at least upon the realization by more and more ordinary citizens that the new era is being shaped by changing technology, globalization and the aging of our population (Reid, 1996, p.9).

Public Opinion Counts

Pollster Angus Reids's book *Shakedown* provides comment on what he says is the sense of frustration and anxiety evident across Canada. This frustration is not attributable to any one simple factor – too much debt, too many immigrants, too many people on welfare, too much concern about Quebec, too much government, too many timid politicians, etc. What is taking place is a much broader transformation of Canadian

society bringing fundamentally new economic, technological and demographic forces that will permanently change the lives of millions of Canadians (Reid, 1996, p.6).

In the workplace, for example, Reid sees huge reductions in full-time paid jobs and equally significant increases in the numbers of part-time and temporary jobs plus self-employed entrepreneurs. At the same time, the family and immediate community are re-emerging as pivotal sources of material support and emotional security (Reid, 1996, p.10-11). Big is no longer safe, that is, decision-makers have begun to think not about expansion but retraction. Visions of growth were replaced with a new ethic: downsize, outsource – get small, fast (Reid, 1996, p.17). Growth is good only for some people. Technology cannot take root unless there is an indigenous component to its development; the application must reflect the needs of society. The lesson, he argues, is that technology is often useless when abstracted from human values (Reid, 1996, p. 22-23).

In education there are no 'safe' fields of study anymore. There is no longer any surefire formula for translating education and training into the kind of rewarding jobs baby boomers once had for the asking (Reid, 1996, p.26).

Family and friends seem to matter more. Loyalty appears more evident in the home though location matters less and less as the spatial dynamics that have defined our lives for generations are obsolete. The sheer mass of present events presses in on us, creating a sense of urgency and a feeling that there is never enough time. The key? Flexibility is everything. Moving thoughtfully and deliberately is now passé; to delay is to lose (Reid, 1996, p.33).

What the above observations provide is a snapshot, by an observer, over many years of soliciting Canadian opinions that tried to address a series of what Reid has defined as beacons that have guided Canadians in the past but are now starting to flicker and fade. They have become myths. Some examples include big is safe; growth is good for everyone; science and technology will save us; a good education means a good job; loyalty is all; location, location, location; time is linear; Canadian culture is a sacred trust; and the public interest still counts. The relevance here is that these myths, while debunked by Reid's research, provide the background to his contention that there are four enduring beliefs common to the vast majority of Canadians, namely, that

- there is a deeply held desire to be unique, to create a society fundamentally different from the one to the south

- nearly all Canadians (85%) believe that English and French Canadians can live harmoniously under one flag
- Canadians hold a core belief in the importance of a civil society
- a core belief persists among most Canadians that we must try to build a society based on the principle of fairness (Reid, 1996, p.308-310)

Reid's observations provide an obviously Canadian perspective. Are Canadian values much different from those expressed in other industrialized nations? Can public survey data provide useful information for state policy-makers as they struggle worldwide to develop and implement policy that may or may not meet the needs of citizens in different social, political and economic environments?

Though based upon world value surveys conducted in Canada in 1981 and 1990 – therefore not as immediate as Reid's findings - Neil Nevitte's research, compiled over a six year period, summarizes the findings of the same surveys that were conducted in 22 countries in 1981 and 44 countries in 1990 (accounting for some 70% of the world's population). He contends that the World Values Surveys (WVS) are the largest body of direct cross-time and cross-national data on public values ever collected (Nevitte, 1996, p.20). Three themes emerged.

First, the heretofore importance of primary resources and manufacturing as wealth producing sector has declined. There has been a steady growing emphasis on the service sector and a concomitant rise in the technologically driven knowledge-based sector. The public that is better educated, geographically and occupationally more mobile. Two family incomes are on the rise while the fertility rate has declined.

The second theme highlights the systematic shift in the values of the public to post-materialism. And this shift is not out of sequence with other industrial states in at least two aspects:

1. there is a balance of materialist post-materialist orientations[3] similar to West European publics
2. post-materialist orientations are connected to age and level of education

Theme three situates Canada as one of many, namely, "...there is nothing to indicate that the priorities of Canadians are radically different from those of any of these other publics" (Nevitte, 1996, p.43). What follows is a summary of those priorities.

Regarding the political culture, over the period from 1981 to 1990, interest in politics went up some 13%. However, for the same period, the confidence in government

institutions and non-government institutions went down. What is significant for future policy development and implementation is that over the decade, Nevitte found that the potential for citizen participation in public life went up however, "...citizens are choosing different avenues and styles for their political participation" (Nevitte, 1996, p.70).

This changing pattern of political participation may be expressed as a pyramid with voting at the base supporting layers of participation beginning with petition signing, boycotts, attendance at unlawful demonstrations, joining unofficial strikes, and finally, the occupation of buildings at the apex of the triangle. What the WVS data indicates is that the percentage of the public that have done one of the four protest behaviours has gone up and the percentage that would never do the same behaviour has gone down. Juxtaposed with the findings that the WVS publics indicated that they want open government and that political reform could be quicker all suggest that policy makers had better listen carefully to what their constituencies express. Canadians, like their survey counterparts, are experiencing turbulence in authority relations. They are not the stereotypical passive lot wedded to the status quo or peculiarly deferential (Nevitte, 1996, p.105).

With respect to any change in the economic culture, the WVS did indicate that Canadians differ less with their American counterparts than is sometimes implied over economic orientations. Further, there appears to be a rise in support for meritocracy. And finally, one out of every four Canadians is prepared to entertain the idea of forming one country with the United States. Leaving Nevitte to postulate that perhaps state boundaries are less relevant than they once were (Nevitte, 1996, p.150).

A related phenomenon – the changing work culture – produced a summary of opinion that may disturb organized labour. The WVS data emphatically do not indicate that publics are clamouring for a completely egalitarian workplace (Nevitte, 1996, p.198). What with the indicators that Canadians are strong supporters of free-market ideas and meritocracy, it is just possible that labour, industry and the government departments responsible for workplace legislation may have to revise current thinking in this area. All of which makes interesting implications for policy in the education area as the public system graduates students that enter the workplace with multiple value sets. Encouraging is the fact that the surveys do confirm that the emerging work ethic gives increasing

prominence to such work values as responsibility, achievement, engagement, and initiative – all supported by extant government education policy documents.[4]

In another area of interest to educators, the WVS data confirm that while church attendance and personal belief in God went down in percentage terms, support for the general principle of tolerance went up some 27% (53% in 1981 to 80% in 1990). Along with cross-national shifts in the direction of greater permissiveness, Nevitte concluded that the publics in most of the WVS countries were becoming more secular (Nevitte, 1996, 236). While not startling perhaps as a single indicator, when considered with the opinions collected under the set of questions dealing with family values, considerate reflection is the message to be sure for policy formulation in the area.

Possible insight for educators is the results that the WVS collected with respect to parent-child interactions. The question posed was "Here is a list of qualities which children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important? Please choose up to five: good manners; independence; hard work; feeling of responsibility; imagination; thrift, saving money and things; determination, perseverance; religious faith; unselfishness; obedience." In 1981, the top three were good manners (53.7%); responsibility (40.9%); and religious faith (23.4%). By 1990, responsibility had become number one (34%); unselfishness was second (21.8%); and good manners had slipped slightly from first place to third place at (21%). At least the publics that were surveyed and the schools in Canada agree on one important characteristic to inculcate – responsibility. Coincidentally, all twelve items demonstrated an increase in percentage response. Educators would be pleased to see such a trend continue.

How publics react to policy and the manner in which they participate in its development and implementation is a critical concern here. The question of the day can therefore loom many times over. By and under whose 'authority' was policy 'x' proclaimed? In Canada, says Nevitte, for the past three decades or more, deference has been an orientation that is entirely consistent with, even necessary to, a society in which élites are closely interconnected and whose place in Canadian society, until relatively recently, was relatively unchallenged.[5] Why has there been a shift? First, the rise of post-materialist values will be associated with the decline of deference. Second, what Nevitte

calls a structural change has occurred - educational levels have gone up along with an increased interest in politics. Third, a new set of ideological beliefs has emerged expressed by "new left libertarians" who are highly mobilized; accept issues on the socialist agenda; reject traditional socialism; reject the primacy of economic growth; and advocate increased levels of participatory democracy. The clear implication is that the decline of deference may be linked to the emergence of New Left libertarian beliefs (Nevitte, 1996, p.302). That may be placing responsibility too squarely on a perceived minority of the Canadian population. Nonetheless, advocacy of such beliefs has been demonstrated by at least one of the traditional political parties and by some of the so-called fringe elements.[6]

The decline of deference presents an interesting challenge to the conceptualization of state policy. How can faith be restored in government? How can confidence be renewed in leaders and institutions including restoration of the depleted reservoirs of trust? And finally, how can the slide into cynicism be reversed?

Shifting Boundaries – A 'New' Policy Paradigm

Not only are citizens apparently perceiving their relationship with the state differently, the state itself is evolving in both structure and in how it relates to local, national and international constituencies. What political scientist David Elkins identifies as the 'logic of non-territorial political organization'(Elkins, 1995, p.7), includes a new dimension of democracy and citizenship, enhanced forms of community, reconciliation between individual and group needs, and a more flexible and focused type of government offering more choices. Not by themselves overly earth-shattering notions, but developed in the context of exploring the vast implications of their metamorphosis from territoriality to non-territorial organization, then we have a very different political, social, and economic scenario for the state to function. The old notion of territoriality, argues Elkins, assumes exclusive use of territory, continuous and contiguous (adjoining) territory as the basis of political authority. What is under way as the 21st century begins, is the demise of territory as the sole basis of political units and the consequent decline of sovereignty for all-purpose political units, especially nations (Elkins, 1995, p.26). Though nations will continue to exist and play important roles indefinitely, corporations are becoming more prominent because they are well suited to certain ecological niches engendered by

technological change which nations cannot easily adjust (Elkins, 1995, p.32-35). One obvious example is telecommunications technology—it has a different logic because it is non-territorial. Distance education is a related example in that when education 'goes to the people' rather than asking them to attend a central location, territorially has little meaning (Elkins, 1995, p.132). What appears to be happening to the traditional notion of the territory/sovereignty relationship and its impact for the state is that people will more often be able to choose one's networks, communities, and identities than has been the case up to now; and, there will be a greater range of options/combinations of options for a significant proportion of the human population.[7] He does predict that there will however be more nations plus a broader grouping of nations [states ruling others but without absolute sovereignty, for example, trading blocs; security alliances; World Trading Organization, World Bank] (Elkins, 1995, p.243).

Technology, affirms Elkins, has been a catalyst to the debundling of the state from the nation as it has enabled more non-territorial forms of organization, administration and regulation or 'policing' (Elkins, 1995, p.259). This will not lead to a 'withering of the state', he says, though still the collector of taxes, the state will become more 'public' whereas the 'nation' may become a more private concept analogous to family on a grander scale. Are there any advantages to 'unbundled' nations?

Peace will be an advantage as unbundled nations might be less prone to warlike behaviour. Once citizenship is no longer exclusive to a nation – but might include membership in overlapping and cross-cutting entities – more citizens will presumably find themselves in 'conflict of interest' situations, and thus reluctant to take up arms or support policies hostile to their interests as embodied in transnational communities (Elkins, 1995, p.262).

Freedom will be a second advantage. People who share interests but are widely separated in distance could be brought together in electronic communities or travel without the current restrictions imposed by national borders or regulations (Elkins, 1995, p.262).

Public administration would be the third advantage. Instead of an all-purpose organization of a fixed territorial size, there would be one more easily created type and size of organizations suited to the particular nature of the problem (Elkins, 1995, p.263).

And what might Elkins's theory mean for the conceptualization of state policy? He uncovered, he argues, the 'logic' behind the flux so evident in the world today. Central to that logic is the increasing role of non-territorial forces, technologies, groups, and governments (or 'police'). He notes that

> ...the time has come to question the common assumption that 'nation', 'state', and 'political authority' necessarily involve territoriality. That was a good working assumption for two or three centuries, but it serves us ill as we enter the twenty-first century. (Elkins, 1995, p.267)

The role of the state, relations between states, and the critical relationship between citizen and state, has evolved over the centuries. Evolved to the point where observers have seriously questioned the historic role (Elkins, 1995) (Kennedy, 1993); the political role (Dobbin, 1998) (Lodge, 1995); the economic role (Rifkin, 1995) (Heilbroner, 1995); and the socio-political/economic role (Reid, 1996) (Nevitte, 1996). These analysts have emphasized that the following ideas/concepts are crucial to our understanding of the current state of the globe: the power of technology; communitarianism; the redefinition of opportunities and responsibilities for humanity; capitalism and mutual competitive restraint; active citizenry; transformation of society; human values; and the decline of deference. Similar scrutiny of organizations and institutions during the final decade of the 20th century occurred.

The State – A New 'Learning' Organization

Peter Senge's publication of *The Fifth Discipline* in 1990 caught the 'popular' imagination of many who worked in what he called a "learning organization", one that continuously expands its capacity to create its future (Senge, 1990, p.14). This is a compelling description that may serve to define the function of the State particularly when added to his notion of a shared vision that, he suggests

- few forces in human affairs are as powerful
- creates a sense of community
- gives coherence to diverse activities
- provides focus and energy for learning
- reflects personal vision
- as an intrinsic shared vision uplifts people's aspirations
- creates a common identity
- provides a rudder to keep the learning process on course when stress develops

In short, you cannot have a learning organization without a shared vision (Senge, 1990, p.209). And, of paramount importance to the conceptualization of state policy, that same shared vision's origin is much less important than the process whereby it came to be shared (Senge, 1990, p.214). Indeed, managers, he argues, would be well to remember that

- ultimately nothing can be done to get another person to enroll or commit
- enrollment and commitment require freedom of choice
- commitment is very personal

Critical to remember about that personal commitment feature is that efforts to force it will, at best suggests Senge, foster compliance (Senge, 1990, p.223).[8] Within an organization then, the most effective people are those who can 'hold' their vision while remaining committed to seeing current reality clearly (Senge, 1990, p.226). A poignant point to be sure especially as it relates to the operations of the State.

Often as not, how the state functions and how it disperses the policy it develops, can best be judged at the points of interface between the system and the outside world—the most obvious, richest source of subsystem dynamics (Bergquist, 1993, p.201). By examining the edge or operational periphery of an organization, and by scrutinizing the way an organization interacts with other components of its environment, collectively leads to the best way to understand an organization.[9] That interactive 'edge' environment relies exclusively upon an organizational culture that requires effort from all concerned to create a strong feeling of solidarity among the members of an organization. Bergquist, by drawing our attention to the fragile boundaries of the interactive 'edge', also reminds us that the primary function of any organization is to snatch order from the jaws of chaos (Bergquist, 1993, p.xiv). A ravenous visual metaphor to be sure but a reminder nonetheless that the organizational reality of any system is determined by the perspectives one takes rather than by the organizational phenomenon being observed. That there is good reason to find order and chaos in any organization. And finally, we must choose what we want to see and why (Bergquist, 1993, p.209). This final point is what Bergquist sees as a major challenge for the post-modern leader in any organization. Mission statements, shared vision, all point to a process for trying to cope with the apparent undercurrent of hidden streams ready to erode the ground base of any

organization. How an organization copes with the turbulence may determine its ultimate success. Bergquist offers a coping mechanism.

First, build a process for the synthesis of ideas and people. Second, develop a sense of community. Third, encourage people to find a place in their own being that provides sanctuary – a safe place for reflection and reward (Bergquist, 1993, p.249-252). While facilitative and potentially reassuring to the worker, Bergquist's suggestion for reflective time may be the most difficult to execute given today's operational environment of instant communication and the implied immediate response of e-mail, internet, and facsimile transmission. 'Just-in-time' delivery, 'competitive edge', WWW (World Wide Web) consumer purchasing from the comfort of one's residence, all micro-second decisions based on a knowledge base that very much differs from what sufficed a decade ago or certainly what took place at the turn of the last century.

Knowledge has become **the** resource rather than a resource contends political philosopher Peter Drucker, and that is what makes our society post-capitalist (Drucker,1993, p.45). What he suggests to be the central philosophical and educational challenge for the post-capitalist society will be the ability of society to transcend the dichotomy of intellectuals and managers in a new synthesis. Intellectuals will manage words and ideas. Managers will direct people and work, that is, they will be responsible for the application and performance of knowledge. To accomplish that, not unlike Bergquist and Senge, Drucker sees as crucial the presence of a clear, focused and common mission as being the critical factor in holding an organization together enabling it to produce results (Drucker, 1993, p.53). Moreover, an organization must be a team of associates, not boss and subordinates. A learning/teaching organization is one where the productivity of knowledge as a qualitative impact is more important than the amount of knowledge – a quantitative aspect (Drucker, 1993, p.186). This 'accountability' reference further helps to situate the impact of technology which for Drucker, matters less than the changes it triggers for the substance, control, and focus of schooling and work.

Technology is significant because it forces people to do new things rather than old things better. The challenge, he says, is not technology itself, it is what people do with the technology (Drucker, 1993, p.197). Arriving at a policy to facilitate such thinking will require the knowledge-based organization to replace the nomenclature of entitlement and

empowerment with notions of responsibility and contribution. Management's task will be
not to make everybody a boss but rather to make everybody a contributor (Drucker,1993,
p.109). To accomplish this, Drucker provides what he calls 'new specifications' for
schools functioning in the post-capitalist society. The school will need to:

1.   provide universal literacy of a high order
2.   imbue motivation to learn – the discipline of continuing learning
3.   be an open system accessible to people at any time
4.   impart knowledge both as substance and as process
5.   partner with employers and employing organizations

The purpose of such a school? Not social reform or social amelioration, it has to be
individual learning (Drucker, 1993, p.200). This, one might argue, is the educational view
of the traditional capitalist or what social reconstructionists call reproduction theory. The
notion that what takes place in school is precisely what the engineers of the capitalist
engine want to take place. Keep the masses at a level of understanding that is at a micro
or personal level and not at a macro or societal level – social reform or social
amelioration.

The Unmasking of Illegitimate Authority

Drucker's post-capitalist perception of the 21st century is in stark contrast to the
new-world order postulated by Noam Chomsky. Both views have tremendous import for
the conceptualization of state policy. The new world, argues Chomsky, is very much like
the old in a new guise. Some important developments include

- the increasing internationalizing of the economy with its consequences,
  including the sharpening of class differences on a global scale, and the
  extension of this system to the former Soviet domains
- the notion that the basic rules of world order remain as they have always
  been:
  > -the rule of law for the weak , the rule of force for the
  > strong
  > -the principles of 'economic rationality' for the weak, state
  > power and intervention for the strong (Chomsky, 1994, p.271)

And, continues Chomsky, just as in the past, privilege and power do not willingly submit
to popular control or market discipline. Privilege and power seek to undermine
meaningful democracy and to bend market principles to their special needs (Chomsky,
1994, p.271). For those unwilling to accept the above, the traditional task remains
Chomsky concludes. To challenge and unmask illegitimate authority, and to work with

'others' to undermine it and extend the scope of freedom and justice (Chomsky, 1994, p.272).

What Chomsky reaffirms on a global scale is the notion of 'think globally and act locally'[10] – a catch phrase that might apply to the goals of a national/provincial/state education system or the goals of an organization and how such an entity functions. Policy determination for such a venture must consider issues that cross all political, social and economic boundaries. Globalization, positions of authority, the growing gap economically between have and have not nations, the concomitant change in the roles between management and employee, all must be included as part of the policy development agenda. How each of these examples is perceived and what the expectation for resolution is can cause serious debate particularly if the views of critical theorists are a part of the discourse.

As stated briefly during the analysis of Drucker's perception of the post-capitalist world, critical theorists ask very different questions and expect very different outcomes for the education system worldwide. Consequently, state policy formulation must take very different issues into account to satisfy the intellectual insights presented by the critical theorist. As Peter McLaren asks, who has the power to make some forms of knowledge more legitimate than others? And for the classroom, what is the relationship between what we do in the classroom and our effort to build a better society? (McLaren, 1989, p. ix-x). Further, Paulo Freire exhorts educators to ask themselves for whom and on whose behalf they are working? He further challenges educators who do their work uncritically, just to preserve their jobs. They have not yet grasped the political nature of education he posits (Freire, 1985, p.180). The auntie is bumped up even more when the issues of mission or vision for an organization are discussed.

Public schools, argues Henri Giroux, need to be organized around a vision that celebrates not what is but what could be (Giroux, 1988, p.10). What Giroux and his colleagues present to the debate about what policy should be developed for school systems is the notion that schools are not what the traditionalists claim, that is, merely instructional sites. Schools are also cultural and political sites. That fact cannot be ignored. Important questions regarding the relations among knowledge, power, and

domination must not be suppressed by the traditionalists (Giroux, 1988, p. xxx). Agree or not, what critical analysts expose is how we collectively try to understand the world.

For example, Michael Apple suggests that criticism is one of the most important ways we have of demonstrating that we expect more than rhetorical promises and broken dreams, because we take certain promises seriously (Apple, 1993, p.5). Stated even clearer for our purposes here, the task of keeping alive in the minds of the people the collective memory of the struggle for equality, for person rights in *all* of the institutions of our society, is one of the most significant tasks educators can perform (Apple, 1993, p.41). A position that provides an example that could serve as a mission statement for any public or private organization.

An Alternate View of Public Education

Equally clear about the importance of economic policy and the organization called the school, political economist John Crispo provides an 'alternative' position to that espoused by the critical theorists.

For all too long, he says, public education has had a near-monopoly on schooling in Canada. If there was more choice and competition built into Canada's education system, our students would be better schooled for the economy of the future (Crispo, 1992, p.163). Crispo would introduce privatization first at the university level to be followed by similar approaches to the 'public' school levels. Vouchers would be issued based on income. The notion of choice - a key concept of capitalist free market philosophy - would see parents and students seek counseling on the alternatives available to them. Private entrepreneurs would undoubtedly emerge he argues, to rate institutions of learning at all levels aiding parental/student choice in the process (Crispo, 1992, p.162). Not quite as controversial, Crispo does suggest that cooperative education, apprenticeship, and business generally must play a more active role in schools (Crispo, 1992, p.156-157).

While the foregoing are instigating suggestions for education, on the national economic front, Crispo believes that in order for the private sector to plan ahead with certainty and confidence, it is appropriate public polices that provide the foundation and framework for private sector needs. The private sector cannot do its job unless such policies exist (Crispo, 1992, p.9). In order to achieve this, the process of political

decision-making has got to become more open and involve more public input (Crispo, 1992, p.192).

Crispo's suggestions for a national consultative process would involve and maintain the sovereignty of parliament by having the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance become more active in directing the nation's economic affairs. The Governor of the Bank of Canada should be available to answer questions on banking policy. Think- tanks should send representatives from the C.D. Owe Institute, the Conference Board of Canada, and the Centre for Public Policy Alternatives to the same Committee. Major national interest groups like the Canadian Labour Congress (the Left), the Business Council on National Issues (the Right) should also be invited. An in-between group – the Consumers Association of Canada – would represent another very large sector of the population (Crispo, 1992, p.194).

While hardly a novel thesis, seeking variant opinion on crucial economic policy is at least an indicator that a very broad range of thinking is beginning to crystallize on at least one important point, namely, to formulate any policy at any level requires a broad spectrum of viewpoints. Finally, what is encouraging from this political economist is the plea he makes for individuals to become more demanding in terms of the price, quality, service and environmental impact. Citizens are exhorted to demand fairer and more balanced coverage of public affairs. Voters should even try to embarrass and shame candidates seeking office into taking more responsible positions (Crispo, 1992, p.207-209). Asking for and getting sound decisions requires inclusive participation. Resolution of difficult issues may be perplexing, time consuming and demonstratively difficult without guidance. Can technology help?

Technology – The Dominant, Determining Factor

Experimental physicist Dr. Ursula Franklin believes that the key question is how will our society cope with its problems when more and more people live in technologically induced human isolation?(Franklin, 1990, p.51) Her point is that future citizens may gain in computer literacy at the expense of moral literacy or knowledge of history, and it seems to [her] quite debatable which agenda is more in the public interest (Franklin, 1990, p.69). Further, while our surroundings in the 1990s may be conducive to production, they are much less a milieu conducive to growth (Franklin, 1990, p.86). Her

contention is that what turns the promised liberation into enslavement are not the products of technology *per se* – the car, the computer, or the sewing machine – but the structure and infrastructure that are put in place to facilitate the use of these products and to develop dependency on them (Franklin, 1990, p.102). What needs to happen?

The news is challenging for those currently involved in elective public office and for those trying to ameliorate the system. The crisis of technology, lectures Franklin, is actually a crisis of governance (Franklin, 1990, p.120). What is there now is nothing but a bunch of managers who run the country to make it safe for technology. The *institution* of government in terms of responsibility and accountability has been lost. Enter a metaphorical resolution!

Social change, pleads Franklin, will not come to us like an avalanche down the mountain. It will come through seeds growing in well prepared soil – and it is [people], like the earthworms, who prepare the soil (Franklin, 1990, p.121).[11] To support the discourse on public decision-making, Franklin suggests that one should ask of any public project or loan whether it

1. promotes justice
2. restores reciprocity
3. confers divisible or indivisible benefits
4. favours people over machines
5. has a strategy that maximizes gain or minimizes disaster
6. favours conservation over waste
7. favours the reversible over the irreversible (progression of a project that allows revision and learning in small reversible steps as most projects do not work out as planned) (Franklin, 1992, p.126)[12]

As helpful as Franklin's list may be, it may not adequately address French historian and social scientist Jacques Ellul's concern that a human being is still an extraordinarily irrational creature. A consequent reliance therefore on technology – a supposed rational environment - may be a less than happy one. Technology is the extreme development of means. Everything in the technological world is a means to an end and only a means, while the ends have practically disappeared (Ellul, 1981, p. 48-50). Technology, he contends, has made humanity very uneasy and very unhappy by accounting for the suppression of the subject and the suppression of meaning (Elul, 1981, p.50).

Along with not seeing politicians reorienting our society in a different direction, Ellul did conclude that technology is the dominant factor , the determining factor within society (Ellul, 1981, p.69). As for education, Ellul suggested an alternative parallel institution where children would learn to live differently and, on an existential level, learn to question the certitudes taught them in regular schools (Ellul, 1981, p.84). Perhaps a precursor to the schools of choice movement in North America or more realistically a position of frustration by one whose perspective on our age captures the true essence of technology and what it can mean for the future of humanity. American social critic Neil Postman is also concerned about the apparent benefits or not of technology particularly in the information field.

New technologies alter the structure of our interests: the things we think *about*. They alter the character of our symbols: the things we think *with*. And they alter the nature of community; the arena in which thoughts develop (Postman, 1993, p.20). One of many concerns for Postman is the observation that those who cultivate competence in the use of a new technology become an elite group that are granted undeserved authority and prestige by those who have no such competence (Postman, 1993, p.9). Moreover, the benefits and deficits of a new technology are not distributed equally he contends. It is similar to the concern expressed above by the critical theorists. To whom will the technology give greater power and freedom and whose power and freedom will be reduced by it? Its impact in the classroom must also be addressed.

Will the widespread use of computers in the classroom defeat once and for all the claims of communal speech? Will the computer raise egocentrism to the status of virtue? That students interact with each other worldwide via the internet on a daily basis is an issue that has tremendous implications for what happens in the classroom. One-on-one interaction at a distance reduced at the speed of light by the technology cannot help but influence how students perceive the world and those who live in it – or will it? Might the old adage still apply that what one gets out of something determines what one puts into the effort? A safer and fairer observation surely is to say that the entire experience hopefully will be a valuable one for all concerned. Policy development for the use of technology in the classroom must research widely current and projected learning outcomes.

On a much wider societal scale, Postman's thesis that culture has or is in the process of surrendering to technology, has produced what he calls a technopoly – a state of culture and a state of mind. It consists in the deification of technology where culture seeks its authorization in technology, find its satisfaction in technology, and takes orders from technology – what he calls a totalitarian technocracy (Postman, 1993, 71, p.5). When the supply of information is no longer controllable, a general breakdown in psychic tranquility and social purpose occurs.[13] Without defenses, people have no way of finding meaning in their experiences, lose their capacity to remember, and have difficulty imagining reasonable futures (Postman, 1993, p.72). Our defenses break down against the glut of information and technopoly flourishes argues Postman. A plan to avoid such an organizational tragedy is required.

Any educational institution, if it is to function well in the management of information, must have a theory about its purpose and meaning, must have the means to give clear expression to its theory, and must do so, to a large extent, by excluding information (Postman, 1993, p.75). Again, the importance of a vision expressed in a mission statement arrived at by collective participation within the organization. Postman reminds us that artificial intelligence does not and cannot lead to a meaning-making, understanding, and feeling creature, which is what a human being is (Postman, 1993, p.113). That same meaning-making and feeling creature should be exposed to a curriculum in which all subjects are presented as a stage in humanity's historical development; in which the philosophies of science, of history, of language, of technology, and of religion are taught; and in which there is a strong emphasis on classical forms of artistic expression (Postman, 1993, p.199).

Culture and the Quest for Meaning

The curriculum Postman proposes in very general terms will begin to sustain a serious conversation of critique and modification to the thrust of the technological thought-world. It is related in purpose to what American psychologist Dr. Jerome Bruner identifies as the proper causes of human action – culture and the quest for meaning within culture (Bruner, 1990, p.20). Such a quest for meaning may happen in any number of circumstances including the workplace, a place of religious worship, the local pub, the family, or in an organization whose primary purpose is to address such issues directly or

indirectly, namely, the local school, college or university. Because such institutions may be funded in a number of ways, that is, public or private funding including combinations of both, and, because such institutions are also subject to varying degrees of policy direction (via publicly elected trustees/boards/legislators or by a board of directors accountable only to the membership of the corporation), all institutions rely upon a collective perception regarding the seminal purpose of their operation. What is the source of the perception of the individuals involved? Is there an extant 'conventional wisdom' that prevails about the purpose of organizations that stand the test of time? Or, would it be better for all concerned to challenge continually the stated purposes of organizations with the intent of improving it for the benefit of all concerned?

A partial response to these questions particularly with respect to organizations having the education of youth aged 5 years to 16 years as there primary *raison d'etre*, might consider some of the following views on the aims and goals of schooling.

Long-time and tireless advocate for the inclusion of the arts in curriculum for schools, Elliot Eisner argues that the aim of education is to free the mind from the confines of certainty (Eisner, 1998, p.186). As an advocate against the outcomes-based strategies exhorted in schooling across North American in the final decades of the 20th century, he pleads that variability, not uniformity, is the hallmark of the human condition (Eisner, 1998, p.185). The whole notion of predetermined results is anathema to Eisner. The good school, he states, would aim at increasing individual differences, not reducing them. Further, the good school would seek to increase variance in performance, not attenuate it (Eisner, 1998, p.113). To get there, he challenges those in the area of educational scholarship, to aim at improving schooling. And the purpose of schooling? Not to ensure the excellence of schools but to increase the student's ability to solve problems that are not limited to school tasks, and, even more generally, to deepen and expand meaning students can construe in daily life (Eisner, 1998, p.140-141). And what should guide schools in their quest to achieve such laudable goals? Policy, says Eisner, that is formulated as a set of ideas reflecting certain values and beliefs created to guide decision-making. It should tell the educational world the direction decisions should take (Eisner, 1998, p.109-110). Not one to assume the task to be simple, he does remind us

that it is simpler to formulate educational policy than to alter educational practice (Eisner, 1998, p.19).

Many change theorists would agree with Eisner (Fullan, 1982, 1991; Barth, 1990; Sarason, 1990; Hargreaves, 2000), that what takes place in schools often is not what the policy developers envision. All the more reason to support psychologist Jerome Bruner's contention that education is risky - it fuels the sense of possibility (Bruner, 1996, p.42). To be fair to Bruner, his observation did not seek to address the problems of educational policy with respect to its intent of determining curriculum implementation strategies for schools. What is relevant here is the notion of what fuels the imagination for children in schools. Learning is inside the head where mental activity is situated and supported by a more or less enabling *cultural setting*. For Bruner, the critical questions are how are ways of thinking, constructing meaning, and experiencing the world judged, by what standards and by whom?(Bruner, 1996, p.67-68). Like Eisner, Bruner relies on the mind to create limitless learning in what he calls a community of learners, an enabling community where meaning is constructed by participation in a collaborative school culture (Bruner, 1996, p.76). In fact, his thinking may be said to be similar to what the social reconstructionists advocate, namely, the building of a school culture that operates as a mutual community of learners involved in solving problems and thereby educating each other. In a word, we would not simply be trying to reproduce the culture (Bruner, 1996, p.83). Or, as Brazilian teacher and linguist Paulo Freire argued during his long battle to improve adult literacy, the educator's role (as the agent responsible for implementing the organization/state education policy) is to propose problems about the codified existential situations in order to help learners arrive at a more and more critical view of their reality (Freire, 1985, p.55). Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye echoed similar sentiments.

The real radical dynamic of our time, he said, involves a dialogue of society engaged in a continuous critique of its order and its assumptions (Frye, 1982, p.160). At the same time, though he saw the purpose of education as being a regulatory one, it is only the born and dedicated teacher who can realize that this motive of adjusting to society, however benevolent, is an enemy to be fought (Frye, 1988, p.14). The notion of 'adjustment' was equally anathema to a contemporary critic – David Solway, English Literature professor at John Abbott College in Montreal. Education, says Solway

...is a matter of attitudes and convictions, of generating conditions conducive
to reflection on a basis of disciplined erudition, of building the interrogative
mind. It is manifestly not a matter of developing skills, of storing information,
or of applying appropriate techniques to facilitate the imperatives of technological
retrofitting. (Solway, 1989, p.5)

Clearly, what Eisner, Bruner, Freire, Frye and Solway have in common is what Beck
(1990) and Pratt (1994) also encourage as the purpose of education - the promotion or
enhancement of human well being. Schooling and society must work together with more
attention to values, culture, religion, politics, economics and ecology says Clive Beck
(Beck, 1990, p.x). This clarion call for what should organize the curriculum is not the
immediate concern here but does serve to illustrate the concern echoed by curriculum
theorist David Pratt that the curriculum should be a springboard not a straitjacket (Pratt,
1994, 31). We are, argues Pratt, primarily interested in the development of capacities and
potentials, not behaviors (Pratt, 1994, p.95). And it will take the efforts of many to effect
such a commendable outcome.

No single interest, contend education reporter Jennifer Lewington and York
University professor Graham Orpwood, can profess full view of the field nor speak with
one voice for all its perceived constituencies (Lewington and Orpwood, 1993, p.2). Both
remind us that the priorities of the baby-boom generation will shift from schools to health
care and related programs for the elderly. That said, winning back public support for
schools will require three principles as touch stones for education – clarity, integrity and
accountability (Lewington and Orpwood, 1993, p.24). Their observation and hence
caution to state policy makers is that Canadian provincial education department
statements are making no difference. Such statements, they argue, are disconnected from
the everyday reality of schools and their communities (Lewington and Orpwood, 1993,
p.103). An attempt to redress that anomaly is their proposal for a Canadian Educational
Standards Council. The Council, were it to be constituted, would challenge current
provincial jurisdictions responsible for education. It proposes the notion of reporting to
the Council of Ministers of Education and the Government of Canada far beyond the
'voluntary' compliance of current practice. Whether this idea comes to fruition or not,
what both conclude in *Overdue Assignment – Taking Responsibility for Canada's*

Schools, is that education cannot be left to those who run the system (Lewington and Orpwood, 1993, p. 220).

Agreeing is parent advocate Mark Holmes, professor emeritus of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. He argues convincingly that one of the major barriers to the reform of Canada's publicly funded schools is the largely un-elected unofficial educational establishment[14] (Holmes, 1989, p.241). They have, he argues, reached a political accommodation that is satisfactory to them. Strong condemnation of the state educational bureaucracy indeed! Though not an outright plea for populism in education, he cautions that the idea of a single secular world-view that the state should approve for all people is unacceptable in a democratic pluralist society (Holmes, 1989, p.66). Clearly not a supporter of the common state school (Holmes, 1989, p.74), he places his hopes upon parents, teachers and students. Passing legislation about what teachers are supposed to be doing in classrooms will have no lasting effect he forecasts (Holmes, 1989, p.191). What would work is for the provincial government to set up a framework for schools to compete to provide conditions that parents want within the limits of an acceptable free, democratic, pluralistic society congruent with its fundamental values (Holmes, 1989, p.193). This restoration of the balance of power between the center and parents relies heavily upon a democratic government that listens to the people (Holmes, 1989, p.196). That a school should reflect the 'public will'(Holmes, 1989, 266) is what probably many people today would like to see happen. Probably it is also a truism that the time has long since passed when the state should determine all aspects of the schooling of every child (Holmes, 1989, p.274). Arriving at that 'public will' is no small task particularly if it is the state's task to make available to every youngster a public school experience, free of the influence of any special-interest group and reflecting the public will of society and the interests of a majority or plurality of parents (Holmes, 1989, p.274).

Professor Holmes leaves us then with the admonition that the there will be no quick and easy solution to the reform of Canada's schools nor is it possible to arrive at a consensus about what schools should be doing. As for the state? It should provide parents and young people with informed choice in schooling (Holmes, 1989, p.228). To be fair, he does present a format that extols the virtues of a school grounded in values, a full academic content, and one that addresses specifically the prerequisites of vocational

preparation. He is not alone in his concern about bureaucracy and its 'unwarranted authority' (Holmes, 1989, p.203). Change must take place in the classroom. Fine! What choices? And who decides?

It is a tough task to presume upon parents! Canadian Teachers Federation administrator Heather Robertson reminds us that

> While in theory almost everyone supports increased parent involvement, in practice few parents have the time or experience to take on day-to-day governance of schools. (Robertson, 1998, p.40-41)

Spencer's 19th century query 'what knowledge is of most worth' still provides the fuel for the education engine. The gathering of that fuel will continue to involve many hands, many minds, and many approaches. Whether the concern is over the commercialization of schools; privatization; outcomes-based education; producing and measuring skills; standards; new technologies; or too much information (Robertson, 1998), parents, students, teachers, indeed all who are involved in the world of education, public opinion as it were, still matters (Robertson, 1998, 248). What Robertson contends is that public sentiment will be the only real barrier to privatization (Robertson, 1998, p.248). Her claim that the corporate state cannot afford democracy – because democracy makes demands – sums up the apparent if not subliminal entry of the corporate world into the heretofore 'innocent' educational environment (Robertson, 1998, p.293). Her passionate plea for education to teach the child consciousness beyond self-interest – 'to see the whole, of which his life is only but a part' – shouts for schools to be the best defence against an unthinkable future, and the best hope for a better one (Robertson, 1998, p.319). Schools do transmit ways of seeing the world. As social institutions, they reflect the society they serve. Sometimes, she says, the reflections frighten (Robertson, 1998, p.9-10). The context in which the school as an organization functions is not immune from the social, political, and economic environment that envelops its daily operation. Globalization, expressed by continental/world-wide corporate mergers, directly challenges the power of the state. Alarmist? Perhaps! And yet what Robertson suggests is that when minimalist governments are relegated to performing only those functions that the private sector has no interest in (cannot profit from), Canadians relinquish the power that democracy can give them (Robertson, 1998, p.120). One must be cognizant that this warning is not a singular sentiment exclusive only to the personal perturbations of one

member of a large Canadian education lobby group. Elkins (1995), Kennedy (1993), Nevitte (1996), Reid (1996), Dobbin (1998), Chomsky (1994), and Lodge (1995), for example, have bemoaned the possible demise of the democratic state at the same time prognosticating the very public assent to economic power of continental/world-wide corporate cartels. Does this suggest the inevitable departure of the state from critical areas of public concern?

Writing about universal and particularistic values in world educational systems, Fay Chung acknowledges the trend toward growing globalization but sees little indication that nation states will cease to exist. Regional partnerships and international networks are more likely (Chung, 1999, p.111). Greater local identification and autonomy; smaller government; greater emphasis on the private sector including community and non-governmental organizations complete the major trends forecasted by Chung. Finally, the development of values must remain a fundamentally important task she concludes.

Canadian John Goodlad, commenting on educational renewal from his position as co-director of the Centre for Educational Renewal at the University of Washington, acknowledges that there are no quick fixes for whatever is perceived to need fixing as debated over the past four decades. He is dismayed to view the degree to which personal, business, and political interests play fast and loose with the purposes of schools. The intended outcomes of schooling he suggests should not be within the purview of political and corporate entrepreneurs to change and manipulate (Goodlad, 1996, p.232). That would leave those who are close to the action – citizens who actively engage in discourse that by its activity tolerates nothing less than a responsive hearing from those who represent them or who work in the state infrastructure. And, those same public servants had better be prepared to share the policy development process!

Education, says Northern Michigan University professor John Covaleskie, is an area of public life and policy that people are healthily unwilling to leave to the experts. It matters and people ought to be involved in its functioning (Covaleskie, 1997, p.538). The state, if it is to function for the good of all it serves, requires participation in the public business. Unless we are all activists, the schools (as an example of state responsibility) will neither belong to us nor meet our needs (Covaleskie, 1997, p.540).

Whether public, private, or corporate activism, no sector is immune from critical scrutiny. Take the issue of employability skills – often part of the vision if not one of the major goals of any educational institution - as an example of the educational policy discourse. University of Alberta researcher Alison Taylor, after tracing a recent reiteration of the policy to the Conference Board of Canada (1991), concludes that the Employability Skills Profile that originated with the Board, became a focus for inclusion in Alberta's public school curriculum. The implication of such an orientation for Alberta provincial educational interests during the mid-1990s says Taylor, is twofold. First, she cautions, be aware of the source of particular reforms. Question the alliances that have formed between business élites and the state, and consider the declining influence of other educational 'stakeholders'. Recognize the particular interests that are being promoted and demand access to the policy-making processes. Second, it is important, she concludes, for educators to recognize the connections between employability skills discourse and initiatives, and the broader context of government cutbacks and restructuring (Taylor, 1998, p.161).

What had become evident in Alberta during the course of her research, is that the focus on *employability* as opposed to *employment* directed attention to schools and distracted attention from workplace and labour market trends (Taylor, 1998, p.155)[15]. Moreover, in Alberta Education, the policy community has been redefined in such a way that the input of business leaders and organizations has been welcomed while the influence of educational 'stakeholders' such as teachers' unions and trustees' groups has declined (Taylor, 1998, p.159). While a situation that may be altered contingent upon the political orientation of the government in power, Taylor concludes that it is necessary to challenge the idea that government policy directions are natural and inevitable. Do so, she implores, by critically assessing employability skills discourse and take seriously the educational goal of reducing the effects of social divisions and inequality in schools (Taylor, 1998, p.161). Taylor's challenge reflects part of the mood of the past decade in educational discourse.

Summary

As the first decade of the 21st century begins, all responsible for the development and implementation of public policy, while the task is daunting, must work together to effect policy that attempts to ameliorate the local, national, and international human condition. Policy makers must heed the cautionary warnings about the power and influence of technology so clearly articulated by Kennedy (1993), Postman (1993), Franklin (1990), and Ellul (1981); and be ever vigilant about the changing role of the state as argued by Senge (1990), Berguist (1993) and Drucker (1993).

I would further concur with Bruner (1996), Eisner (1998) and Frye (1988), that the primacy given to the importance of learning about culture and the values of society is absolutely critical to the determination of public policy for education. Whatever policy results, it must be so designed as to be both responsive and mutative. 'Think globally and act locally' should be the operative strategy and vision for the process of policy development and implementation. The problem, as stated by Elkins (1995), is that not only are the boundaries of government responsibility and action changing worldwide, within the nation-state itself, the gap between citizen and government is more and more under stress (Dobbin, 1998). And, like it or not, even though messages of global cooperation are being openly proclaimed (Lodge, 1995), the gap between various economic sectors of employment continues to cause major concern for corporate and labour leaders alike (Rifkin, 1995). It is as if legitimate authority is being challenged everywhere (Chomsky, 1994; Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1988 and McLaren, 1989). That notion is a welcome one as defenders of public schools (Robertson, 1998) and (Goodlad, 1996) remind policy makers that at least one institution must be maintained to ensure the survival of society. I agree with Angus Reid (1996), one should look for and advocate flexibility on all issues and problems thereby increasing the opportunity for tolerance and understanding. Heilbroner (1995) says it best I think when he claims that a terrestrial base must be secured for water, soil, population and air to be shared by all along with respect for human nature. Keeping warlike proclivities at bay is not so bad either!

Shifting political and personal responsibility boundaries then will necessitate not only a judicious use of continuously changing cybernetic capacity but a recognition of the value that alternative viewpoints can make to the realization of public policy. Public

opinion research as conducted by Reid, Dobbin, and Nevitte must continue to be solicited and used to assist public policy makers. Such information will challenge the efficacy of the state to create a balance where all may claim some satisfaction for their individual and collective efforts. One must be equally vigilant in the use of public opinion particularly that advocated by certain advocacy groups as Taylor (1998) reminds us. To ensure that appropriate scrutiny occurs, policy stakeholders will have to continue and improve where possible their capacity in the area of policy analysis. Peter Senge's description of the state as a 'new' learning organization provides a fair degree of optimism for this civil servant.

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[1] Practically any day of the week of the local press contains reference to the Y2K concern, for example, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 28, 1999, Section B1 – "Aviation experts in Montreal for Y2K rollover"; or "Hubble repair mission returns" a story on the same page referenced the concern to have the mission ended before any Y2K problems occurred. "Canadians hoarding for Y2K...just in case" in the same Section B1 but a day later detailed the concern of a Fredericton, NB citizen who had spent some $4000 getting ready to stockpile a reserve of household effects to tide her over in case there was a Y2K caused crash.

[2] A recent example can be seen in the Speech from the Throne of the newly elected New Democratic government of Manitoba, November 25, 1999, pages 1, 6, and 7 – a summit on the future of the Manitoba economy is planned along with sessions to "...listen carefully to...patients...care-givers..." in the health system including sessions for parents, teachers, students and employers regarding the education system.

[3] Nevitte describes a post-materialist orientation as one which gives priority to aesthetic, intellectual, and belonging needs.

[4] See Government of Manitoba policy documents *Renewing Education: New Directions – A Blueprint for Action* (July 1994) and *Renewing Education: New directions – A Foundation for Excellence* (1995)

[5] Nevitte sites John Porter's work of 1965 – *The Vertical Mosaic* – as the source of this viewpoint.

[6] The New Democratic Party has long advocated similar policies as have the Canadian Libertarian Party including an unlikely source – the Canadian Communist Party.

[7] The world will experience what Elkins calls an 'unbundling', i.e., the weakening of the idea of nation as a territorially based political organization.

[8] At a December 1999 gathering of employees of the School Programs Division of Manitoba Education and Training, the new Deputy Minister of Education reiterated his message that learning is very much a vertical and horizontal mutual exchange of ideas, critique and recommendations. We learn very seldom from people who agree with us all the time. Critical but positive discourse is essential for the growth of the organization.

[9] This has particular application to the implementation of education policy with specific reference to curriculum. The clearest, most articulate documents detailing policy on curriculum usually require some three to five years and even seven years of continual use and interpretation before a degree of classroom success has been achieved in terms of the intents of the curriculum.

[10] This catch phrase was the rallying cry of many world-wide global educators who argued long and hard for the inclusion of topics on the curriculum that emphasized such global concerns as the struggle to eliminate poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation –*Our Common Future: The World Commission on Environment and Development* (1987).

[11] One is reminded of a similar sentiment by Michael Apple in *Ideology and Curriculum* (1979) commenting on the curriculum field having its roots in the soil of social control (page 47). Both involve grass roots participation by citizens.

[12] This same list was quoted by Heather-Jane Robertson in her book *No More Teachers, No More Books — The Commercialization of Canada's Schools* (1998), page 195-196.

[13] A very similar observation was made by Joshua Meyrowitz in *No Sense of Place — The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (1985) in which he postulated that because of the immediacy of telecommunication particularly television and its capacity to bring world-wide events into the home, people were losing a sense of 'place', a sense of who they were and what they stood for. Electronic media have altered the significance of time and space for social interaction. The electronic media affects us not primarily through their content, but by changing the 'situational geography' of social life. The connection to Postman is that Meyrowitz suggests that a broad, seemingly chaotic spectrum of social change may be, in part, an orderly and comprehensible adjustment in behavior patterns to match the new social situations created by electronic media. Where Postman differs is in the description of the social change that may result.

[14] By educational establishment Holmes means the provincial/large school district bureaucracies, teachers' unions and faculties of education.

[15] Giroux, Apple, McLaren, and Robertson, have made similar observations to the effect that the public school system has been blamed for not preparing youth adequately for the work force when in fact employers should be shouldering more of the on site training to further the entry points and careers of employees. It is certainly unfair to generalize about all employers. But the 'public' cry that they issue for schools to 'train' young people for the workforce cannot be ignored. And, the workforce environment some high school graduates are destined to enter is not without serious *employability* issues. Rifkin (1995, 86) argues that Unions have failed to come to grips with the central dynamic of the automation revolution — management's single-minded determination to replace workers with machines wherever possible. They should have been trying to secure control over the technology instead of calling for retraining declares Rifkin.

CHAPTER 3

POLICY ANALYSIS – THE DISCIPLINED APPLICATION OF INTELLECT TO PUBLIC PROBLEMS

The purpose of this chapter is to situate the role of policy analysis in the process of public policy development. While deemed to be necessary and in demand, agreement on the net result of policy analysis is an evolving debate.

This chapter has been organized under the headings: "Open Inquiry – A Primary Principle of Policy Analysis"; "The Aim and Mission of Public Policy"; "Positivism – Still the Dominant Force"; "The Arenas of Policy Archaeology"; Analytical, Critical and Persuasive Discourse"; "the Policy Analyst as Client Advocate"; "Policy Questions – Theoretical or Practical?"; "A Process for Policy Analysis"; "Policy Analysis and 'Civic Discovery' "; and "Summary"

> Truth, to the extent we know it at all, comes out
> of the oppositional contention of ideas. (Greenfield, 1993, p.185)

Greenfield's declaration for open enquiry as being of fundamental importance to the functioning of organizations - provides an important dictum for discourse not only in the worldly context presented in chapter 2, but also might serve as a first principle for the conceptualization of state policy. Which is to say that if ideas are not encouraged, seldom solicited, or given reluctant respect, then the resultant policy will be less adequate than policy formulated by the reverse. Answers to questions about the effectiveness and efficiency of policy, cannot, argues University of Toronto political scientist Paul Manzer, escape the ideological context within which they are asked (Manzer, 1994, p.12). That ideological context – whether the increasing economic power of transnational corporations over governments; the marketization of education; the exponential growth of cybernetic intelligence; or the issue of who is in control of public education – can exert enormous pressure on the state to prepare policy that must accommodate those pressures both for its own survival and, one hopes, to effect a higher purpose – the amelioration of human kind.

It is well to recall that the government is the one institution with the singular obligation to facilitate societal choice making and action. In fact, it is the government's

ability to make decisions and act, when taken together that comprise the dominant dimensions by which government performance should be judged (Parsons, 1995, p.613). That 'performance' *cum* public policy, has at least three purposes posits political scientist Wayne Parsons. First, enlightenment; second, fuller development of the individual in society; and third, the development of consent, consensus, social awareness, and legitimacy. All three, he suggests, come ahead of the delivery of goods and services. Public policy then, involves improvement of the democratic or political capacities of people – not simply efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of services. This means, says Parsons, extending democratic control over the managerialsit arrangements – consultants and quangos – which have thrived in market-driven public policy through reinvigorating and reforming constitutional arrangements and more bottom-up accountability and evaluation (Parsons, 1995, p.614). And what does Parsons list as the main aim of public policy?

The Aim and Mission of Public Policy

His response is an educator's dream! The aim should be the formation of values that could shape the full development of individuals and society as a whole. Specifically, it means the transmission and application of knowledge and democratic skills to as wide a public as possible. All to be accomplished in political and social institutions that have as their purpose to improve the communicative rather than instrumental rationality of democratic societies. The mission for policy analysis for the current decade says Parsons, is to help in fostering a genuine dialogue between policy-makers, policy specialists and an active society. As for the core vital task of the theory and practice of public policy, it must seek to clarify and shape values to extend and enhance democratization (Parsons, 1995, p.616). A noble but very difficult task to effect indeed!

Attempts to explain policy-making and the policy executing process, says Daniel McCool, began in earnest in the early 1950s with Harold Lasswell – the first to enunciate the concept of policy science. He introduced the notions of interdisciplinary processes (social, psychological, natural sciences); empirical research (quantitative methodologies and logical positivism); megapolicy (focus on the big question); theoretical complexity (problems of the intricacies of human behaviour); applied methodology (research of direct/immediate value); and normative/prescriptive procedures. Lasswell, says McCool,

saw policy science as a way of protecting democracy from the politicization of information (McCool, 1995, p.2). Suffice it to say that the subtle influences of ideology as well as the threats and temptations of power in the policy domain have not disappeared even after close to a half century has elapsed since Lasswell presented his thesis. In small part no doubt to what McCool draws from the observations of Bauer and Gergen in their 1968 publication *The Study of Policy Formation*, namely, policy does not exist in discrete units; it is part of a complex system without clear demarcations (McCool, 1995, p.4). Further, as a professional endeavour, policy analysis discovered its limits in the 1970s.

Government programs did not always live up to what they promised. Program budgeting rose and fell resulting in long-range planning problems. Central planning created its own backlash and a heightened awareness of what can – and cannot – be accomplished by government-via-analysis. Policy analysis then, could not solve the problems of government. There is no one best way. The nature of policy problems is such that a variety of approaches are required to deal with the complexity of the process – a conclusion reached by one of McCool's sources from the late 1970s W.I. Jenkins (McCool, 1995, p.7). The important thought to note here is that McCool posits that it may be inappropriate to attempt to construct a theory of policy. The subject, he suggests, is simply too diverse, variable, and immense. The relationships inherent in policy theory are too complex to be explained by a single theoretical approach. His second explanation is equally challenging. He laments that policy scholars have the propensity to isolate themselves in a single theoretical or substantive specialty. The result? Little effort has been made to discover commonalties and combinations among the various theoretical contributions. That being said, McCool does contend that theory does not make good public policy. Good policy makers make good public policy. Theory, he concludes, can guide inquiry enabling policy makers to make informed decisions. And what is the ultimate measure of good theory? According to McCool, the extent to which the theory leads to enhancing the quality of social life (McCool, 1995, p.20). That determination will not be easy as the policy sciences – living by the twin pillars of democracy – conflict and choice – must continue to rely upon open debate which features both micro and macro theory as the focus of the policy sciences theory building efforts.

Positivism – Still the Dominant Force

Policy science tends to be oxymoronic contends McCool. If the emphasis is on the policy, then it becomes increasingly difficult to emphasize the science or vice versa. That has led some to argue that policy simply does not lend itself to scientific investigation. Policy design, summarizes McCool, is a contextually sensitive iterative analytical process in which analyst and subject interact. To cool the consternation over whether policy theory is a science or not, McCool presents the notion of alternative approaches not as a replacement for positivism but as a complement to positivism. Positivism remains, he concludes, the dominant force both in social science research and for the field of policy science. All of which leads to his overall thesis that no single theory will ever explain the totality of public policy making (McCool, 1995, p. 406).

McCool's contingent approach to policy theory may be described by a graphic that illustrates a horizontal and vertical axis which situates micro and macro theory at opposite ends of the former and positivist and post positivist theory at opposite ends of the latter. The four quardrants created by the model graphic, divide policy research into what he calls decision analysis, traditional policy analysis, component analysis and interpretative studies. Each quadrant describes the type of decision(s) made, the magnitude of the decision, and the range of values involved – objective/value neutral at the positivist theory end and subjective/value driven at the postpositivist theory end of the vertical axis. It is a first step – a simple beginning he offers – designed to emphasize choices of theory (McCool, 1995, p.404-406).

The Arenas of Policy Archaeology

Not unlike McCool's contingent approach to policy theory, Scheurich (1994) reconceptualizes policy theory into what he calls policy archaeology – a study of the social construction of social and educational problems that have become visible. Policy archaeology interrogates the social construction of the range of problems. It proposes that a grid of social regularities constitutes what is seen as a problem, what is socially legitimized as a policy solution, and what policy studies itself is.

Scheurich claims that the traditional policy studies problematic describes social problems; discusses competing policy solutions; considers general implementation problems; and evaluations of particular policy implementations. His approach takes a

radically different tack. Problems, problem groups, discussions of policies and policy alternatives, and presumptions about the functions of policy studies within the larger social order are addressed in four 'arenas' of study or focus.

Arena # 1 questions or brackets the acceptance of a social problem as an empirical given. Policy archaeology refuses to accept social problems as a natural occurrence. When they do, it is skeptically examined. Policy archaeology posits that social problems are social constructions and that process itself is critically examined – the how-it-came-to-be question. Policy archaeology studies the strands and traces of social problems prior to their naming as a social problem. A social problem's history is not the focus of policy archaeology. Rather it is the constitutive grid of conditions, assumptions, and forces, which make the emergence of a social problem possible and eventually visible as a social problem. The theory, postulates Scheurich, tries to describe the complex group of relations that make social problems and policy choices possible. This introduces Arena #2 – the presence of powerful 'grids' or networks of regularities.

These grids constitute the range of acceptable policy choices. Policy archaeology suggests that there is a grid of social regularities that constitutes what becomes socially visible as a social problem and what becomes socially visible as a range of credible policy solutions. Scheurich claims that his methodology can identify this grid or network of social regularities.

First, the regularities are not intentional meaning—no particular individual or group consciously created them. Second, social regularities do not determine social problems or policy solutions. Third, the regularities are historical. Policy archaeology, continues Scheurich, can not only identify the regularities but also delineate shifts in the regularities that shape the emergence of social problems and policy solutions.

Arena # 3 is the study of how the range of possible policy choices is shaped by the grid of social regularities – how the grid of social regularities generates the range of possible and 'impossible' policy solutions.

The final arena examines the function of conventional and postpositivist policy studies within the larger liberal social order. Scheurich argues that conventional and postpositivist policy studies themselves are constituted by social regularities similar to problems and policy solutions.

Given that any ordering of the arenas may be applied to proceed, Scheurich, in applying arena # 2, cites five regularities that are necessary to the constitution or emergence or construction of the problem of failing school children. They are: gender, race, class, governmentality and professionalization.[16] While but five of the social regularities that comprise the dominant liberal social order, says Scheurich, they constitute that which becomes visible and acceptable within that order. Important here is the notion that it is the interaction of the five regularities that constitutes the problem, the problem group and the policy solution (Scheurich, 1994, p.307).

In applying arena # 3, Scheurich contends that policy solutions that are radically at variance with the grid of regularities are not seeable or credible. The range of policy choices will accord with the grid of regularities. Those policy solutions that contradict or question the social order will not emerge or if they do emerge among the socially marginalized, will not achieve any credibility among the governmental and policy agents who serve as the legitimacy gatekeepers of the policy discourse.

With respect to the study of the social functions of policy studies themselves – arena # 4 – Scheurich suggests that postpositivist policy analysts think they see policy somewhat differently than conventional policy analysts. Except they also do not question the social order. This is a major concern for Scheurich. Both make the problem and the problem group visible through sanctioned performances. They both discuss only those policy solutions that sanction that order. Even, he muses, when policy analysts repeatedly conclude that a particular policy has not worked, this judgement rarely leads to a larger critique of policy studies themselves or of the social order itself.

Scheurich argues that the most important social functions of policy analyses are the normalizing or disciplining of the population. Problems and problem groups are social constructions (Scheurich, 1994, p.311). Important again is that the main function of the social constructions is to provide a definition of correct, productive behaviour to citizens – many of whom are already acting in concert with the social order. And what is the primary function of policy studies? Not, says Scheurich, the solution of social problems but the disciplining and normalizing of productive citizens (Scheurich, 1994, p.312).

Policy studies are a social performance that reassures the citizenry and affirms the commitment to 'do something' about social and education problems, even though such 'doing' typically has little effect on the more substantive social and education problems. This 'problematic of policy studies' – that large and serious social and education problems continue to exist (for the USA in Scheurich's discussion) – have not been successfully eradicated by the social sciences or the policy sciences concludes Scheurich. What he calls a "monstrous result" – the fact that the most vulnerable groups in society are seen as a social problem and the most powerful are not seen as a social problem within the dominant public and academic discourse – has arisen. Why?

Although not a definitive answer, his new methodological framework for policy studies – policy archaeology – attempts to reframe the above stated 'problematic' and monstrous result! The concept of 'social regularities' is, he challenges, a mobile metaphor requiring more scrutiny and thought. That is a fair and open acknowledgement that policy studies – if they are to be of some value to the improvement of the social order that they are attempting to address - must demonstrate an integrative multidisciplined approach. One that continually asks what Jacob Bronowski declared as the essence of science in his 1973 work *The Ascent of Man*, namely, "…ask an impertinent question, and you are on the way to the pertinent answer."(Bronowski, 1973, p.95).

Policy analysis would appear to be the field of study to pose the 'impertinent questions' but agreement on its progress in facilitating pertinent answers to questions of policy conceptualization is not so clear.

Analytical, Critical, and Persuasive Discourse

Louise White, for example, posits that critics have been reacting to the record of policy analysis. Since the 1980s she says, there has been a lack of a compelling theoretical base, a failure to anticipate unintended consequences, poor utilization by policymakers, and displacement by politics or implementation failures (White, 1994, p.506). Her response is a tripartite theoretical perspective on discourse.

Analytical discourse draws on multiple theories and data sources. It consists of efforts by the traditional policy analysis community to take the critics seriously and incorporate their concerns into the practice of analysis. Critical discourse emphasizes critical reflection and links evidence to value discussions. It draws from a more

philosophically oriented literature and takes a more critical stance toward the practice of analysis. Persuasive discourse focuses on the role of ideas and persuasion by policy entrepreneurs. It comes out of political science and organization theory. All three, she argues, have the common feature that there is a plurality of values and arguments for thinking about any specific policy issue. The three discourses emphasize that analysis and research have to be interpreted through some form of dialogue or interaction in order to offer a basis of policy advice.

All three views suggest that ideas can influence policymakers. The difference comes about in how they link ideas and interests and in their respective approach to the role of analysis.

White further offers the premise that there are multiple perspectives on policy issues and that analytic techniques contain their own implicit biases that need to be acknowledged (White, 1994, p.509). Though perhaps an obvious caveat, it helps set the context for the following elaboration on each discourse.

Analytical discourse

- counsels practitioners to be open and flexible in all phases of the analytic process
- relies on social science procedures and proper uses of evidence to resolve differences among the procedures
- assumes there is a real world even though we can only know it imperfectly
- relies exclusively upon contextual knowledge assumes that different perspectives are valid, legitimate, and if different must be aggressively included

Critical discourse

- emphasizes that value questions have to be explicitly included in analysis
- encourages participants to examine their preferences, background, and openness to change in a broad participatory process
- involves a critical exchange among different views and a critical examination of the relevant facts
- tends to be deeply suspicious of official views
- treats opposing views seriously particularly those that are a counterpoise to the estimates of experts

Persuasive discourse

- is most attentive to the development of policy preferences; how preferences emerge; and the opportunities that policymakers and analysts have for influencing those preferences
- impugns that policy is made by an informal network or web of interests rather than a narrow set of prescribed players

- suggests that analysts and political leaders promote and shape ideas but do so by sharing in a discourse with the public
- means that analysts can facilitate change by introducing new ideas into political debates
- assumes that it is more important for analysts to generate different perspectives on problems and introduce information into the process than to offer solutions to problems
- affirms that the public will have the most impact by contributing to discussions around issues of immediate concern rather than appealing to more remote public interests
- makes it hard for unorganized interests to find an entrée because the process is open-ended, complex and confusing

Summing up, all three discourses stress that ideas and analysis play a role in the policy process. Policy recommendations require consensus among the participants based on information, analysis, and the infusion of knowledge into the policy process. An understanding and interest in change is important to all three with analytical discourse the most apt to end up with incremental change; critical discourse most apt to changing the status quo; and persuasive discourse most concerned with the possibility for changing preferences and interests (White, 1994, p.519).

The message White offers for the field of policy analysis is that analysis must be grounded in the policy process. The analyst must solicit a range of perspectives from as many varied groups as possible with the caution that one be cognizant of the inevitable biases in any efforts to apply rational analysis to human affairs (White, 1994, p.521). White's closing plea to analysts is that they should look for more opportunities to be part of a broader policy discourse and to promote new ways of looking at issues.

The Policy Analyst as Client Advocate

The role of the policy analyst then is to 'actively mediate' the discourses between scientists, advocates, and politicians. By so doing, the policy community is enlarged to be technically competent, legitimate, and politically astute (Throgmorton, 1991, p.155). What Throgmorton calls a client advocate, assumes that an objective and technically sophisticated comparison of alternatives should guide policy making. Client advocates address two difficult challenges that scientific analysts try to avoid. First, they try to understand the decision-maker's situation and they attempt to reconcile the analysts' disciplinary view of problems with the decision makers' short-term oriented and institutionally bound view. Second, client advocates transform the technical jargon of the

discipline into the simpler, action-oriented discourse of politics. In short, policy analysts should try to understand lay advocates and translate arguments into language that the lay advocates can understand and accept. Further, the policy analysis must not only be ethical but also critical and emancipatory (Throgmorton, 1991, p.165). Which is fine provided that the client advocate is cognizant of whom or what interests is represented.

Throgmorton cautions that by acting as advocates for clients, analysts can not only directly influence decision-making but also they do so at the risk of losing legitimacy in the eyes of advocacy communities. By assuming the role of issue advocates – earning credibility with a particular community – they may risk losing the trust of elected officials. On the other hand, if they do not produce recommendations and information that will help officials win at the polls, politicians will consider analysts to be impractical, naïve and dangerous (Throgmorton, 1991, p.167). The way out, says Throgmorton, is to form 'analytical teams' that communicate forthrightly with the politicians, the scientists, and advocacy interests.

The teams would use rigorous scientific techniques to help create and sustain a coalition of advocacy groups and supportive elected officials. The point of policy analysis would be to stimulate and maintain a conversation between scientists, politicians, and lay advocates. Mediation among the three groups and the creation of a community that accepts diversity would be the goal of the analyst.

Paramount for the policy analyst is the rejection of any effort to privilege the rhetoric of science and politics over the 'irrational' and too often feeble voice of the lay public. Throgmorton's plea at the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century is a simple but poignant directive. Invite lay people and their advocates to conferences; have them write reports and articles; use personal interviews[17]; and abandon the use of obfuscating language. Policy analysts should open themselves, he says, to the possibility of being persuaded by people speaking on their own terms rather than in the dominant discourses of politics and science. Indeed! It is the clarification of the 'terms' that is the most difficult task of all in the formulation of policy.

Policy Questions – Theoretical or Practical?

Definition of the 'terms' is what policy conceptualization addresses. Maximally it may involve just about every facet of scientist, politician and citizen relationship in the

exercise of policy formulation. Minimally it involves the determination of policy question etiology.

Using the economic notion of scarcity, that is, wherever there is enough of everything, enough justice, enough virtue, enough bread and wine, there is no allocation problem. In short, as there is no problem of scarcity there can be no questions of policy (Green, 1994, 4). This observation, idyllic as it may be, does serve to remind all that in the grand order of the availability of goods, none are free and none that can be provided in plenitude without making certain others in short supply. The point, says Green, is that there is no ultimate solution to any problem of policy, except in paradise problems of policy are not so much solved, as they are simply non-existent. Returning to reality, a policy question is a request for a fairly stable, but modifiable, line of action aimed at securing an optimal adjustment of the conflict between goods, all of which must be pursued, but which taken together, cannot all be maximized.

All issues of public policy argues Green, are 'nested' in a set of social goods all of which must be considered, but which taken together, are at some point, mutually incompatible. The 'trade-off' principle appears to be the condition that all must learn to accommodate. In education circles for example, raising the exit standards from public schools may result in reduced attainment levels.

What Green concludes is that there is no technical solution to policy questions. He posits that policy questions are always practical questions. They are never theoretical questions. In any public forum where policy is shaped, only practical questions are admissible, never theoretical ones.

And what is the answer to a policy question? A line of action, he says, a specification of what to do. Answers to theoretical questions are always aimed at truth claims. Policy deliberation is aimed at action and not at the acquisition of knowledge. Theoretical questions are aimed at the reverse. Policy debate demands an answer to what must be done –not what must be believed (Green, 1994, p.3).

Green further observes that in matters of policy, we are confronted by indecision not because our knowledge or technical facility is faulty but simply because we are confronted with a kind of question that, in principle, cannot be answered simply by any

increment or improvement of knowledge (Green, 1994, p.4). Contingency theory again appears to be the only constant in the conceptualization of policy!

Green appears to concur. Policies are guides to action subject to amendment, but not that much. They should be durable, but not permanent. Permanence, he states, is as alien to the idea of policy as transience (Green, 1994, p.6). As for durability, it is one of the defining features of context for policy questions argues Green.

Making a decision on time even without all the facts is better than making the decision late but with all the facts. In the case of policy, decisions, says Green, have to be made within large limits of uncertainty. Amazing as it may be, crude data arriving on time are always to be preferred over refined data arriving too late. This places the role of research in a curious position with respect to policy formulation.

Green contends that because data relevant to policy decisions are never in, the argument is never complete. It is acceptable, he says, even fortunate, that research methods required for policy decisions are crude, even though the standard methods of research are highly refined (Green 1994, p.7). Policy questions are always answered in the midst of uncertainty. Green's contention that there is always a point beyond which more information will do little to reduce the uncertainty and do nothing to alter the direction of the decision has been a conundrum often experienced first hand.[18] A perceptive policy process would help and Green offers one.

A Process for Policy Analysis

The four facets of Green's approach are called: policy analysis, policy formation, policy decision, and the political analysis of policy. Never fully discrete in practice, the four facets do not occur in any persistent sequence.

Policy analysis Green defines as the rational or technical assessment of the net marginal trade-offs between different policy choices. Policy analysis is simply an activity whose theory is the theory of marginal utilities.

Policy formation is that activity by which we seek to gain agreement on what form a specific policy can or will take, as opposed to what form it ought to take. The theory of policy formation can be discerned as one aspect of the theory of governmental management and rhetoric. Green offers the following as a guiding rule in the theory of policy formation – 'if it matters what you call it, then call it something that matters'. His

example is priceless! Call it Government spending and you open the floodgates admitting a torrent of political difficulties. Call it 'public investment' and the waters remain calm.

Policy decision may be described as the authoritative action of some office, administrative or legislative, by which a line of action is established. It is a momentary end point in the continuing conduct of government.

Political analysis measures the political weight of a given course of action. The aim is to determine the constituency of a particular policy –who will vote for the policy. The theory of political analysis, Green suggests, is the theory of political behaviour.

In sum, the theory of policy analysis, says Green, is the theory of marginal utilities. It might rank policy choices according to the estimated net utilities of each. The theory of policy formation is the theory of inter-agency politics. It is the governmental process by which a course of action comes to be selected and actually framed. The theory of policy decision is nothing less than the theory of polity itself, the theory underlying the placement of authority.

For people in a position of contributing to the conceptualization of policy, Green offers the advice that while the exercise of political judgment is a practical activity, it is also an evaluation activity. What one does through the exercise of political analysis may turn out to be very different thing when it comes to a political decision.

With respect to policy formation, the evaluator, as professional, can contribute, but that contribution will be most substantial to whatever extent he or she becomes a student of bureaucracy and a trusted counselor to authoritative leadership.

The evaluator, as evaluator, is likely to make a contribution only to the conduct of policy analysis. But when one possesses knowledge, particularly in government, that fact alone can bring a certain kind of power. He envisions the evaluator and policy researcher who with superior knowledge and the confidence of political leaders, exercising political judgement, and utilizing the acquired skills of a practiced political observer of the bureaucracy, absolutely contributing to every facet of the policy process. The irony, if there be one, is that the same evaluator/policy researcher will become less so in any limited professional sense and more a political leader or public servant in a quite old-fashioned and conventional sense. One who will possess the kind of civic virtue not different in kind from that called upon citizens to perform. All of which says that the role

of citizen within a democracy contributes in a rather substantive manner to the conceptualization of state policy.

Policy Analysis and 'Civic Discovery'

In fact it is precisely this phenomenon that may assist policy researchers resolve what James Cibulka identifies as two extant problems for policy research—the politicization of policy research and the utilization of policy information to improve policy (Cibulka, 1994, p.117).

Policy analysis, he contends, has for many political scientists become a political resource used to advance partisan interests. Policy research and policy argument is separated by a very thin edge. Policy argument uses research to fit a predetermined position with respect to a desirable policy. Applied policy analysis, in contrast to basic policy research, has the risk of bias intruding into the work of those who serve clients since the clients are likely to colour the way research is conducted or dictate its interpretation. So what might be the possible resolution to this policy formulation conundrum?

Cibulka's reference to what R.B.Reich calls 'civic discovery' bears repeating:

> The core responsibility of those who deal in public policy – elected officials, administrators, policy analysts – is not simply to discover as objectively as possible what people want for themselves and then to determine and implement the best means of satisfying these wants. It is also to provide the public with alternative visions of what is desirable and possible, to stimulate deliberation about them, provoke a reexamination of premises and values, and thus to broaden the range of potential responses and deepen society's understanding of itself. (Cibulka, 1994, p.118)

Cibulka acknowledges the fundamental problem in democratic theory and practice – the respective role which élites and masses play in the control of government and its policies. Further, what remains as a major tension is the dilemma of attempting to be politically effective and yet retain objectivity (Cibulka, 1994, p.119). He concludes however, that basic policy analysis can enrich the study of politics – that applied policy analysis can help improve public policy making. How so? Because the information and knowledge-based means of production are now a principal source of power. Will it democratize the flow of information and increase the role of the citizenry? Or, will the presence of ever-increasing information strengthen and narrow the autonomous spheres of experts possessing and controlling such information? Cibulka's answer is that the

field of policy analysis must help us adapt democratic government to this new global transformation (Cibulka, 1994, p.120).

Cibulka's response confirms a colossal challenge for the field of policy analysis. Any attempt to reconcile the relationship of the state and its citizenry particularly with respect to policy conceptualization must, by its very nature, be the very 'stuff' of the political, social and economic environment of the modern nation-state. More formally stated, it is what Leslie Pal calls 'public policy analysis'— the disciplined application of intellect to public problems (Pal, 1997, p.12). This systematic analysis proceeds, he argues, through a series of clearly defined stages to conclusion. Although not everyone can do it properly, there will be good and bad analysis because public policy analysis is itself a form of inquiry. Public policy, he posits, is not the implementation of programs; it is not the behaviours of public servants; and it is not the reaction of citizens affected by it. Rather, policies are mental constructs, strings of phrases and ideas (Pal, 1997, p.12). This notion has its own burden to bear!

Pal opines that public policy analysis carries its own cultural baggage because it demands expertise; reliance on Western science; deductive logic; measurement; and clear replicable steps or stages. That being said, public policy analysis, he concludes, is necessary and in demand. There is a need to deal with public problems therefore the task for public policy analysis is to clarify problems. The rational model is best, he says, because it provides the heuristic tool/guide to think through problems (Pal, 1997, p.26). An observation Professor Pal thinks is applicable if the following conclusions from the *Task Force on Strengthening the Policy Capacity of the Federal Government (1995)* are relevant. Some of the task force's conclusions cited by Pal were that public participation in the policy process is undoubtedly greater; media scrutiny is arguably tougher than a generation ago; there is an increasing skepticism toward experts; and new technologies offer possibilities for interesting innovations in policy-making methods (Pal, 1997, p.26-27). Whatever model is used, the formulation of policy, particularly from the perspective of public policy analysis – based at least upon Pal's reference to mental constructs, phrases and ideas – is even further frustrated by the multi-faceted phenomena of globalization introduced in Chapter 2.

Economic globalization, argues Pal, has changed the terrain of modern policy making and analysis. Two implications are evident. First, governments have fewer policy instruments at their disposal to protect domestic markets. Second, the boundaries between policy fields are dissolving (Pal, 1997, p.42-43). In short, international standards are superceding even more domestic considerations that have in the past driven the policy process. The problems of modern governance have and continue to be exacerbated by the effects of economic globalization. Pal suggests that the traditional association between public policy-making and the territorial boundaries of the nation-state have been severely challenged in the last decade. In fact, he claims, "...the source of policy problems and their political solutions now lie as much outside the boundaries of the state as they do within."(Pal, 1997, p.47). To the point even that people appear to be more and more identifying with non-territorially based groups (religious; gender; linguistic; ethnic)[19]. He further wonders if people still may become suspicious of institutions that represent majoritarian interests. That there has evolved in the last 30 years a struggle involving government, civil society and their relationship with the market is well documented. Whether educational theorists/informed analysts, social, political or economic critics, all have attempted to resolve the conceptual conundrum of state policy formulation by trying to tackle the tricky theoretical trio of the gospel of smaller government, balanced budgets, and new management practices. What is clear – and virtually impossible to reverse says Pal – is that globalization, increasing cultural diversity, the decline of deference, and the information revolution are here to stay (Pal, 1997, p.62). How we deal with the 'tricky trio' and the four irreversibles will in large part occupy center stage for the conceptualization of state policy.

Summary

Critical to the development and implementation of public policy, policy analysis is a process that must be encouraged and improved. By working together, the professional policy-maker and citizen can ensure that not only 'good' policy development results but equally important, the continued existence of the state will be less in doubt as the resultant disparate discourse will by its very strength help to guarantee its future.

While not easy to be sure, the identification and proposed solution to problems must not be mired in processes that dwell too long in microanalysis that may blur the

larger issue to be solved. Apparently there is no **one** solution anyway therefore consider the alternatives and proceed comfortable in the notion that risk and error can improve the sought after result. After all, analysis, we have been told, must be grounded in the policy process.

That a policy analyst can mediate policy discourse is encouraging particularly if the process reinforces the notion that the lay public can contribute to the development and implementation of public policy in a significant manner. And, the 'public' should be very effective given that policy questions are always primarily 'practical' questions. I like the statement that the theory of political analysis is the theory of political behaviour. And that behaviour is most discernable when it involves deliberation over alternative visions about the policy being examined. Problem clarification then is probably the most important task of policy analysis. The fact that global variables may impinge on that clarification process does not make the process of policy analysis any easier. Aside from that reality, clearly, what the exponents of policy analysis argue is that going it alone is not the route to follow. The tough issue to resolve for all concerned is how to ensure that public and private interests are honoured and that the net result is as 'good' as can be achieved. That is a very practical problem. Are there any theoretical approaches extant to offer assistance?

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[16] Governmentality, Scheurich posits, is a kind of governmental rationality that equates the well-being or happiness or productiveness of individuals with behaviours that reinforce the social order – it is an insatiable management of social spaces, practices and forms. Professionalization – it works closely in tandem with governmentality - is the proliferation of professions to treat and manage the citizenry, that is, to produce the disciplined, productive citizen even though this goal is not evident to the professionals themselves.

[17] The whole notion of using personal interviews and personal narrative to understand the formulation of policy will be discussed later based upon the research of Stephen Ball.

[18] Many times have occurred in my own 25 years in government when data is known to exist but there is not enough staff to research and bring alternative solutions to the 'table'. Urgency of response rather than thoroughness of background information or recognition of quality Canadian educational research too often have dictated the policy as far as this observer is concerned.

[19] A more poignant example is the approach used by First Nations people not only in Canada (across provincial/federal territorial and jurisdictional boundaries) but via their connections with the struggle of aboriginal peoples worldwide.

CHAPTER 4
POLICY-MAKING – A COMPLEXLY INTERACTIVE PROCESS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of some of the extant theory that drives public policy formulation. This will be followed by a discussion of some of the challenges facing policy-making.

This chapter has been organized under the headings: "The Stagist Approach"; "Deductive and Inductive Theory"; "The Challenges Facing Policy-Making"; and "Summary"

In his book *Public Policy-An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis,* Wayne Parsons suggests that the decade of the 1980s radically challenged the theory and practice of public policy (Parsons, 1995, p.76). Constant anti-state argument during the period publicly choreographed by United States President Reagan and United Kingdom Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as— government is best which governs least or the market place is more efficient at making decisions than the public sector— went a long way to creating a policy environment where public policy *qua* state or bureaucratic intervention made problems worse rather than solving them. Public choice theory was used as justification for cutting back government and expanding markets. It became, says Parsons, the core of public policy theory for the last two decades of the 20th century. And for those policy theorists that attempted to explain the policy formulation problems of the 1980s and 1990s with stagist or policy cycle theory, Parsons served up a tantalizing metaphor. To imagine that public policy can be reduced to over-simplified stages, he mused, has more methodological holes than a sack-load of Swiss cheese (Parsons, 1995, p.80).

The Stagist Approach

Beyond the dairy diatribe, Parsons does suggest that no one theory or model is adequate to explain the complexity of the policy activity of the modern state. What he does claim however, is that a stagist approach does help if only because of the extant range of frameworks and models. Some way is needed to reduce the complexity to a manageable form. Because contemporary policy analysis is a multi-framed activity, a stagist approach affords a rational structure to consider the multiplicity. Stagism has

heuristic (and hermeneutic) usefulness Parsons claims. Further, a stagist approach leads to a managerialist, top-down approach to the policy process. The problem is not with the policy cycle *per se* as with the need to incorporate or include models and approaches that are or may be deployed in policy analysis.

Selecting such models and approaches to explain public policy depends not only on the analyst's frame of reference but also on the interests, ideologies, and experiences of the analyst (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.7). While seemingly self-evident, it is well to state 'up front'. Understanding of public policy, say Howlett and Ramesh, demands:

- examination of the nature (organization) of the political regime
- a search for causal variables (policy determinants) in public policy-making
- a focus on the policy content (the nature of the policy problem and the solutions devised to address it)
- assessment of the direct and indirect effects of specific policies

The Policy Cycle

To accomplish the above, analysts have attempted to simplify public policy making into discrete stages and sub-stages referred to as the policy cycle. In doing so, they have 'declared' their frames of reference. An early example is Harold Lasswell —one of the first in the world of policy science to attempt such an approach. His seven stages focused upon the decision-making process but said little about external or environmental influences on government behaviour. Briefly, the seven stages include:

1. intelligence – collection/processing/dissemination of information
2. promotion- particular options moved along
3. prescription- decision-makers select an option
4. invocation-prescribed option begun
5. application-policy applied by the courts
6. termination-bureaucracy applies until cancelled
7. appraisal-results evaluated against aims and goals of original decision-makers (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.10)

The major point Howlett and Ramesh make is that the operative principle behind the notion of the policy cycle is the logic of applied problem solving. This they describe as the five stages of the policy cycle and applied problem solving.

Phases of Applied Problem-Solving	Stages in the Policy Cycle
1. problem recognition	1. agenda– setting
2. proposal of solution	2. policy formulation
3. choice of solution	3. decision-making
4. putting solution into effect	4. policy implementation

5. monitoring results   5. policy evaluation (Howlett and
                                               Ramesh, 1995, p. 11-12)

       Agenda-setting they define as the process by which problems come to the
attention of governments. Policy formulation is the process by which policy options are
formulated within government. Decision-making is viewed as a particular course of
action or non-action by governments. The process of putting policies into action is policy
implementation. And finally, policy evaluation – stage five – is the process by which the
results of policies are monitored by both state and societal factors—a process that may
reconceptualize a policy problem or solution. Are there any advantages to the policy
cycle model? Two are cited.

Advantages of the Policy Cycle

       First, the policy cycle facilitates an understanding of public policy-making by
breaking the complexity of the process into stages and sub-stages. Second, it permits an
examination of the role of all actors and institutions dealing with a policy. Both all well
and good except the apparent simplicity of the model suggests that policy-makers solve
public problems in a very systematic and more or less linear fashion. Reality suggests
otherwise![20] Howlett and Ramesh agree stating that the identification of problems and the
development of solutions is often an *ad hoc* and idiosyncratic process (Howlett and
Ramesh, 1995, p. 12). Further, the stages are often compressed or skipped, or followed in
an order unlike that specified by the logic of applied problem solving. In short, often,
they argue, there is no linear progression of a policy. Finally, the model lacks any notion
of causation. The model could stand an update and Howlett and Ramesh offer some
suggestions.

       The policy cycle model must identify the actors and the interests being pursued. It
is after all the result of their interaction that defines what public policy is all about. And,
because the actors operate within a set of existing social relations, their behaviour is
constrained—all the more reason why the policy actors and interests must be clarified.

       The context of societal, state, and international institutions, and the values these
institutions embody, conditions how a problem is defined; how adoption is facilitated;
and how solutions are proposed. That is why the context presented in Chapter 2 is so
important to the conceptualization of policy.

The set of ideas and beliefs or the discourse surrounding a policy problem also serves to constrain policy actors—a surprising degree of agreement and the limited number of options for solving the problem is more often the case than not. The policy cycle model would be improved if the reverse were true; that is, more options should be sought rather than fewer brought to the table.

The fact that instrument availability may constrain the actors or limit their choices, suggests that to improve the model, opportunity to strike tactical alliances amongst actors must be encouraged in order to mitigate against the possible limitation of the workplace.

Finally, Howlett and Ramesh state what experienced public policy makers know, past experience can shape what views are held and determine what action is taken.[21] The past history and experience of an organization, including the contributions of the policy actors involved, cannot be ignored, and must be one of the options that is considered in the conceptualization of public policy. An improved policy cycle model to be sure. Its usefulness depends in large part upon the approach taken in studying public policy-making.

Deductive and Inductive Theory

Howlett and Ramesh, using the individual, group, and institution as the fundamental unit of analysis, suggest public choice theory, class theory and neo-institutionalism as a set of deductive theories; and welfare economics, pluralism/corporatism, and statism as a set of inductive theories. Deductive theories begin from a relatively small number of basic assumptions that are then applied to the study of specific phenomena. Inductive theories start with observations of specific phenomena and attempt to derive generalizations from these observations that can be combined into more general theory. First the deductive theories.

Public Choice Theory

The primary assumption about public choice theory is that the political actors act rationally to maximize their utility. They are guided by self-interest and select a course of action which is to their best interest — the only political actor that counts is the individual. Democratic governments operate in a form of perpetual electoral campaign in which the types of decisions taken vary according to the timing of the electoral cycle; that

is, popular decisions precede the election, unpopular ones follow. This approach to public policy-making, say Howlett and Ramesh, is simply a process of the gradual extension of state provision of goods and services to the public (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.20). Though perhaps the expectations of specific sectors of the population, problems with this approach to public choice theory include

- avoidance of empirical reality – many political activities are undertaken for symbolic or ritualistic reasons
- a poor predictive capacity – the theories prediction that government functions will grow inexorably because of the competitive dynamics of democracy has no empirical proof
- the conception that party politics is always a contest between two parties thus allowing voters to choose between two clearly definable alternatives
- little guidance about policy-making in non-democratic systems that do not rely on free elections
- a disregard of or underestimates the effects of institutional factors in shaping actors' preferences
- the promotion of a particular vision of orthodox liberalism which would promote markets wherever possible and severely restrict the scope of government activities

The next deductive theory – class theory – is described using the group unit of analysis.

Class Theory

Class theories, argue Howlett and Ramesh, ascribe membership on the basis of certain observable characteristics of individuals whether or not the individuals see themselves in those terms. In capitalist societies, public policies are seen as reflecting the interests of the capitalist class. For capitalism to survive, the state must perform those functions that ensure property rights enforcement; maintain peace and order; and, promote those conditions that favour the continued accumulation of profit. Against the notion of capitalism, the theory recognizes that working class parties and trade unions operating through normal political channels is key to the conceptualization of public policy. Their collective action, not the direct response to the needs of capital, account for the rise of the welfare state (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.24). The classic struggle between capitalism and socialism makes class theory as an approach to public policy no less problematic than public choice theory.

The determination of what exactly is class and what is not does not go away. Nor does the question of the relationship between 'superstructure' and economic 'base' – the mode of production and the associated relations of production, which constitute the basic

structure shaping the state, law, and ideology. The problem of economic determinism continues to drive the theory. Reduction of every issue and problem to an economic base cannot be avoided if class theorists wish to maintain their theoretical integrity.[22] As an approach to public policy, class theory must be considered seriously. The same applies to the last of the deductive theories—neo-institutionalism.

Neo-institutionalism

In the conceptualization of policy, institutions affect actions by shaping the interpretation of problems and possible solutions. They also constrain the choice of solutions and the way and extent to which solutions can be implemented. Further, institutions exist to overcome impediments of information and exchange in social organizations. The basic unit of analysis is related to the 'transaction' among individuals within the confines of the institution. Quoting from March and Olsen's paper presented at the 1994 International Political Science Association meeting held in Berlin— 'Institutional Perspectives on Political Institutions'— Howlett and Ramesh repeat the observation that institutions constitute and legitimize political actors and provide them with consistent behavioral rules, conceptions of reality, standards of assessment, affective ties, and endowments, and thereby with a capacity for purposeful action (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.26). Are there any problems with this approach to public policy? Two are posited.

First, neo-institutionalists are unable to provide a plausible coherent explanation of the origin of institutions without resorting to functionalism. Second, the theory provides little insight in what causes policy-makers to move in any particular direction. The risk here surely is to rely too heavily upon any one theory or explanation to describe the operations of an institution or the actions of policy-makers. That neo-institutionalism adheres to a sociological approach –functionalism - to account for the origins of institutions or cannot explain the deliberative actions of policy-makers, should not detract from the fact that institutions and the 'culture' inherent in those same organizations does facilitate the conceptualization of public policy—not a single or definitive role but one of many that contribute to the formulation of policy. Deductive literature, concludes Howlett and Ramesh, tends to apply deductively derived theoretical insights to actual instances of policy-making. Further, researchers forget the contingent nature of the

hypotheses generated by the various approaches and the need to test them. The point made is that instead of using the study of public policy to test the hypotheses and assess the explanatory capacity of their theories, analysts simply read public policy making in terms of the theoretical framework, models, or metaphors they are using (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.40). Is it any different when inductive methods of theory construction are used?

Welfare Economics

Inductive theories depend on the accumulation of multiple empirical studies of any phenomena for their raw data which in turn leads to propositions that may be generalized. Example one is welfare economics.

Welfare economics is based on the notion that individuals, through market mechanisms, should be relied upon to make most social decisions. It then follows that governments should not interfere in transactions and activities related to private goods and services. Public goods should be provided because markets cannot provide goods or services for which businesses cannot charge or profit.

As for market failure, welfare economists argue that governments have a responsibility to correct it because optimal social outcomes will not result from purely uncoordinated individual decision-making (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.29). Moreover, contemporary welfare economics Howlett and Ramesh claim, now espouses the criterion that policy alternatives maximize net benefits over cost benefits. This notion replaces the older criterion of *Pareto Optimality* where it was required that actions be undertaken only if the possibility of making at least one person better off without worsening the situation of any other person. For policy selection, it means that some policies may be chosen even if some lose as long as the total gains are higher than the sum of losses. Market failure determination and what to do about it situates governments in a precarious position. Rarely do states make decisions using the technical manner of the theory. Often as not, the actual choice of policy is a political one, bound by political institutions, made by political actors, often in response to political pressures (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.33). In fact, both summarily dismiss the theory recounting that critics describe welfare economics as a myth, a theoretical illusion which promotes a false and naïve view of the policy process (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.33). Why? Because, the same critics say,

the theory neglects political variables! That response is interesting given the definition provided for inductive theories by Howlett and Ramesh—the theories are constructed from the 'bottom up'. Avoiding the 'political variables' may be more a result of the policy analyst's selection of raw data than a fault of the theory *per se*. Howlett and Ramesh's second example of an inductive theory - pluralism and corporatism- moves the discussion along to the group level of analysis.

Pluralism and Corporatism

Dominant as a perspective within American political science, pluralism views politics as the process by which competing interests are reconciled. Public policies are the result of competition and collaboration among groups working to further collective interests. This has led to some problems for advocates of pluralism in that determination of a group's capacity to affect government decision-making has not been fully developed. The result has been the emergence of a neo-pluralism. This notion modifies the idea of approximate equality among groups and explicitly acknowledges that some groups are more powerful than others. That being said, neo-pluralism continues to overlook the roles of the state and the international system in shaping public policies and their implementation (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.35). Further, the kind of open access enjoyed by groups in the congressional system is not the same for the parliamentary system. Pluralism's European group counterpart-corporatism-attempts to solve at least two of the problems endemic to pluralism.

First, corporatism does not neglect the role of the state; and second, corporatism considers the institutionalized patterns of relationships between the state and groups. Corporatist theory considers public policy to be shaped by the interaction between the state and the interests groups recognized by the state. Interaction among groups is institutionalized within and mediated by the state. For example, public policy toward a declining industry would take the form of bargaining between and among the state and relevant industry associations and trade unions as to how best to rationalize the industry and make it competitive (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.37). But as a theory for the conceptualization of public policy, corporatism is problematic in that it

- is a descriptive category of a particular kind of political arrangement among states and societies
- does little to further understanding of public policy processes

- does not clarify its own unit of analysis – the interest group
- is vague about the relative significance of groups in politics
- provides no clear conception of the nature of the state, its interests, or why it recognizes some groups and not others as representatives of corporate interests (Howlett and Ramesh, 1994, p.37-38)

On the plus side, by emphasizing the autonomous role of the state, the theory has prompted public policy analysts to go beyond group theory to explain public policy-making. This is particularly poignant for the last of the inductive theories – statism.

Statism

With its emphasis on the centrality of the state, statism, it is argued, offers a more plausible explanation of long-term patterns of policy development in many countries than do other types of political theory. The problem is that the existence of social liberties and the inability to always enforce its will cannot be explained. For example, during rebellions, revolution, and demonstrations of civil disobedience, the state may be at serious odds with it citizenry. Extreme examples to be sure but the same apply for a society that has voting rights. In fact, theoretically speaking, it is the voting population that is the sovereign authority – not the state *per se.*

Whether a deductive or inductive theory is selected as an approach to explaining public policy formulation—and both have their problems—the policy sciences have begun to abandon the notion of all-pervasive conflict (the struggle to survive in a world with limited resources but limitless wants). They suggest that the experience of the actors and that of others is a significant determinant of the actor's behaviour in the policy process. In short, the objectives actors seek depend on what they believe to be desirable and achievable. And here is the critical point for the conceptualization of state policy. Discussion, argument, and persuasion among actors, are viewed as an integral part of the policy process conceived as a process of learning by trial, error, and example (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.40). Moreover, the policy sciences say Howlett and Ramesh, cannot be furthered simply through the utilization of any existing general theoretical construct – deductive or inductive. Needed, they say, is an analytical framework that permits consideration of the entire range of factors affecting public policy. Parsimony and aesthetics are to be superceded by precision and adequacy in policy analysis. The broadened analytical framework would need to include conflict and learning at the same

time incorporating the results of empirical analyses of many policy domains into the process of theory building in policy science. Policy actors, institutions, and instruments must be a part of that framework—a framework that requires continuous fine tuning if the engine of government (policy) is to perform.

The Challenges Facing Policy-Making

Policy-making is a complexly interactive process without beginning or end (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.11). As such, the challenges facing policy-making are formidable indeed! Four cited by Lindblom and Woodhouse include

1. humans' limited capacity for inquiry into complex problems
2. the frequent conflict between reasoned judgment and the exercise of political power
3. the central role of business in policy making
4. socioeconomic and political inequality

With the above challenges in mind, both observers contend that systematic analysis of policy suffers from limits acknowledged by analysts, namely, researcher fallibility; value conflicts; time and cost constraints; and finally, problem formulation. The point they drive home is that there is no realistic prospect of substituting analysis for political interaction on any wholesale basis. Any efforts to do so are misguided; even dangerously misleading they conclude (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.22). For them, inquiry and judgment by ordinary people remain at the heart of the policy-making process particularly if professional analysis deserves to be seen as no more than an input to political interaction and judgment (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.22). This notion places a high premium on the principles inherent in a political democracy—one that speculates upon but appears to value the collective wisdom of the populace *cum* citizenry.

Strategic Analysis and Mutual Adjustment

Their chapter heading for the introductory analysis of how public policy may be best developed —The Potential Intelligence of Democracy—offers a cryptic clue to their main thesis. Democratic systems work, they posit, because they half-wittingly utilize strategies that render complex social problems far more manageable than could be achieved by analysis alone (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.24). It is the interaction among political participants that is critical to the formulation of policy. Guided by what they call 'strategic analysis', the participants

- focus on small variations – a simple incremental analysis
- focus on a handful of policy alternatives – less comprehensive
- ameliorate the most pressing problems
- reduce the number of alternatives and complexity of factors

Then, by coupling the notion of mutual adjustment – agreement in lieu of complete understanding – with the above process of strategic analysis, the result is what Lindblom and Woodhouse theorize is the underlying process by which democratic systems achieve intelligent action. Hardly advocates of extended deliberation about the formulation of policy, both conclude that waiting to act in a complex situation until one understands the consequences is a prescription for paralysis (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.32).

Certainly the notions of mutual adjustment and strategic analysis have played an important role in the study of policy development in Canada as well. As Dobuzinskis et al (1996) contend, policy theorists over the past two decades or more have used the language of context, learning, complex relationships, and mutual dependence in their descriptions of policy-making. In fact Dobuzinski identifies two dominant trends that have more than any other concerns directed the discussions about policy proposals. First, there has been a shift from the paradigm of market failure to the idea of government failure. Second, the increasing interest in institutional reform and more democratic and participatory practices (Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.7). It may be ironic that at the very time policy theorists are examining the role of the state with a renewed vigour regarding the state's role in policy formulation, that the state *per se* may be losing its once perceived omnipotent role in policy-making. International forces such as transnational corporations, world-wide trade and financial associations appear to be gaining the upper hand in terms of macro economic/financial policy formulation —again, the importance of the context detailed in Chapter 2.

State Survival

So too is it important to remember that core political institutions do not exist, says G. Bruce Doern, in the first instance, to make policy. They exist, he argues, to ensure representation, prevention of tyranny, accountability and peaceful transitions in power. In short, they were not established as policy-making machines (Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.17). This is obviously important to consider as Doern has determined that more study is required on how 'systems' affect policy rather than just how bureaucrats as

players influence policy. Recent public service reform has been more influenced by business and economic theory than by traditional public administration concerns. What he looks for is more study on the impact of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms on policy formation, policy community strategies and discourse. Further work is also needed on the policy influence of corporations; systematic comparisons across time; the roles of the Bank of Canada, federal Department of Finance, and the governing party caucus.

Complexity, Change and Adaptation

Perhaps the following is too simple an observation but so many have offered the same sentiment. The processes of policy formation and implementation are complex (Phidd in Dobunzinski et al, 1996, p.29). It requires critical examination of the complex interrelationships that exist between political parties, interest groups, and public bureaucracies. As Richard Phidd reminds us, the Canadian State must be viewed as a decision-making/management system continually under change and adaptation (Phidd in Dobunzinski et al, 1996, p.31). This simple but poignant point supports the suggestions of earlier policy theorists arguing for multiple alternatives and interactive stages in the process of policy formulation and policy analysis. This makes the tendency to accept American pluralist ideology the cause for potential confusion about the nature of Canadian political society (Pross in Dobunzinski et al, 1996, p.34).

Pluralism

As stated earlier (Howlett and Ramesh), applying the European notion of pluralism to the Canadian context is problematic. It is no less the case for the application of the theory of dispersed political power, fragmented, and unequally distributed as it is in the American version of state operation and policy development. Aspects of pluralism have presented Canadians with a classic tension in every policy concern—the tension between collectivism and individualism. As Pross further suggests, Canadian pressure group literature is concerned with the relationship between organized interests and the state. And this point emphasizes the most notable aspect of the foregoing relationship as one between interest groups and the bureaucracy. And what has all this to do with the conceptualization of state policy? Pross's observation must be considered. The need for state intervention in virtually every aspect of our lives, he declares, is the leitmotif of this country's existence (Pross in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.41). Who, how and why certain

entities become involved is no less a conundrum for Canadian contributors to the conceptualization of state policy. And it is particularly the case where interest groups are concerned. It is fascinating says Pross, that in Canada, interest groups—the institutions which sit at the very core of the American version of pluralism—commonly owe their creation and frequently their continued survival in Canada to government intervention (Pross in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.47). Not one to encourage the use of American or any other international model of pluralism, Pross urges analysts of the Canadian political environment to do so with discernment applying to our situation only those aspects that truly reflect our reality (Pross in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.45). The same may be applied to the impact of the political economy tradition on the development of public policy.

The Political Economy Tradition

The early staples theory of Harold Innis and W.A. Mackintosh depicted Canada as a disadvantaged actor in the international economy shaped by other countries (McBride in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.51). The result was that foreign investment and free trade discourse dominated political economy debates determining viewpoints on the environment of Canadian public policy, power distribution, and the institutional frameworks in which the policy debates occurred. McBride's next observation is important as a context for understanding the influence of the market place on policy formulation and how the state reacts to that domestic or international impact on policy development. Since international agreements are binding on governments, trade agreements serve to 'constitutionalize' many tenets of neoconservative economics included in the agreements. The ruling assumption is that government interference with market forces is illegitimate. Corporate property rights are generally enhanced by the agreements and those of governments, which have at least the potential to act as expressions of the democratic will of the people, are reduced. This must be kept in mind especially when proponents of the 'right' present their solutions to social, economic and political problems of the day—educational issues in particular!

The main conclusion of political economy policy analysis, says McBride, is that the neoconservative platform is erroneous at best and fraudulent at worst. Contrary to neoconservative claims, governments can do something about unemployment; chronic deficits are not the result of profligate spending on social problems (McBride in

Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.59). Or otherwise stated, the state can be considered a responsible entity and has a concomitant responsibility to develop appropriate public policy to that effect. And within the Canadian state, at least over the period of the two world wars, the 'expert' has been an indispensable part of the policy process.

The 'Expert Spin'

Those who went to work for the Canadian state shared a technocratic liberalism—interventionist, confident in the ability of government to manage social and economic problems, but also fundamentally supportive of capitalism and hostile to the idea of a class-based redistribution of wealth (Brooks in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.77).[23] Interestingly enough, Brooks suggests that such events as the formation of the Economic Council of Canada (1963) and the Science Council of Canada (1968) seemed to contribute to the eclipse of the 'mandarin expert' (Brooks in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.81). Brooks's selection of a comment from Donald Savoie's book – *The Politics of Public Spending in Canada* (1990) in the context of commenting on the policy analyst's penchant toward scientism in the 1960s and later must be included here. The expert analysis performed within government is assumed to be a necessary part of the policy-making process even if, in the priceless word of one official, it involves 'turning cranks not connected to anything' (Brooks in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.85). What Brooks was raising in an important manner was the apparent obsession experts had with polls and measurement both a symptom of scientism. That if enough data was collected any policy could be justified based on the weight attributed to empirical evidence. It was probably no more evident than in the use by social science experts of what (Poerksen in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.87) called "plastic words". These words taken from everyday experience are appropriated by social scientists or knowledge experts and returned to popular discourse with different meanings. For example, 'information' becomes the government's spin on how they perceive an issue; 'needs' is reworked to reflect a government priority when it was really not an issue with the public; 'planning' becomes a government stall technique for something the public may have wanted immediate response; 'communication' becomes a polite synonym for what really is government party propaganda; 'development' becomes the government's real agenda. Brooks argues that through the use of such plastic words, social scientists have achieved a level of

collective influence far beyond what is generally attributed to them. In short, every age has its priests, shamans and elders; groups whose role it is to make sense of life and explain it to others. Ours, says Brooks, turns to policy experts, social scientists and pollsters, giving the policy analysis profession a profound influence in the age of scientism (Brooks in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.89). And they have encountered an age were the only constant seems to be mutation.

The Changing Market for Policy Ideas

In what Dobuzinski calls the 'market for policy ideas', he outlines factors which he feels account for the multiplication and gradual differentiation of sources of information and policy advice.

First is the observation that issues have increased in complexity. Domestic and international issues have become blurred often requiring specialized and outside-of-government advice.

Second, the policy process has witnessed accelerated fragmentation. Autonomous policy communities have arisen which were simply not there before.

Third, policy research organizations have been formed to meet the demand for information and new ideas.

Fourth, the negative reaction of the public to the secrecy of the policy process until very recently has coerced governments to be at least to be seen as listening to public response.

Fifth, and this is very new, the move towards an information society has meant that the production and dissemination of information has become an 'output' of, rather than an 'input' in, the political system.

Royal Commissions, task forces, advisory councils, and think tanks, all have contributed to what Dobuzinski concludes makes it difficult to determine exactly what the proper balance between private and public sector ought to be (Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.103). Some, as discussed earlier, attempt to present the logic of democratization as providing an alternative to the market-place agenda. The Fraser Institute, for example, has directed its attention to the link between economic freedom and political freedom. Environmental policy, to site a very different contextual example, hinges on a comparison of the relative merits of market-oriented measures and regulatory schemes.

A Redefined State

What Dobuzinski sees as critical is that the role of the state requires redefinition. A role that seriously considers the dominant themes of new economic constraint and the urgency of democratic reform. He further cautions the policy analysis community saying that they have been far too myopic about their own role in the policy process. Political scientists are, he declares, arguably too narrowly concerned with process issues (Dobuzinski, 1996, p.116). At the same time, something must change to address process issues. His proposed general solution and observations about players in the process merit repeating. The transition from market failure to government failure, and proposals for a re-designing of the policy –making process, he posits, can lead to valuable reforms only if sufficient attention is paid to the detailed re-engineering of many bureaucratic agencies. Structural change of course will not effect the desired result alone. It will require a recognition of what Dobuzinski sites from the utilization of social science research in policy making, namely,

> ...policy makers very rarely have first-hand knowledge of policy
> research...the social sciences have been criticized for being irrelevant
> to the practical concerns of government officials who prefer instant
> and timely advice on issues of the day. Policy analysis is communicated
> to them through indirect means (e.g., the media); this leaves much room
> for misapprehension of research results and other communication failures.
> (Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.118, note # 18)[24]

Along with the impact of media on policy analysis, it is well to recall that the impatience and desire for immediate action by a Minister of the Crown can lead to the distribution of policy documents that, in hind sight at least, could have been better prepared and at least evidence cognizance of extant Canadian research on implementation and change.[24] What Dobuzinski et al must remember is that in any analysis of the policy-making process, the power of the political entity in the policy-making apparatus, that is, in the parliamentary system, the cabinet and minister responsible for the relevant bureaucracy, must at least be referenced if not fully acknowledged. In the case cited above, from 1994-1998, with respect to Manitoba Education and Training, 'when' was never part of the policy-making discourse. 'Now' was the order and it came directly from the Minister—RUSH/URGENT!

Citizen to Client

Immediate and satisfactory service has become the *modus operandi* of public administration in the 1990s. No longer serving 'citizens' only, the operational nomenclature has taken on the demi-god of the private sector—client. Clients, suggests University of Moncton economist Donald Savoie, are more demanding than citizens, less deferential. The goods produced by government are consumed in a competitive environment with the competition being between the public and private sector. In short, while citizens can have common purposes, clients says Savoie, are sovereign (Savoie in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.137). All of which describes a work environment that must develop and implement policy. A work environment—the federal public service in Ottawa—where the determination with any degree of reliability and consistency who is competent and who is not does not happen in Savoie's opinion (Savoie in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.140). That being said, Savoie does make clear what others have occasionally left out of their critique. It is hardly possible, he says, to overstate the fact that public administration begins and ends with political institutions, notably Parliament and Cabinet. Evident and perhaps all too obvious as that is, Savoie does wonder what has happened to the long-standing tradition of non-partisan politically sensitive public servants who offer political masters neutral advice. Indeed, recognizing the impact of new management strategies, that is, if key policy issues are more and more horizontal, then the bureaucratic policy formulation and advisory structure must become horizontal as well (Savoie in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.141). This means the public service must become less insulated from the private sector; and, greater managerial discretion must be given in the direction of staff and resources. Also more evident in the last decade has been the creation of Special Operating Agencies—arguably an attempt to off-load public debt and infuse a produce-for-profit notion from the private sector in order to maintain a given 'service' to the public. And how is the foregoing important to the conceptualization of state policy? Public administration is people. Lest we need to be reminded says Savoie, those people are public servants who became so because they wanted to serve their country. He even predicts that there will come a day when citizens will begin to see the value of a strong public service. That may well be and it is kind of Professor Savoie to so

exclaim but it is the following challenge that is more important for the conceptualization of state policy. Dr. Savoie concluded his article on public administration with the plea that "...there is probably no task more urgent and more important for both academics and practitioners than to articulate what it is governments do well, what a national public service should look like, and how to improve the operations of government" (Savoie in Dobuzinski et al, 1996, p.143).

Summary

Policy-making is not easy. Any strategy that facilitates the process is usually welcomed by all concerned. Howlett and Ramesh provide a model that situates applied problem solving with a five-step policy cycle. Their suggestions for improving the model attempt to allay the following model weaknesses: problem identification; solution development; allusion to linearity and dearth of causation theory.

I like their emphasis on actor role and actor interests as important aspects of policy making. Equally, context is critical - a key emphasis of Chapter 2.

In detailing the deductive theories of public choice theory, class theory, and neo-institutionalism, Howlett and Ramesh provide ample evidence that policymaking performed by an individual, group or institution, in the end relies minimally upon actor judgement and maximally upon societal values and interests.

In detailing the inductive theories of welfare economics, pluralism and corporatism, and finally statism, it has been made amply clear that policy making must consider a multiplicity of factors including conflict and learning.

Lindblom and Woodhouse remind us that the capacity for humans to juggle judgement and political power, and at the same time effect a balance between social and political inequality with the central role of business is no small task. After all, as humans, we are fallible, we disagree over issues of value, our finances are limited and we suffer from a disease called 'problem formulationitist'. It is no surprise then that the perceived saviour of the policy making process is none other than the ordinary citizen. It is the foundational premise of democracy that must rise and facilitate policy-making. Concepts like 'mutual adjustment ('I'm 'ok' if you're 'ok' with the policy); 'strategic analysis' (keep it simple) along with a recognition that things other than 'policy' are important like

representation, stopping tyranny, and changing government peacefully – should all help to develop policy exclusive of a set theory or fancy framework.

That there are issues of information source credibility, augmented by tougher multi-faceted pressures from many 'soap boxes', concern about what to develop or keep close to the vest, of course makes policy making the complex thing it is today. And calling citizens 'clients' doesn't cut it! The philosophy behind the economics is wrong. The notion of citizen is entirely different. We are people, we work with people, and we serve people – people who rely on the State to ensure that people remain people and not clients of some complex interactive policy process.

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[20] While it may or may not be bureaucrats that simply react to circumstances, their interests, or preset ideological dispositions, they must certainly attempt to accommodate the Minister of the day. That political office may or may not honour past practice, or even extant research when formulating policy 'x'. Such is the experience of the writer over some 25 years in the Manitoba Department of Education.

[21] A recent example occurred within the Manitoba Department of Education when it was announced in a policy document that Canadian History would no longer be a compulsory subject at the Senior 3 (Grade 11) level. The uninformed decision was reversed but caused much angst in the interim. Experienced 'actors', were they consulted, could have prevented the problem for the Minister.

[22] Class theory continues to be one of if not the paramount philosophy that permeates extant Canadian societal issues. Whether the concern is an attempt to solve the problems of health care with private clinics (Alberta's Premier Klein), or Manitoba's Premier Doer courting the interests of the private sector in stimulating Manitoba's economy, the policies promoted by each provincial government are those that each government (ruling political party) firmly believe must be implemented to ensure the amelioration of the human condition.

[23] This attitude was noticed when the writer served on the Committee for the Reorganization of Secondary Schools formed in July 1969. The election of the Schreyer NDP government had just occurred in June 1969. The then major representatives of the Manitoba Department of Education Manitoba were very experienced and respected personnel who had begun their careers under the Roblin Progressive Conservative regime. Going to the 'public' therefore with a consultation process about the direction of secondary education was certainly a different notion to the resident government 'experts' of the day.

[24] In the early to mid 1970s, at the Manitoba Department of Education, there existed a Research and Planning group in Room 408-1181 Portage Avenue that generated an enormous number of innovative projects that were designed in the main to challenge the then education 'system' to break from its perceived very traditional organizational and pedagogical practices. As a parallel structure to the regular 'line' version of the Program Development Branch, this R & P unit certainly did what Dobuzinski suggests. Some might argue that the group in '408' went too far in their proposals. Regardless of political stripe, what is more revealing about the state of the 'system' at the time is how one group of activists headed by Assistant Deputy Minister Dr. Lionel Orlikow could so disrupt a very large school system and entrenched bureaucracy. This group did use research and did support projects that evidenced the juxtaposition of social science research with very practical school/classroom issues. More recently, an attempt by the current Deputy Minister, Dr. Benjamin Levin, to form a research and policy section of Manitoba Education and Training, has reestablished the important role of research in education planning.

[24] The plethora of policy documents released as "New Directions" by the Manitoba government beginning in 1994 will be addressed later.

CHAPTER 5

POLICY MAKING – AN EXCEPTIONAL EVOLUTION OF PEOPLE AND PROCESS

The purpose of this chapter is to examine some of the main factors and features of policy-making that invariably arise and must be addressed by those responsible for conceptualizing public policy. Though often sought as an 'answer' to a perceived dearth of direction, 'policy' is only as strong and reliable as the last people who made it and that is what makes the process of public policy-making an amazing amalgamation of people and practice.

This chapter has been organized under the headings: "Incremental Policy-Making – A Linear Process"; "Setting the Agenda"; "What is the 'Problem'?"; "Political Communities – The 'Real' Source of Public Policy"; "Framing – Precursor to Policy Design"; "The Imprecision of Voting"; "Institutionalism – economic, Sociological and Political"; "Neo-Institutionalism"; "The Bureaucrat as Policy Actor"; "Advocacy Coalition/Interest Groups/Lobbyists"; "The Advocacy Coalition Framework"; "Subsystem Theory"; "Interest Groups"; "Governance – A Shifting Dynamic 1985-1996"; "Policy Communities/Networks Can Be Influenced"; "The Need for Networks"; "Ideas Can Be Illusive"; "The Decision-Making process"; and "Summary".

Though there is an extensive and diverse scholarship that examines the multiplicity of policy processes, there is no definitive, discrete category of research called 'policy process studies' (McCool, 1995, p.105). Some studies may focus on decision-making behaviour; others may emphasize linear or spatial relationships; while others will focus on structures such as institutions, regulations, and laws. By focusing on a linear concept of the process of policy making—where one act leads to another in a causal chain of decisions, outcomes, and responses—McCool's research provides a manageable starting point to the process of policy making.

Incremental Policy-Making – A Linear Process

From Charles E. Lindblom's seminal article "The Science of Muddling Through" published in 1959, the primary points of the notion of incrementalism can be detailed. Lindblom observed that the capacity for humans to comprehend the then mass of

information had become a serious concern. Many administrators, he discovered, were making policy decisions without clarifying objectives first. Often the mere complexity of the problem forced simplification. To do that meant proceeding in small steps or increments because, he argued, policy does not move in leaps and bounds. If the policy moved otherwise, that is, non-incrementally, it was typically not only politically irrelevant but also unpredictable in terms of consequence.

Lindblom also claimed that policy making was not made once and for all; it had to be made and re-made endlessly. Policy-making is a process of successive approximation to some desired objectives in which what is desired itself continues to change under reconsideration (Lindblom in McCool, 1995, p.153). For the policy-maker who prefers to operate under the guise of maintenance theory, incrementalism makes a modicum of sense as serious long-lasting mistakes may be avoided if said policy-maker proceeds through a succession of incremental changes. Even so, Lindblom was cognizant of some of the pitfalls of his approach.

Pitfalls of incrementalism. First, incrementalism devours facts and relies heavily upon much observation—as an approach to policy-making, it takes a long time. Second, he found the approach to be insufficiently precise for application to a policy process that moves through small changes. McCool, on the other hand, and with many decades of hindsight, concludes that incrementalism favours the status quo; does not facilitate real reform; provides little or no guidance to moral decision-makers; and has an ideological bias (McCool, 1995, p.167). McCool does grant Lindblom the point that incrementalism is an accurate account of how the policy process actually works most of the time. Picking up on the same theme, a contemporary of McCool, Parsons (1995) commented that Lindblom had revised his earlier notion of incrementalism refining the decision-making process defining it as 'disjointed incrementalism'.

Disjointed incrementalism and partisan mutual adjustment. Lindblom sees a method of decision-making in which comparison takes place between policies which are only marginally different from one another and in which there is no great goal or vision to be attained, so much as an amelioration of problems and policies (Parsons, 1995, p.287). Equally important to the integrity of Lindblom's approach to decision-making is his contention that policy-making take place by trial and error. It is disjointed because

decisions are not subject to some kind of overall plan, analysis, control or coordination (Parsons, 1995, p.288). Finally, Parsons captures the essence of Lindblom's approach to decision-making by referencing the notion of partisan mutual adjustment— a decision-making process that involves bargaining and negotiation between the decision-makers. It involves adjustment and compromise from all sides effecting agreement and coordination. Which is fine except when it comes to setting or accommodating agenda change, incrementalism or gradualism is problematic (Kingdon, 1995, p.79).

Setting the Agenda

Interest in a subject or problem more often than not does not occur over a long period or gradually. It suddenly 'hits', 'catches on', or 'takes off' says Kingdon. Agenda change, he argues, appears quite discontinuous and non-incremental (Kingdon, 1995, p.82). His point? Due to the involvement of many actors, including their constant coming and going, all makes a unitary decision-making structure elusive. Though he does grant that incrementalism might still characterize the generation of alternatives and proposals. Particularly because an agenda—the alternatives and various proposals—is a list of subjects or problems to which government officials and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time (Kingdon, 1995, p.3).

Systemic to formal agendas. The agenda is affected by the participants and processes. Items may be transferred from the non-government "systemic" agenda to a government "formal" agenda through the

- mobilization of the relevant publics by leaders
- diffusion of ideas in professional circles and among policy elites (bureaucrats)
- change of the party in control

Kingdon further contends that what influences the agendas—and these may occur incrementally or through 'dumb luck'—is the inexorable march of problems; the knowledge and perspectives of the specialists in the policy area; or national mood swings, public opinion, elections and institutional re-organization. Many ideas are possible in principle. They float around, he says, in a "policy primeval soup" (Kingdon, 1995, p.19).

The ideas that survive to the status of serious consideration and—with apologies to Dr. Kingdon, get served—must meet the criteria that they

- be technically feasible
- fit with dominant values and the current national mood
- be budgetary workable
- be capable of experiencing political support or opposition

And who best shapes the agenda? Not the career bureaucrats or non-governmental actors, resolves Kingdon, but rather it is elected officials and their appointees (Kingdon, 1995, p.19). And this all happens or rather significant movement is likely if the problems, policy and politics are all coupled into a package. When solutions become joined to problems, says Kingdon, and when both are joined to favorable political forces, then this 'coupling' is most likely to occur when what he calls policy windows —opportunities for pushing pet proposals or conceptions of problems—become open (Kingdon, 195, p.20). And how those windows 'open and shut' is largely determined by how the agenda setting evolves.

Ideas come from anywhere. What Kingdon cautions, based upon his research that involved the interviewing of some 247 people working on the development of United States federal government health and transportation policy (1976-1979), is that concentrating on the origins of initiatives in policy dose not make for very complete theory. Why? Ideas, he says, can come from anywhere. In fact, tracing their origin can involve one in an infinite regress. And, because of that problem, the ultimate origin of an idea, concern, or proposal cannot be specified. Tracing origins he chides, turns out to be futile (Kingdon, 1995, p.73). His observation that public policy is not one single actor's brainchild befits the foregoing observations. It is far more beneficial for the understanding of policy change to not dwell on where the idea came from but on what made it take hold and grow. Indeed, an ideas rise to prominence on the agenda therefore is not its source but upon the climate in government or the receptivity to ideas of a given type. What is interesting about Kingdon's conclusions about the fate of an idea is the perhaps obvious point that no source monopolizes the flow of ideas. To stretch the growth metaphor, it is critical to understand **not** where the seed comes from but what makes the soil fertile. And it is the agenda that organizes the landscape.

Convergence theory. Agenda setting is perhaps the most critical stage of the policy cycle (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.104). It is about the recognition of a problem on the part of government. Some of the political, social, and ideological factors that determine which problems gain access to the policy agenda include what Howlett and Ramesh identify as convergence theory—as countries industrialize, they tend to converge towards the same policy mix. Agenda-setting becomes an automatic process occurring simply as a result of the stresses and strains placed on governments by industrialization and economic modernization.[25]

At the national or provincial level, the political-business cycle functions in the economy that presents its own internal dynamics which may be altered by political 'interference' in the form of public policies. This may result in absolute soil contamination contingent upon which side of the public/private sector debate is supported. Business generally prefers a minimalist approach, that is, as little government interference in the economy as possible. Indeed, as Howlett and Ramesh declare, traditions, beliefs, and attitudes about the world and society

> affect how individuals interpret their interests...these sets
> of ideas or ideologies...can be construed to have a significant
> impact on public policies...for through these ideational prisms
> individuals conceive of social or other problems that inspire
> their demands for government action. (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.109)

In order to increase comprehension of the agenda-setting process, determination of how demands by individuals/groups for a policy are made plus how government responds to those demands would be beneficial. Further, cognizance of the conditions under which the demands are made (institutional and ideological context) and how they are articulated in policy discourse will also help to clarify the agenda-setting process as would knowing the material interests of the actors. Interesting as well are what Howlett and Ramesh cite from research by Americans Baumgartner and Jones. In the early 1990s they posited the notion that the 'image' of a policy problem is significant because it influences the membership and activities of relevant policy subsystems. The key element in the process of agenda-setting argue Baumgartner and Jones, revolves around the creation of 'policy' monopolies in which specific subsystems gain the ability to control the interpretation of a problem and thus the manner in which it is conceived and

discussed (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.112). Why such an important insight? It brings to the fore the question of the principal actor in agenda setting claim Howlett and Ramesh.

Agenda setting, phases and patterns. The typical agenda-setting process used by government then involves the placement of issues on either the systemic/public agenda[26] and /or the institutional or formal agenda. The issue is said to have entered the institutional agenda once the government has accepted that something needs to be done about a problem (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.112). Four phases of agenda-setting are suggested as issues move between systemic and institutional agendas:

1. issues are initiated
2. solutions are specified
3. support for issues are expanded
4. if successful, the issue enters the institutional agenda

Although it has been the normal assumption that issues move from the systemic to the institutional agenda, the research cited by Howlett and Ramesh found that in different countries with different political regimes, three basic patterns or models of agenda-setting emerged:

- outside initiation model [liberal pluralist societies]
  - social groups play the key role
  - issues arise in non-governmental groups then expand through the systemic on to the institutional agenda phases

- mobilization model [socialist one-party states]
  - describes decision-makers trying to expand an issue from a formal to a public agenda
  - political leaders initiate a policy but require the support of the mass public for implementation (moving an issue from the formal to the public agenda is the key)

- inside initiation model [authoritarian bureaucratic]
  - influential groups with special access to decision-makers initiate a policy and do not want it to be expanded and contested in public
  - initiation and specification occur simultaneously – group/government agency enunciates a grievance and specifies some potential solution

The major finding emphasized by Howlett and Ramesh is that political regimes are characterized by a variety of agenda-setting styles. The benefit here is to note that no firm generalization of agenda setting by regime type is possible rather the key variable is the

nature of the problem itself (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.114-114). Might these findings provide insight and further understanding of Kingdon's agenda-setting model?

Policy streams – a contingent course? What Howlett and Ramesh posit is that Kingdon's three stream model, that is, the *problem stream* (the perception of problems as public problems requiring government action); the *policy stream* (experts and analysts examine problems and propose solutions); and the *political stream* (swings of national mood, administrative/legislative turnover, pressure group campaign); whether or not the three operate independently to eventually intersect as a policy window, the theory is extremely contingent (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.115). The timing at which items emerge on the agenda is set by unpredictable elements—the behaviour of policy entrepreneurs or calamitous societal events. What it all seems to suggest is that the more theoretical a model for agenda setting is proposed the more contingency theory seems to apply.

The central question then for agenda setting is not the type of regime involved but the nature of the policy subsystem dealing with the problem. The policy subsystem determines whether the state or societal actors initiate the process, and the level of public support for the resolution of the problem. Before dealing with the 'problem' and before resolving the 'problem', is there some modicum of agreement on what constitutes a problem?

What is the 'Problem'?

First, the process of fixing attention on one problem rather than another is a central part of agenda setting (Kingdon, 1995, p.15). And, there is a difference, he says, between a condition and a problem. Conditions become a problem when there is agreement that something should be done about them. Much also depends upon what values one brings to the definition of the problem. For example, if you do not believe in using government to address the inability of much of the population to be not capable of paying for certain medical expenses, then you would not consider user pay regulations a problem.

Comparisons sometimes involve problems. If one is not achieving what others are achieving, and if equality is the objective, then the relative disadvantage constitutes a problem. Further, categorization, that is, how and where a problem is placed may cause

serious definitional difficulties. Kingdon's finding on this point is that in the face of changed needs or new problems, government's first instinct is to preserve the old categories as long as possible (Kingdon, 1995, p.112).

Problem indicators. Problems may capture attention in at least three ways. First, a routine way is to monitor the pattern of government expenditures and budgetary impact —a rather large indicator. Decision-makers may then use the indicator to assess the magnitude of a problem and to become aware of changes in the problem. The critical point to note is that decision-makers consider a change in the indicator to be a change in the state of the system—and then that is a problem (Kingdon, 1995, p.92).

Moreover, what he also found evident from the interviews he conducted was that those close to the policy process were found to be preoccupied with demonstrating the existence of a problem to which they would attach their solution. This also meant that pressure for policy change required the participants to construct indicators. That in turn necessitated capturing agreement that the indicators existed in fact. The logic that Kingdon attributes to the process is the 'stuff' of public service personnel prose. Fact gathering plus the incumbent interpretation naturally create debate. That discourse in turn transforms the statements of 'conditions' to statements of policy problems.

A second indicator is the impact of some focusing event, that is, a crisis/disaster (financial or natural). As a catalyst for problem prominence however, Kingdon concludes that the more visible the policy domain, the less important the crisis or disaster becomes as the vehicle to highlight the problem. Important but not quite as obvious, the passage of legislation may be a symbol of perceived public restiveness, a shift in public opinion.

Finally, the third factor to bring problems to the fore is feedback—sometimes solicited and often as not demonstrative discourse. Whether it is gathered by daily monitoring of programs or through complaints registered by the public, government officials can contribute to the setting of the agenda in an important manner primarily due to their experience in program administration. That same experience would also assist in the area of problem clarification.

The core of public policy. Because policy-making is in large measure about trying to solve problems, the nature of these problems—how they are defined—is central to the entire process. As Leslie Pal suggests, goals, policy instruments, and problem

definition form the core of public policy (Pal, 1997, p.69). Pal posits the following queries as important for problem definition:

1. what process defines the problem
2. what are the generic elements of a problem definition
3. how are some problems chosen for the political/policy agenda while others are not
4. what impact does problem definition have on subsequent stages of the process

Given the 'ebb-and-flow' of the policy process, where accident and luck play a great role, says Pal, policy itself is increasingly viewed suspiciously as a cause of problems (Pal, 1997, p.71). Quite so! If one agrees with Pal that there is no science of problem definition, then his observation that the problem has to be recognized before it can be defined really does 'play' the stage of public discourse. To support his observation he cites *Evidence, argument, and persuasion in the policy process* (Majone, 1989) " '...much of the time the process of problem recognition and definition is one of making arguments and persuading others'" (Pal, 1997, p.77). In fact, the conventional argument in the literature says Pal, is that the way in which a problem is defined has a dramatic impact on the proposed solutions. More to the notion of argument and persuasion, Pal notes that there is a growing interest in the way in which policy arguments are framed as narratives or as stories. Contingent upon the perspective taken, arguments about social policy and the deficit can be seen as redemption stories.[27] Beyond the domestic domain however, Pal confirms again the impact of globalization on policy-making systems in the 1990s and how it has effectively shifted the preponderant concern about problems generated domestically within national borders, to problems generated internationally (Pal, 1997, p.83).

What has changed the 'climate of ideas' argues Pal, quite significantly and created new constraints on problem definitions in some major policy areas, is the global sources of policy problems; the interconnectedness of domestic and international developments; and the emphasis on deficits and spending.[28] And while the effect of globalization may be all too obvious at this point, what Pal further observes about the shaping of policy at the domestic level is that for entrepreneurs and policy actors, the fiscal context has changed the environment in terms of the weight that the different players bring to bear – the Department of Finance has a stranglehold on the policy process. The second major change (though not the concern here) is the expenditure

management process coupled with the effects of cuts on the internal policy capacity of departments.[29] Pal is absolutely correct! The context and processes of problem definition are never set in stone (Pal, 1997, p.94). Indeed! The process may be very vociferous and vituperative.

Political Communities – The 'Real' Source of Public Policy

Problems are not given out there in the world waiting for smart analysts to define them correctly. They are created in the minds of citizens and government agencies as an essential part of political manoeuvring (Stone, 1988, p.122). Because much political activity is an effort to control interpretation, says Stone, both policy and thinking about policy are produced in what she calls 'political communities'. Public policy is about communities trying to achieve something as communities. For Stone, groups are the building blocks of the state, where cooperation is the norm. Change occurs through the interaction of mutually defining ideas and alliances. There is a potential problem, however, as Stone contends that because full information is impossible, that fact undermines the ability of voluntary exchanges to produce efficiency. For our purposes here, this has implication for how problems are perceived, defined and how solutions are selected.

A 'web of dependencies'. Stone does not find the market model convincing as a description of today's world. Her approach is an analysis that starts with a political community where people live in a 'web of dependencies'. As she sees it, much of politics invokes people seeking protection from the harms caused by market competition (Stone, 1988, p.97). Groups, individuals, and government agencies, she says, deliberately/consciously design portrayals so as to promote their favoured course of action. Representations of a problem are constructed to win the most people to one's side and the most leverage over one's opponents (Stone, 1988, p.106). In her view, there can be no objective description of a situation because there are no fixed goals or fixed positions in the *polis*. Problem definition in the *polis* then, is the strategic representation of situations (Stone, 1988, p.106). She describes five such situations: symbols; numbers; causes; interests; and decisions.

The Strategic Representation of Situations – Symbolic Representation.
Symbolic representation is the essence of problem definition of politics she says. It is a

fundamental part of all discourse. By conveying images of good and bad, right and wrong, suffering and relief, these devices become instruments in the struggle over public policy (Stone, 1988, p.122).

Symbolic representation comprises narrative stories (explanation of how the world works); synechdoches (figures of speech used to represent the whole); metaphors (seeing likeness essential to classification and counting); and ambiguity (the capacity to have multiple meanings). Policy 'stories' really become strategy tools. Often the themes will be something in 'decline' or being 'revised'. The other theme pairing Stone notes is 'control' and 'helplessness.' An example of synecdoche is 10,000 feet marching on the legislature – for a brief moment critical thinking may be suspended by the sheer poetry of the writing. Metaphors are much more evident. Examples abound like ' a community has a life of its own'; 'the family is the heart of the nation'; disease is inferred as things 'spread', a business is 'healthy'; 'war' becomes a battle cry against poverty. What Stone argues convincingly is that names and labels create associations that lend legitimacy and attract support to problems—in the world of politics, language matters. (Stone, 1988, p.121). This is foremost with the most important feature of symbolic representation – ambiguity.

Ambiguity. Without it, argues Stone, cooperation and compromise would be far more difficult if not impossible. Of course this may lead to multiple viewpoints about a given problem. But that too is all right as most people do not have a coherent and logically consistent set of beliefs about policy issues and choices (Stone, 1988, p.126). The key is that equivocal iterations may in fact effect alliances where apparent absolutes or definitive deliberation may lead to prolonged discourse and possible deadlock. Stone suggests that the ambiguity of symbols help transform individual strivings into collective decisions—a consensus if you will.

Stone's treatment of *numbers* and what they mean for problem definition provides a fascinating context for the second of her list for the strategic representation of situations.

Numbers. First of all, measurement is one of the most common ways to define a policy problem. Data may include as well as exclude things or people, and, contingent upon the perspective of the data user, entice the reader into any one of a number of points

of view. Policy formulation via problem clarification can easily become a crisis of legitimacy. As Stone contends, how the measure is interpreted is far more important than the actual measure (Stone, 1988, p.132). For example, advocates of the reform of government with a view to eliminate 'waste' and thereby cut costs and/or taxes must contend with others who see the quality side of the system and thereby the benefits of high costs. The use of numbers may also extricate a problem from the morass of multiple meanings and situate the problem where those involved may feel resolution is possible.

Stone describes the implicit meaning of numbers as follows:

- To count something at all is to assert that the phenomenon is at least frequent enough to bother counting.
- Counting applies an identifiable entity with clear boundaries.
- Counting creates a community/group be they artificial or statistical.
- By creating groups, counting is an essential instrument of political mobilization
- Numbers offer the promise of conflict resolution through arithmetic
- Numbers are symbols of precision, accuracy, and objectivity.

Important to the issue of policy conceptualization, and the message from the above implicit meaning of the use of numbers, is that there must be a realization that numbers in politics are measures of human activities, made by human beings, and intended to influence human behaviour (Stone, 1988, p.137). Indeed, in public policy, measures are explicitly evaluated and are used to determine how people and organizations will be treated (Stone, 1988, p.139). But as evocative and evident as they may be, numbers remain descriptions of the world. They are no more real than the visions of poems or paintings (Stone, 1988, p.146). Stone's third strategic representation of situations—causes—is no less illusive.

Causes. In politics Stone argues, we look for causes not only to understand how the world works but also to assign responsibility for problems. This may involve political conflicts over causal stories that really become fights about the possibility of control and the assignment of responsibility. These argumentative altercations may involve contests over the basic structure of social organization. If, for example, the issue is the debate over the privatization of certain components of the universal health care system, for policy determination, there is always the choice about which causal factors to address. Different choices will obviously locate responsibility and the burden of reform differently. Causal theories then:

1. can challenge or protect an existing social order
2. can assign responsibility to political actors to stop, do it differently, compensate or face punishment
3. can legitimize and empower actors as fixers of the problem
4. can create new alliances among people (Stone, 1988, p.160-161)

What is important here is that finding the true or ultimate cause of harms in policy areas is not what is at issue. The fight says Stone, is about locating moral responsibility and real economic costs on a chain of possible causes. Causal theories may also serve as devices for building alliances between groups who have problems and groups who have solutions. Also, it only takes a shift in the location of responsibility on a causal chain to restructure the alliance.

How difficulties are interpreted and controlled is an attraction for causal theory. As political actors are the causal story creators, their description of harms and difficulties and assignment of roles for individuals and organizations, becomes the script for the invocation of government power to stop the harm. One of the ways to do so is how the government deals with the fourth of Stone's strategic representation of situations — *interests.*

Interests. Because Stone views the political community as one where people live in a 'web of dependencies', where citizens fight for public interest and individual interest through associations advocating common concerns, this very activity itself is the central problem in democratic theory. Interests, she suggests, that are regarded as morally equal are politically unequal (Stone, 1988, p.180). These interests though good, legitimate and virtuous, are not necessarily strong ones. In fact, against corporate lobbyists and political parties, they are quite politically weak. 'Good' interests do not merge naturally in Stone's view. The anomaly is that they require the protection of government to operate on a day-to-day basis.[30] For purposes of ever eventually resolving policy conceptualization, such representation—albeit often at a very simple though grass roots level—is the process by which interests are defined and activated in politics. All the more credence therefore to the notion that there is no such thing as an apolitical problem definition (Stone, 1988, p.183). This is particularly poignant for the last of Stone's strategic representation of situations for problem definition – *decisions.*

Decisions. In Stone's version of the *polis* and how it operates, authority on issues of significance is usually dispersed, shared, negotiated, and constantly contested. Advocates of rational decision models however, come close to promising that politics will become unnecessary (Stone, 1988, p.194). Moreover, rational choice models in the *polis* are persuasive appeals mounted by people with stakes in the outcome. Her point is that it is rarely in anyone's interest – least of all policymakers – to articulate unambiguous goals. Eliminating ambiguity is conceptually impossible she contends. The inescapable ambiguity of political goals means that they are more like moving targets than fixed standards (Stone, 1988, p.195-196). As such, keeping things off the agenda is a form of power as important as getting them on the agenda. For Stone, the tack for the policy maker is to make one's preferred outcome appear as the only possible alternative. The process for the construction of alternatives for a decision therefore, depends a great deal on the policy-makers conception of causation. That conception is contingent upon the attention attached to a particular slice of an extended causal chain, or what Stone defines as issue framing—an important step for problem definition as political actors are dedicated to showing that a favoured course of action benefits society as a whole and imposes costs on no one in particular (Stone, 1988, p.205). Framing is also a term that Wharf and McKenzie (1998) prefer to the word 'definition' when it comes to problem clarification.

Framing – Precursor to Policy Design

Defining the problem to be addressed is surely the most perplexing part of the initiation stage of policy formulation. Rather than connoting precision and explicitness, framing outlines the general parameters of the issue being addressed (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.41). It provides a sense of direction, and sets out preferences and prescribes limits based on ideologies and experiences. Framing, argue Wharf and McKenzie, is the most significant aspect of the initiation stage. Significant because the beginning point might emanate from a social movement advocating change, from ministry staff suggesting a correction to existing policy, or from government itself. And, when all this framing of the policy issue occurs or inspiration as Pal calls it, is mixed with technique, the result is what he calls policy design (Pal, 1997, p.101).

Policy tools and instruments. The technique comes in the detailing of what tools to use and they will vary with the task at hand. The tools may be announcements of expenditures, regulations, creation of partnerships or simply the exchange of information. When and how the mix of instruments is to be used in policy design still begs for a consensus (Pal, 1997, p.101). Pal lists over two dozen such policy instruments (cash grants; tax breaks; license/permit; fine; prohibition; and price control) to name a few. Given the sample list, it is the government's capacity to command and prohibit through regulation that is the most fundamental resource that a government possesses. But the nature of governance is changing as detailed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

Fiscal restraint, as a consequence of extensive and often complex policy links to multiple departments—connecting issues of youth education, justice, employment, and social welfare to combine the efforts of four government departments—is a case in point. Another example would be sustainable development and how policy is developed to incorporate the initiatives of the government departments of natural resources, northern affairs, First Nations, and the related concerns of the mining, forestry, fishing and trapping industry. Reduced funds once budgeted for any of the above domains becomes a strategy unto itself, that is, how to leverage what is left.

Regulatory instruments are not immune from change either. As mentioned earlier, international trade agreements, technology, economics and cost all must factor in the incumbent constraints. Related to these policy determinants is the reality of downsizing. Though primarily identified with expenditures and direct service provision, the role of government has changed to one of establishing framework legislation or regulation.

A 'new' approach. Have there been any new approaches to policy design? Pal cites three.

First, exhortation, the use of information and entreaties by government, has been listed in instrument inventories says Pal but they are not as effective as the more robust regulatory and spending instruments (Pal, 1997, p.123). Second, policy makers have been urged to conceptualize their roles as 'stewards' of policy communities, that is, to share information. Third, a notion of 'partnership' has been suggested as a development in policy targets hence policy instruments. For this 'new' emphasis, if partnerships are conceived of as a policy instrument, then they will not simply appear, they have to be

created (Pal, 1997, p.124). What makes the policy design process even more fascinating—in spite of the foregoing rather weak initiatives—is what Pal calls one of the paradoxes of the modern policy environment, namely, while governments complain about restricted resources and limited capacities, most of them are busy with massive redesigns of huge programs in virtually every field (Pal, 1997, p.125).[31] And this says what for policy design? Pal suggests the following:

1. if possible, policy should depend on market mechanisms and individual choice, and minimize spending and regulation
2. small government and unobtrusive instruments seem to be the order of the day
3. postmaterialist values are not uniformly promoted when it comes to the environment
4. there is substantial angst about some social policy questions, e.g., youth crime, violent pornography, school behaviour, decaying family values, racism, educational performance
5. market forces that drive globalization and competitiveness generate anxieties about jobs, communities and lifestyle
6. maximize individual choice and minimize government intervention

There remains an inconsistency within the above six points. Pal appears to argue the case for a minimalist approach to governance. Points number five and six respectively express the very essence of interventionism. The state may be the primary if not the only source for resolution to the identified issues. Citing from Aaron, Mann and Taylor's (1994) work *Values and public policy,* Pal records their finding that effective public policies depend on a certain temperament of cooperation and support from citizens—neglect of same would be a huge mistake! Nor is this an endorsement of minimalism! Further, governments have a legitimate, though carefully balanced role in supporting and developing some key social values, such as, trust, community, and empathy (Pal, 1997, p.129). The foundation of almost any public policy is trust, community and social cooperation. That, says Pal, has become clear and important to governments. And, there is more than one route to a policy objective.

Good policy design depends on

- understanding the substantial room that is left to manoeuvre
- the substitutability of instruments
- the multiple levels (local, national, international) at which instruments can be invoked (Pal, 1997, p.132)

The above helps to clarify Pal's earlier position on policy design detailed above. Whether a minimalist or interventionist, is really not the critical issue for him. More important is the notion that the answer, if it can be found to reside anywhere with respect to policy conceptualization, can at least be sought only if those closest to the issues are involved in a cooperative, conciliatory and comprehensive manner.

The Imprecision of Voting

Few would disagree that in a society that supports a government that demonstrates all the theory and practice of democratic processes, the electorate represents the absolute final authority. With respect to policy conceptualization, does the same thinking apply? If the power rests with the electorate to either re-elect or elect new representatives and by so doing maintain or change the government, does that act constitute a direct intervention in policy determination? The succinct response is 'no'! The irony is that the policy theorists argue that the actual day of voting (the penultimate mode of public expression) has little if anything to do with policy development. Then they go to great lengths to devise modes of consultation with the public between elections. That process is becoming more and more encouraged as the path to take in the conceptualization of policy—as stated earlier, negligence of same would be perilous!

On voting day then, there is little to substantiate the theory that personal self-interest is the motivation behind voter choices – even if it may be that policy-makers and politicians believe it to be the case (Parsons, 1995, p.220). Indeed, determining the motivation behind voters would be a difficult task at any time. Elections are relatively weak vehicles for translating citizen's needs and judgments into policy (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.43). Even when a wining candidate claims a mandate to lower taxes, present a hard line toward unfriendly nations, and cut federal payrolls, it is fraudulent say Lindblom and Woodhouse.[32] It is tempting to suggest that election results may be interpreted as mandates for policy 'x'. But what has been found is that there is nothing automatic about campaign pledges finding their way into public policy (Kingdon, 1995, p.63). While that may be, voters can only react to what is presented or indeed not presented during an election campaign. The net result? On election day at least, voters play a small role in the policy process mainly because the voters' policy capacity usually cannot be actualized (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.52). As Charles Lindblom and

Edward Woodhouse observe, voters are rarely well versed in the positions of candidates; they are relatively ignorant of the policy issues; issues are not 'put-to-voters'; and the effectiveness of a political party to present policy issues may also be seriously queried. Their chapter heading captures the essence of the whole question about voter impact upon public policy—"The Imprecision of Voting". Ambiguity about the role of the voter in effecting policy via the ballot box aside, is the role of the person they elect any clearer?

The 'elected' and policy. When elected functionaries do make policy choices, they are faced with two options. First, do they work for policies sought or approved by citizens or, second, do they work for policies judged best by an elected elite? The former case, argue Lindblom and Woodhouse, is usually believed to raise the risk of unintelligent policy; the latter situation reduces democratic responsiveness (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.54). The point here is that the citizenry only has a loose control over policy. The problem for all concerned is that intelligent policy-making can be highly variable. It depends on the good will of elected functionaries. Some perform others do not! And here is the clincher! The political machinery will not systematically prefer one to the other (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.56). But then the political machinery is hardly immune from any of the problems associated with policy-making.

Institutionalism – Economic, Sociological and Political

The impact of institutional arrangements cannot be ignored in understanding the 'process' of policy formulation or how problems are defined. 'Problems' and policy 'solutions' exist in a constitutional or institutional space as much as a wider economic or social 'environment '(Parsons, 1995, p.223). Three frameworks situate institutionalism: 'economic' institutionalism, sociological institutionalism, and 'political' institutionalism.

Economic institutionalism returns to a Taylorist world in which human beings are driven by self-interest and are self-regarding. Decision-making involving values, interests, the impact of the environment, goal displacement, compromises and adaptation are gone in this mode of institutional operation. The interpretation is derived from transaction cost economics where buyers and sellers apparently evidence little trust but much uncertainty, duplicity and opportunism. And the core of the theory is? Lower transaction costs—more certainty, more control, more capacity to monitor the

opportunism of individuals and subordinates—will make for greater efficiency in the firm.

Sociological institutionalism deals with how institutional arrangements within a society shape human behaviour. To explain how and why a policy emerges in relation to a 'problem', it requires analysis of the structure, historical development, personal networks, and decisions over time of an institution.

Political institutionalism comprises contributions that focus on the 'autonomy' of the state in policy-making and the relationship of state and society. Parsons cites the work of P.A. Hall (1986) *Governing the Economy: the Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France* —a macro view of the relationships of institutions to society and the state. Important for the conceptualization of state policy is Hall's finding that in post-war developments in both countries, economic policy was the result of institutional structuring of the state. Economic policy could be explained, he argued, by the structural variables of the organization of labour, capital, State legislature, political system, and structural position of the country within the international system. The strength of the Hall approach suggests Parsons, is that it provides a framework for the analysis of decision-making in historical and comparative terms (Parsons, 1995, p.335). Again from Hall, organizational relations can alter the basic logic of political rationality for many actors by altering their relationship to other actors. Finally, and most helpful for understanding the conceptualization of state policy, institutions exist, says Hall, and have an impact on how decisions are made as they provide the context within which judgments are made, but they do not eliminate 'free will of policy-makers (Parsons, 1995, p.335). So, do institutions matter?

The impact of 'institutional arrangements'. Parsons provides what may be considered a strong substantiated 'lean' toward an answer with his reference to case studies published in 1993, edited by R. K.Weaver and B.R. Rockman. The studies dealt with energy policy, pensions, industrial policy, energy policy, budget deficits, environment and trade policy. They looked at the issue of what impact institutions have had on the policy process and the policy output and outcomes in the U.S.A., Sweden, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Japan. Their overall conclusion? The impact of institutions on policy output and outcome is best viewed in

terms of the way in which institutional arrangements confer risks and opportunities. Success and failure in policy-making will often turn upon how social, political and other conditions have, in specific countries and at specific times, resulted in risks or opportunities predominating (Parsons, 1995, p.230). Some of the Weaver and Rockman specific conclusions were:

1. the effects of institutions on government capabilities are contingent
2. specific institutional arrangements often create both opportunities and risks for individual governmental capabilities
3. policy-making capabilities may also differ substantially across policy areas within a political system
4. differences in electoral rules and the norms which guide the formation of governments may have as much impact as institutions themselves
5. parliamentary systems are not better than presidential systems, and vice versa
6. divided party control of the executive or legislative branch exacerbates the problems of governance – especially that of setting policy priorities
7. institutional arrangements involve trade-off in capabilities
8. governments may work around institutional constraints by generating countervailing mechanisms (Parsons, 1995, p.229-230)

What Parsons posits is that policy-making also takes place within the parameters of past policies and choices as well as inherited 'institutional arrangements'. Such past policies will have an important role in determining how current issues will be defined, and what strategies, means and ends will be deployed. Thinking about and debates on issues inevitably are contextualized by what laws, policies and programs already exist to deal with a given set of problems. Existing policy may well inhibit or prevent a more comprehensively rational review and result in a more 'incremental' policy-making process. Politicians may promise innovation but they inherit the decisions and commitments of previous incumbents (Parsons, 1995, p.230-231). And that reality is a given when the policy process is analyzed from an institutional perspective.

The stage model and institutionalism – a critique. In his article from the journal *Canadian Public Administration* (1992), B. Guy Peters critiques the stage model of the policy process citing fundamental weaknesses. These include its assumptions concerning linearity and the temporal ordering of the stages, and the difficulty of the model in coping with policy change. He further observes that outcomes of the stage model tend to be determined by the environment of politics rather than by the actors and institutions within government. Development of the 'new institutionalism' in political science and of institutionalist approaches in the other social sciences offers an important

alternative to stage models and rational choice theory (Peters, 1992, p.160-161). The generic stage model then, assumes that policy will begin with problem identification and agenda setting, and then proceed through policy formulation, legitimation, resource attachment, implementation, and evaluation. The problem with this model Peters suggests are:

1. little comparative work has been done
2. the implied environmental determinacy has caused intellectual problems[33]
3. the implicit assumption that each stage is completed before the next is undertaken, and that the process is linear
4. the process may be truncated at any place
5. the disaggregation of policies (it separates the process into a series of discrete stages, but the problem extends beyond just that)

Peters contends that some form of policy formulation must occur in all settings but not of the structured type implied in the stages model. Policy-making in contemporary democracies, says Peters, is policy succession rather than policy initiation. It involves making decisions about existing programs rather than writing new policies on a *tabula rasa* (Peters, 1992, p.165-166). Even more interesting is his observation that there are very few areas of social or economic concern that have not been addressed in some manner by contemporary democracies. The policy space in contemporary societies is extremely crowded he contends.

The analytical process model and the policy analyst. As for analytic process models that place the policy analyst in a central position as motivator of action, Peters observes that these models recognize the need socially to define problems and then to shape them for resolution through the remainder of the policy-making process. Such a process emphasizes the importance of conceptual definitions of solutions as well as problems. Analytic models recognize that policies and solutions are not natural phenomena but require social construction and agreed definitions before they can be processed effectively by human institutions. Analytic models then require a broad array of intellectual activities if policy-making is to be successful (Peters, 1992, p.168).

The policy causes politics model. The policy causes politics model usually associated with Theodor Lowi, has for its basic premise that the characteristic of a particular policy will determine the manner in which it is processed by the political

system. Also, the nature of the policy will determine the arena in which it is processed by government. Lowi defined policies in four categories: regulatory, distributive, redistributive, and constituent. Though Peters credits Lowi with determining that the type of policy rather than political culture or even governmental structures would be the source of variations in politics; and that there are limits to the rational analysis of policy-making and of policy, the lack of specification around the four policy types has produced the impression that there are very little differences among them (Peters, 1992, p.171). Further, the nature of an issue may be changed as it passes through the policy-making system. Absent too is the notion of either institutional or value contexts—how or why policies are defined is limited. By omission, the theory says little about the nature of the policies and the manner in which the policies will be defined by the actors within the process. Important to note is the fact that actors may change. That alone may alter the operating definition of the type of policy.

Peters argues that it is important analytically to link the substance of policy with the process by which policy is developed. The Lowi model does that. However, the categorization of policies does not hold up well to empirical scrutiny and this makes the ability to predict process characteristics from policy content weak (Peters, 1992, p.172).

The rational choice models. Turning finally to the rational choice models, they have in common the assumptions of utility maximization and rationality on the part of the actors involved in the policy-making process argues Peters. The problem is that from the empirical side, the theory's assumptions do not explain very well the real world of decision-making in governmental settings. Political actors are much too complex and subtle in their decision-making to be captured by any simple model of rational choice (Peters, 1992, p.173). He sees political activity as symbolic and ritualistic and not goal-oriented. Indeed, policy-making may be secondary and not be the primary purpose of the process. Peters's primary criticism of the rational choice theory process is that the policy-making process is not totally about the maximization of personal utilities. In short, politics is at least about values and achieving certain public goals rather than simply being about what individuals can receive. As for institutionalism, two views are presented.

Institutions provide constraint. Peters describes Elinor Ostrom's (1986) perspective that involves isolating different levels or arenas of activity and examining the influences of each level on the final policy choice. It assumes that individuals will act rationally within the constraints imposed upon them by the several layers of rules derived from the encompassing institutions. The rules are conceptualized as permitting a range of behaviours, as well as prescribing and proscribing other behaviours. While the approach appears to be deterministic it is not argues Peters.

The logic of 'appropriateness'. March and Olsen provide the second perspective. Their conception of the policy process is that it is governed by the logic of 'appropriateness' not the rational choice of rule-constrained individuals (March and Olsen in Peters, 1992, p.175). They argue that the collective histories of organizations and institutions serve as guides for action for the current members of the organization. And here is the critical point! This institutional memory tells current decision-makers what actions are in keeping with the goals and values of the organization. The assumption here of course is that individuals making the choices are sufficiently well socialized within the institution to make the 'right' choice.[34]

Meaning and the interpretation of organizational life are crucial in this approach. Reality in this scenario is socially constructed and organizations are crucial actors in that activity. Rational behaviour on the part of organization members must be understood within the context of organizational values rather than in the context of individual rational choice. Understanding the policy process then involves understanding how different organizations conceptualize the social world for which they bear some decision-making responsibility and how the organizations interact to make policies (Peters, 1992, p.175-176).

General characteristics of institutional models. In summary, the general characteristics of institutional models are:
1. institutions are the central actors in the policy-making process
2. institutions and organizations are conceptualized as having collective memories
3. institutions are assumed to attempt to minimize their own decision-making costs by perpetuating the status quo
4. institutions demonstrate a persistence of policies
5. institutions preserve their dominant values
6. institutions emphasize the appropriateness of organizational forms and policy decisions

7. institutions embed the consideration of particular policy proposals within a larger institutional and value framework which tends to minimize the problems of linearity identified with stages models
8. institutions emphasize the virtual randomness of much decision-making
9. the approach provides a mechanism for understanding why policies are different in different countries which an examination only of the stages through which the process must go might miss (Peters, 1992, p.176-179)

Less international in scope than the Peters research, Hanne Mawhinney's (1995) study of French language policy implemented in Ontario during the 1980s confirms the importance of an interpretive orientation to policy inquiry and how institutional arrangements, rule and norms guide policy-making.

Institutional arrangements guide policy. What he found was that the theoretical depiction of the policy process as a series of discrete stages fails to capture the dynamics of the overlapping and interacting processes. Because information is indeterminate and introduced over often-long time frames, it becomes the central focus of political activity. Also, many decision points occur along the way usually involving many different actors. All this says Mawhinney seriously questions the theoretical conception of policy as a series of stages including agenda setting, adoption, design, implementation and evaluation (Mawhinney, 1995, p.4).

Reconceptualization of the stage model. His notion is that the stages models need to be reconceptualized to encompass a focus on iterative processes and longer time frames—ones that take critical cognizance of leadership changes, elections, court challenges and implementation delays created by the interaction of other polices.[35]

Regarding agenda setting, Mawhinney makes a plea for the importance of achieving a degree of normative consensus—failure to achieve it will ensure that the political bargaining and negotiation characteristic of agenda setting will continue throughout the policy change. The result for policy 'x'? A crisis in legitimacy will spill into all phases of its development (Mawhinney, 1995, p.4). In other circumstances, where policy was addressing core ideas, the capacity to gain support of those affected increased by the legitimacy with which the policy developers were viewed. Further, when the structures were flexible and brought together diverse ideological perspectives and experience, the organization encouraged learning on a case-by-case assessment of policy problems.

The capacity to adjust to and 'read' the shifting sands of policy conceptualization is not easy given the uncertainty characteristic of policy making under conditions of multiple goals, inconsistent preferences and the ubiquitous participation of actors in the decision-making process. Policy goals should emerge therefore through a process of bargaining and compromise among forces both inside and outside the policy system and not be set by decision-makers at the apex of the hierarchy (Mawhinney, 1995, p.5). And here is his major point about the new focus for institutional structures and their role in the resolution of conflicts and differences of view.

Neo-Institutionalism

Neo-institutionalism, Mawhinney proposes, goes beyond the earlier institutional conceptions emphasizing values, norms and attitudes, it places more emphasis on the strategic and political elements of action. The role of interests, power and social change become the central issues. No longer are institutions seen as imposing constraints on human action, now they must also be seen to be the product of human action. The underlying assumption is that values and preferences of political actors are not external to but develop within institutions. That process in turn develops social norms that serve as an interpretive frame of reference for understanding events. Given the ambiguity often associated with complex policy change processes, determining the course of action by policy actors is enhanced if they know not only the implication of actions on their roles but they must also know what the situation means. Helping to effect political action would be the rules, traditions, and structure of the institution. Institutionally determined rules serve as frameworks for organizing behaviour, particularly frameworks consistent with inter-and intra-organizational observed extant realities. The role of rules and routines in promoting order and stability in policy-making, while seemingly self-evident, also are central forces in defining the interests and conflicts in a polity (Mawhinney, 1995, p.6). That said, the effect institutional structures have on policy-making and how they shape the nature of collective action, at least as far as institutional theorists are concerned, has been helpful but tentative (Mawhinney, 1995, p.6). What Mawhinney does conclude is that

- the exercise of political leadership is critical to policy change
- political leadership requires an appreciation of the potential for value conflicts to arise from a policy goal

- leadership is based on the capacity to reduce value conflict by generating normative consensus
- critical is the development of a common interest framework to promote constructive debate and policy-oriented learning among interest in the policy community
- failure to generate a degree of normative consensus on policy changes which confront core values in a political community can have long term negative impacts on the legitimacy with which a government is viewed
- growing emphasis on problem-based approaches to policy development requires logic-in-use orientation – critical and reflective stance development

Clearly, what happens within an institution among the participants and the type of institution that houses those same participants on a daily basis, has, arguably, significant impact on why and how policy is developed. Multiple policy determinants operate continuously. From ministerial/chief executive officer, to director/managers, to colleagues and clients/customers, not to mention lobbyists and advocacy coalitions, the bureaucrat/line worker must respond to the multiple memos/directives—in some cases policy manuals—in a manner that facilitates operationalization of whatever policy has been decided. Contingent upon ones role and placement within the organization, the degree and manner one may respond to those determinants at least partly explains how state policy is conceptualized. One such actor is the bureaucrat.

The Bureaucrat as Policy Actor

Bureaucrats are active participants in the policy-making process. As Lindblom and Woodhouse declare, if the aim is to understand how governments come to do what they do, the term *policy* needs to be applied to actual practice, not merely to formally announced intentions (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.60). Often as not, delegation of policy-making occurs accidentally when the legislation itself creates such controversy that the law passed may incorporate a number of contradictory policy guidelines. The implementing department then has to sort out or make sense of the intent of the legislation. Appointed officials then cannot merely implement laws and other directives from elected functionaries, civil servants are compelled to participate in the policy-making process (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.61). An example is the generalization about the delegation of policy-making authority to bureaucrats during the early life cycle of a policy being developed for a social problem—at this juncture there is little experience on which to base a regulatory effort. The bureaucrat must be involved to

literally 'write' the policy. As Lindblom and Woodhouse declare, most people would prefer to not have elected functionaries or untrained citizens entirely take over the technically laden policy tasks. Eminently reasonable and applaudable, they contend, is the delegation of authority to those with requisite expertise, that is, the bureaucrat(s) (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.62).[36] However, all is not so cut and dried or complimentary to the bureaucrat or bureaucracy.

Administrative 'anomalies'. Lindblom and Woodhouse theorize that bureaucratic policy-making also can reduce the intelligence of policy-making. How? It happens when administrators

- protect their own budgets, power and policy turf
- become too preoccupied with process rather than results
- become too enamored with one set of interests
- allow personal ambition to supercede achievement of program goals
- do not disclose errors
- impose procedural constraints to escape from responsibility/accountability
- create specialized agencies for specific jobs[37]

What some theorists do not say however is that while the above observations may be 'known' to colleagues in an institution, verifying same would be singularly exhausting to document and probably in the long term counterproductive to the progress of the person attempting to prove the case. Oppositional discourse depends as well upon where one is located on the bureaucratic organizational ladder and on the work 'environment' surrounding the civil servant's cubicle, Unit, Branch, Division and Department. That there can and may be problems is self-evident. Is there a remedy for the vocational virus alluded to here?

Placing policy coordination under one authority is one approach except it too can generate serious anomalies. It is simply too difficult to sort out how a single complex policy will interact with other policies. All the more stressful to the bureaucracy because central coordination efforts usually auger more layers of bureaucracy exacerbating communication problems including more policy actor policy confirmation 'sign-offs' may be required. Along with possible system 'unease' with something new entering the loop of policy conceptualization, such a proposal may rekindle the very points made above with respect to limiting bureaucratic intelligence. Fortunately, there is a better way!

DMA works! Decentralized coordination via partisan interaction and mutual adjustment works say Lindblom and Woodhouse. When bureaucrats from different programs and agencies work together it becomes clear (after much debate) that assessing a problem from many different perspectives improves the solution of the problem(s) beyond what could be accomplished if left to single agency or program resolution attempts. A high percentage of the effective coordination done in any government bureaucracy actually is achieved through decentralized mutual adjustment (DMA) (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.67-68).[38] It must be remembered that what is being discussed above relates primarily to policy formulation within government. Certainly the centralization of policy conceptualization can and does cause serious problem for those 'outside' of government. Local innovation may be difficult if centrally mandated curricula, texts and other countless regulations are seen as constraints on local policy input.

The 'popular' notion of bureaucracy—that it is a languorous labyrinth—alone attests to the fact that bureaucrats tend to pay more attention to constraints than to goals. Bureaucrats tend to lose sight of actually trying to achieve what the organization is supposed to be doing (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.71). Referencing James Wilson's (1989) study of government bureaucracy—*Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* —Lindblom and Woodhouse reiterate Wilson's observation that public management " 'is a world of settled institutions designed to allow imperfect people to use flawed procedures to cope with insoluble problems' " (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, 72). Hardly a flattering observation about the entire process to be sure, but an accurate reflection and attestation to the complexity of policy conceptualization.

The 'iron triangle'. Kingdon (1995) found that career civil servants had a more noticeable impact during the implementation and alternative generation stages of the policy process. This he attributed to the bureaucrat's service longevity, concomitant expertise, and relationships with internal and external committees and groups. This connection between committees, bureaucrats and interest groups, is often referred to as an 'iron triangle'. So-called because the interests dovetail, it is impenetrable from the outside, and uncontrollable by political appointees, or legislators not on the committees in

question. In the government operations of the United States, it also kept the President at bay (Kingdon, 1995, p.33). Kingdon further differentiates participants in the policy process describing them as a 'visible cluster' (President, Congress, media, political parties)—they affected the agenda setting, and a 'hidden cluster' (academics, researchers, career bureaucrats, staffers, administrative appointees)—they affected the generation of alternatives. Though these distinctions are not 'iron-clad absolutes', they are determined by resources needed to perform tasks and incentives that draw people to the task (Kingdon, 1995, p.68- 69).

Key policy actors –bureaucrats. As policy actors then, bureaucrats are very often the keystones in the policy process and the central figures in many policy subsystems (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.56). They are formidable players with perennial powers. The law itself mandates that certain crucial functions must be performed. Within the limits of fiscal restraint usually unmatched access to material resources are available. The bureaucracy is a repository of a wide range of skills and expertise with access again to vast quantities of information. The notion of permanence in the bureaucracy along with tenure often gives it an edge over the elected executive. Finally, and perhaps arguably the most annoying feature of the bureaucracy, is the secrecy that is often associated with policy formulation—attempts to mount opposition to the policy is denied to other policy actors (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.56).[39] As one senior government official has said, planning in government is qualitatively different from planning in other organizations (Levin, 1985, p.600). Planning, he says, is dominated by political and social considerations closely tied to matters of value. Though he suggests that paradoxically, planning is almost impossible to plan, Levin articulates implications for planning that demonstrates the importance of experience. Planning must

- be organized around issues rather than operations
- bridge the gap between political and operational levels
- carefully consider the operating environment of government departments
- evidence a process of environmental scanning
- distinguish between issues where the government will have to respond and issues where the government may initiate action
- acknowledge the characteristics of the government and the minister (Levin, 1985, p.603-605)

Taking into account what Levin calls the 'facts of life' in government, is advice that no policy actor should ignore particularly poignant in light of recent pleas for public policy

to be developed based on 'inclusiveness (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998), the 'learning organization' (Rosell, 1999), and 'new public management' (Pal, 1997). It is advice certainly that an important group of policy actors—advocacy coalitions/interest groups/lobbyists—must be cognizant.

Advocacy Coalitions/Interest Groups/ Lobbyists

Interest group activities are interactions through which individuals and private groups not holding government authority seek to influence policy (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.75). 'They blow the whistle' if government does not comply with a particular 'interests' concerns. For some, their primary function in a word, is that of surveillance. They can and do however help to form a feasible agenda by

1. clarifying and articulating what citizens want
2. monitoring the actions of government
3. providing feedback to government
4. serving as a source of information
5. facilitating working coalitions (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.79)

Helpful as the above may be, interest groups can at the same time be problematic for the democratic function of government in that contingent upon financial resource base, membership, and human resources, great inequality can emerge particularly for those groups who do not possess the same attributes. It leads in part to what some theorists conclude that interest groups activity emphasizes differences rather than commonalties (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.86). Advocacy coalitions, advocacy networks, and policy streams theoretically do the opposite as the notion of network analysis is based on the idea that a policy is framed within a context of relationships and dependencies.

The network metaphor. With the increasing diversity in society, diversity in policy programs and increase in participants in policy development, policy theorists argue that the network metaphor has been a better fit with modern policy-making than pluralism, corporations and other 'traditional' models (Parsons, 1995, p.185). The relationship between the state and networks continues to dominate the research. Parsons cites from the work of M.J. Smith (1993) who looked at the relationships between state actors and groups and how such entities shaped policy outcomes in the US and UK. Smith observed that

- the type of network and community relationships varies across time, policy sector, and states

- state actors have interests which shape the development of policy and policy networks
- the autonomy of the state in making and implementing policy is affected by the types of policy networks that exist
- types of policy networks affect policy outcomes
- the type of policy networks provides a context for understanding the role of interest groups in policy-making. Networks are the 'enstructuration' of past policies, ideologies and processes
- the types of network will affect the way in which policy changes

As for the general comparative question of whether or not a parliamentary or congressional form of government presents similar characteristics for policy conceptualization, Smith (1993) noted that policy communities are more likely to arise in the UK than the US. Further, policy communities are more likely to develop where the state is dependent on groups for implementation and where policy communities have important resources to exchange. About the only constant that continues to emerge from the literature is that notions of the state, pressure groups, state autonomy and policy networks are highly problematic. Issues are not so neat and tidy as policy community theory claims. Issues tend to overlap and get mixed up with other issues in actual practice (Parsons, 1995, p.190-191). To be specific, Parsons references the work of Atkinson and Coleman (1992). They credit the network literature with going beyond the bureaucratic-political models but detail three major problems that network theory does not address. First, the models have a problem with the influence of macro-political institutions and the impact of political discourse. Second, the models have difficulty with the issue of the internationalization of many policy domains. And third, the network/community approach has failed to address the problem of policy innovation and change. In fairness to the advocacy coalition model, a discussion about the major premises of the framework is in order.

The advocacy coalition conceptual framework. The conceptual framework focuses on the belief systems of advocacy coalitions within policy subsystems as the critical vehicle for understanding the role of policy analysis in policy-oriented learning and the effect, in turn, of such learning on changes in governmental programs (Sabatier, 1988, p.129). The framework, he says, has at least three premises:

1. understanding the process of policy change—and the role of policy-oriented learning therein—requires a time perspective of a decade or more

2. the most useful way to think about policy change over that amount of time is through a focus on 'policy subsystems', that is, the interaction of actors from different institutions interested in a policy area

3. that public policies (programs) can be conceptualized in the same manner as belief systems—as sets of value priorities and causal assumptions about how to realize them

Sabatier's first premise regarding implementation requiring 10 years is that this is the time frame needed to complete at least one formulation/reformulation cycle. Program success and failure assessment, to be reasonably accurate he suggests, requires the same time parameters.[40]

The most useful aggregate unit of analysis for understanding policy change (premise #2) in modern industrial societies, is not any specific governmental institution, but rather a policy subsystem—those actors from a variety of public and private organizations who are actively concerned with a policy problem or issue such as air pollution control, mental health, or surface transportation (Sabatier, 1988, p.131).

The meaning behind the third major premise is that public policies/programs incorporate implicit theory about how to achieve their objectives.

Factors affecting policy change within subsystems include the basic attributes of the problem area; distribution of natural resources; fundamental cultural values and social structure; the basic legal structure (constitutional relationships); changes in socio-economic conditions, technology, systemic governing coalitions; and policy decisions and impacts from other subsystems.

Policy subsystem. A policy subsystem is defined as the set of actors who are involved in dealing with an identified policy problem (Sabatier, 1988, p.13 8). New subsystems may emerge if a group of actors become dissatisfied enough with the neglect of a particular problem by existing subsystems to form their own. Sabatier posits that the most useful means of aggregating actors in order to understand policy change over fairly long periods of time is by 'advocacy coalitions'—people from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest group leaders, researchers) who share a particular belief system. Before proceeding, some general observations are useful.

Sabatier argues that in most subsystems there will be only a few politically significant advocacy coalitions. Not everyone active in a policy subsystem will belong to an advocacy coalition or share one of the major belief systems. One of the categories of

actors evident will be 'policy brokers'. Their concern will be to keep the level of political conflict within acceptable limits and with reaching some reasonable solutions to the problem. Traditionally the function of some elected officials or high civil servants, they will have some policy bent whereas advocates may show some serious concern with system maintenance. As policy brokers, high civil servants are also often policy advocates particularly when their agency has a clearly defined mission. It must be remembered that the concept of an 'advocacy coalition' assumes that it is shared beliefs that provide the principal 'glue' of politics. And this introduces the first of the nine hypothesis of the advocacy coalition framework.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework

Hypothesis 1: On major controversies within a policy subsystem (i.e., when core beliefs are in dispute), the lineup of allies and opponents will tend to be rather stable over periods of a decade or so.

Shared beliefs. The framework rejects the view that actors are primarily motivated by their short-term self-interest and thus that 'coalitions of convenience' of highly varying composition will dominate policy-making over time. Coalition stability may result more from stable economic/organizational interests than beliefs but the framework uses belief systems rather than 'interests' as its focus because beliefs are more inclusive and more verifiable says Sabatier.

With respect to advocacy coalitions and public policy, where there is a decentralized system, different coalitions may be in control of various governmental units. While the direction of the advocacy coalition will be determined by the belief system, its ability to do so will be critically dependent upon its resources (money; expertise; supporters; legal authority).

Hypothesis 2: Actors within an advocacy coalition will show substantial consensus on issues pertaining to the policy core, although less so on secondary aspects.

Hypothesis 3: An actor (or coalition) will give up secondary aspects of his (its) belief system before acknowledging weaknesses in the policy core.

Core beliefs are powerful and once realized are resistant to change even in the face of countervailing empirical evidence or internal inconsistencies (Sabatier, 1988, p.147). What about policy change within subsystems?

Policy change within a subsystem can be understood as the product of two processes: First, the efforts of advocacy coalitions within the subsystem to translate the policy cores and the secondary aspects of their belief systems into governmental programs. The second process is one of external perturbation—the effects of systemic events—changes in socio-economic conditions, outputs from other subsystems, and changes in the system-wide governing coalition—on the resources and constraints of subsystem actors.

The policy core resists change. The policy core of an advocacy coalition is quite resistant to change over time (Sabatier, 1988, p.148).

> *Hypothesis 4: The core (basic attributes) of a governmental program are unlikely to be significantly revised as long as the subsystem advocacy coalition which instituted the program remains in power.*

> *Hypothesis 5: The core of a governmental action program are unlikely to be changed in the absence of significant perturbations external to the subsystem, that is, changes in socio-economic conditions, system-wide governing coalitions, or policy outputs from other subsystems.*

Hypothesis four suggests that the only way a minority coalition can hope to gain power within the subsystem is if some external event occurs to significantly increase their political resources. Hypothesis five hints that policy learning may contribute to alteration of the secondary aspects of a program. In fact, policy learning may even occasionally lead to a revision of core aspects in the absence of perturbations from beyond the subsystem.

Policy-oriented learning. 'Policy-oriented learning' is of particular concern to the framework. The result of experiential thought and behaviour, policy-oriented learning is concerned with the attainment or revision of the percepts of one's belief system. It is an ongoing process of search and adaptation motivated by the desire to realize core policy beliefs. It can occur both within and across belief systems.

> *Hypothesis 6: Policy-oriented learning across belief systems is most likely when there is an intermediate level of informed conflict between the two.*

What is required is that both have the technical resources to engage in such a debate and the conflict involves secondary aspects from one with core elements of the second or alternatively between secondary aspects of both systems.

Hypothesis 7: Policy-oriented learning across belief systems is most likely when there exists a forum which is prestigious enough to force professionals from different coalitions to participate and when the forum is dominated by professional norms.

Some policy subsystems are dominated by a single professional journal or annual conference where researchers feel obliged to present their views. The final two hypotheses increase the likelihood of increased policy-oriented learning whether within or between coalitions.

Hypothesis 8: Problems for which accepted quantitative performance indicators exist are more conducive to policy-oriented learning than those in which performance indicators are generally qualitative and quite subjective.

Hypothesis 9: Problems involving natural systems are more conducive to policy-oriented learning than those involving purely social systems because in the former many of the critical variables are not themselves active strategists and because controlled experimentation is more feasible.

Policy-oriented learning then has a formidable focus—the development of a better understanding of the factors affecting a specific policy area over time (Sabatier, 1988, p.157). As for the framework itself, Sabatier argues that it has increased our understanding of the role of policy analysis in policy-oriented learning and the role of such learning in policy change by

- taking the concept of policy subsystems ('iron triangles' and the like) and uses it as the basis for developing a preliminary theory of policy change by relating it to the larger political system and by viewing advocacy coalitions as the key units of internal structure
- advancing understanding of the nature of elite belief systems (Deep Core fundamental normative and ontological axioms; a Policy Core of basic policy choices and causal assumptions; and a set of Secondary implementing Aspects) by expanding political scientists' traditional focus on normative elements to include perceptions of causal relationships and variable states
- focusing on policy-oriented learning

Improving the framework. But the framework still has room to improve. Certain aspects of the framework require: empirical testing in a variety of settings; alternative frameworks of the role of policy analysis in policy change over periods of a decade or more need to be developed; the relative importance of 'interests' versus 'beliefs systems' needs to be explored; much more needs to be done concerning the role of 'policy brokers'; little has been said about the generation and diffusion of new ideas concerning

causal relationships and policy instruments; and finally, subsystem dynamics may vary by policy type (Sabatier, 1988, p.159). A more resent critique of the advocacy coalition framework cited by Parsons (1995) includes the following observations.

- The framework needs exposure outside of the USA (particularly in situations where the contact between policy actors is less open – the model has utility for policy styles/issues which exhibit pluralistic characteristics)
- The model posits that there are 'events' and 'stable parameters' which set the constraints and resources for the 'subsystem' and its actors (Do such forces exist 'out there' or do they exist in the minds of the participants?)
- The framework sees non-elites having no expertise, no time, nor inclination to be active participants in policy subsystems

As Parsons remarks, the advocacy coalition framework does at least link the early phases of the policy cycle – problem definition and agenda setting with decision-making and implementation. Moreover, the framework facilitates 'mapping' the policy process (Parsons, 1995, p.203). A potential problem for the framework however is its potential for 'interest' exclusion. Policy elites may not control the agenda process but it is manifestly true that they have far more impact and influence over what goes up, what goes down, and what gets on the agenda than those members of society whose participation is marginal and impaired (Parsons, 1995, p.207-208). Daniel McCool's 'discussion' of the Sabatier (1988) article provides a further set of perspectives on subsystem theory.

Into the mid 1990s, few research attempts have been recorded to systematically validate subsystem theory says McCool. To date, much of the support for subsystem theory is anecdotal and impressionistic (McCool, 1995, p.380). Operating in a potentially adversarial scenario, this would make the role of conflict a significant research question for subsystem theory. It must be remembered that the concept of 'iron triangles', for example, minimizes conflict by excluding or co-opting opponents. At the same time, the theory, in order for it to function at all, must in some way be able to limit conflict— increased conflict can give rise to new subsystems argues McCool. And, back to 'iron triangles', they too have been forced to change. McCool suggests that they have been "pluralized" meaning that all three corners have multiple participants. The media, policy analysts, and individual policy entrepreneurs now play a larger role in policy making. Taking the discussion to a higher theoretical level, McCool raises the question about the

relationship between subsystem politics and democracy. Specialized policy alliances, assumes the policy literature, are antidemocratic. That they may be exclusionary has been mentioned. Certainly if one is not a part of a 'special' interest the opportunity to have any effect at all on policy-making is at risk. A large percentage of the voting public then has only one recourse—(save public demonstration, referenda and state initiated public forum feedback sessions) the ballot box the effect of which on public policy-making was discussed earlier. Much to McCool's credit from the perspective of his anthology of public policy, theories, models and concepts, he poses the ultimate research question, is subsystem theory a good theory?

Subsystem Theory

In general, subsystem theory offers a unique perspective of how policy is made. It does so in that it cuts across innumerable dimensions of policy-making. Specifically, subsystem theory improves understanding of

- who participates
- the policy-making process
- typologies ('iron triangles'; issue networks; distributive and redistributive policy

Subsystem theory also informs about governing institutions, that is, how they interact with each other and with non-governing entities (interest groups, the media, and policy specialists) (McCool, 1995, p.385). There is a caution that should be noted. It is a mistake to assume that a subsystem can be found for every issue. If that were the case, the concept would have to be so generic as to loses much of its meaning. The research challenge, concludes McCool, is to explain the difference between various subsystems and identify the conditions under which they operate. Howlett and Ramesh (1995) concur.

Policy actors and policy formulation. Identifying the key actors in policy subsystems, what brings them together, how they interact, and what effect their interaction has on the policy, continues to provide fascination for public policy-making partisans. Policy formulation, they surmise, is a highly diffuse, and complex, process, which varies by case (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.123). The following characteristics of policy formulation listed by Charles Jones (1984) cited by Howlett and Ramesh make the point. Jones concluded:

1. policy formulation is not limited to one set of actors; there may be two or more formulation groups producing competing or complimentary proposals
2. policy formulation may proceed without clear definition of the problem or without formulators ever in contact with the affected groups
3. there is no necessary coincidence between formulation and particular institutions
4. formulation and reformulation may occur without ever building support for any one proposal
5. several appeal points exist for those who lose in the formulation process
6. process never has neutral effects – some win and some lose (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.123).[41]

While the Jones list is hardly meant to be definitive, it certainly supports the contention—perception is just as real as reality itself in the policy process (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.124). A better understanding not only of perceptions but of policy development and change requires an appreciation of how the policy subsystem functions as demonstrated by the following entities: subgovernments (groupings of actors functioning in routinized patterns of interaction); iron triangles; issue networks (Heclo, 1978); advocacy coalitions (Sabatier, 1988); policy networks—interactions among departments/branches and between government and societal organizations (Rhodes, 1984); and policy communities—actors sharing a common policy focus (Haas, 1992). An interesting 'take' on the above 'interest groups' is that of John Kingdon.

Interest Groups

Negative blocking. Much of interest group activity, he says, consists not of positive promotion, but rather of negative blocking. Interest groups seek to preserve their extant prerogatives and benefits, blocking initiatives that they believe would reduce those benefits (Kingdon, 1995, p.49). He is rather firm on the point that interest groups are to be seen as blocking agenda items. Any amendments that are proposed are really substitutes for proposals already on the agenda. Such entities are effective because they are able to convince the government that they speak with one voice. As for academics, researchers, and consultants, for the long term at least argues Kingdon, they may effect the alternatives more than the agenda. He does concede that if academics wish to have short-run impact, they must be in government (Kingdon, 1995, p.56). That notion may be paradoxical in that governments popularly are not known as 'think-tanks' of critical free-thinking though there is no reason why they could not so indulge given the possibility of

loosely defined parameters for a given project for a set amount of time. Kingdon's perception about the role of the media in agenda setting is equally poignant.

The media. The media's tendency to give prominence to newsworthy events actually diminishes their impact on governmental policy agendas because such stories tend to come toward the end of a policy-making process rather than at the beginning. As to the importance of the media in the policy-making process, Kingdon posits that the media

- act as a communicator within a policy community
- magnify movements started elsewhere as opposed to originating the movement
- can shape an issue or structure it but not create it
- can play a part to the extent that expansion of a conflict is a central feature of agenda-setting
- may have an indirect effect to the extent that public opinion may have an affect on the participants (Kingdon, 1995, p.60)

A similar constraining 'middle-of-the-road' interpretation of the role of the media and its impact on policy formation is assumed by Lindblom and Woodhouse. They see mainstream print and broadcast news offering primarily 'thoroughly conventional interpretations of current events' (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1995, p.117). The perception is that the media tend to reiterate and strengthen society's dominant views more than challenge and probe. In fact, the more dissentient the group, the less favourable treatment is accorded the group. Even more to the point is their contention that by reflecting dominant opinions, advantaged elites receive continual coverage (business) whereas the interests of labour may not be accorded similar positive coverage on a daily basis. Few would deny the fact however that the media are crucial links between the state and society at large.

By reporting on problems, the media combine the roles of passive reporter with active analyst as well as an advocate of a solution—this makes the media's role in agenda setting particularly significant (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.59). The traditional role as the Fourth Estate, that is, reporting directly upon the daily proceedings of the state legislature and then throwing the ball back to the same forum via the print and broadcast medium, creates a constant cycle of information flow. That same flow and how much is passed through the media/government pipeline may lead to the not uncommon use of the

media by public officials and interest groups to their collective advantage and thus bolster their case on any given issue of the day (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.59). With respect to any media interest informing the public about the evaluation results of policies, the media has done little to inform public debate about such matters (Pal, 1997, p.260). Nonetheless, as Parsons (1995) details, the media does have an effect from a constructivist approach in problem definition. For example, in dealing with social problems, the media can 'sensitize' the public and amplify the substance of an issue. On occasion, by portraying a given incident as indicative of a wider social problem, the media can so distort an issue as to create a public 'panic' creating demands that policy-makers 'do something' (Parsons, 1995, p.107). The media's capacity to collect and cast items from outside the political agenda into the political arena—the illusive notion of 'public opinion'—is what lends credence to the observation by Parsons that the treatment of such public opinion by policy-makers gives weight to the argument that the policy agenda is set by the interplay of public opinion and public power (Parsons, 1995, p.110). Indeed, the capturing of public opinion whether articulated by the media, policy networks, policy communities, interest groups and the like, has generated much debate for the academic study of public policy formulation particularly with the issue of governance.

Governance – A Shifting Dynamic 1985-1996

Dobuzinskis (1996) et al cite the work of Atkinson and Coleman (1988) who claim that the decade from 1985-1996 has seen two changes in the academic study of public policy. First, society driven models of the policy process have given way to models in which institutions of the state are understood to have considerable autonomy. The images of responsive politicians and compliant bureaucrats need to be amended they argue. The state is not inert, it is an active agent molding society and serving the interests of office-holders sometimes as much as or more than the interests of citizens. Second, traditional pluralist conceptions of the organization of societal interests have been expanded or amended. Stressed more often is the organizational difficulties of such entities plus the problem of maintaining interest not to mention the uneven character of some organizations. The privileged status of business is also emphasized (Dobuzinskis, 1996, p.193). The overall point, posit Atkinson and Coleman, is that government now

shares a measure of responsibility where heretofore the creation of economic dislocation was the domain only of firms and individuals. And what is the problem for governance?

Challenges for the policy network/community. How to maintain ultimate control yet share the exercise of public authority in a pluralistic social, economic and political milieu. The use of the policy network/community concept then has at least three challenges for the academic study of public policy:

1. theorizing the connection between networks, communities, and broader political institutions
2. integrating international levels of decision-making into studies that have been confined to the nation-state only
3. conceptualizing patterns of change in networks (Dobuzinskis, 1996, p.201)

Atkinson and Coleman offer some acute advice for advocates of the policy network approach in the study of policy innovation and change. The policy network approach needs to be recast conceptually. It is critical for the analysis of change that researchers

- are able to identify participants in the policy-making process
- may study the types of policy networks over time to test their durability, openness to outside influences, and the shifts that occur between the included and excluded
- may devote greater attention to the cognitive frameworks of all members of the policy community, to the relative strength of coalitions of community members supporting alternative sets of ideas
- may devote more attention to the potential for policy learning (Dobuzinskis, 1996, p.214)

From the same volume, Evert A. Lindquist, in his article "New Agendas for Research on Policy Communities: Policy Analysis, Administration, and Governance", suggests that there is a risk that community analysis could become a modern form of systems theory encompassing all actors or variables but without a compelling theoretical edge. Further, such analysis could see a proliferation of concepts attempting to capture different kinds of communities, networks, and associations that often intersect, overlap, or operate at different levels of analysis, but little attempt is made to relate them to each other (Lindquist in Dobuzinskis, 1996, p.219). Lindquist answers his own question about what we know from the research of the 1980s.

What the 1980s reveal. Certainly more policy actors are involved and the interrelationship among actors varies across policy domains or sectors. Commenting on Hugh Heclo's work on issue networks, Lindquist takes issue claiming that Heclo's

findings relied upon congressional politics as a backdrop for issue network analysis – a problem for Canadian application in that the research placed an emphasis on individuals as much as institutions. Lindquist affirms that such an approach is lamentable given the fact that it was policy analysis in institutions that alerted observers to the realization that there existed a much wider circle of policy actors in the policy process that had analytical competencies and influence (Lindquist in Dobunzinskis, 1996, p.221). Continuing with the results of research regarding traditional understandings of the policy process, Lindquist states that experts or analysts spent all or the better part of their careers with one institution where there was a limited range of organizations with influence where they could work; creative policy analysis was most likely to emerge from policy units in bureaucracy; the analyst group had sufficient resources to accomplish feats; and actors in the attentive public were not equipped to influence the design of policies and the implementation of programs. Heclo's concept of issue networks did capture the less stable career patterns of experts, a more fluid labour market, the emergence of more complex issues with increasingly blurred boundaries, and increased fragmentation of authority in traditional institutions. The overall result and trend that emerged from the 1980s, says Lindquist, is that governments began to rely more heavily on the expertise of consulting firms, interest groups, think-tanks, and universities. Why? Lindquist says it

> ...was partly attributable to political leaders who did not fully trust the advice of public servants, but it was also a response to the fact that many senior officials and even subgovernment actors as managers of existing policy and administrative regimes were in a coping mode...during a time of significant expenditure restraint and delayering of senior management in the public service. (Lindquist in Dobuzinskis, 1996, p.222)

It was also a time when increasing global competition and debt problems forced governments into restrictive policy regimes. As Lindquist says, the policy capacity of departments waned during the 1980s. Did any theoretical insight emerge regarding the analysis of policy at the same time? Their common attribute, says Lindquist, is the lack of any plausible rendering of how contemporary analysis is *actually* conducted. Not content at all with that observation, he does offer some corrective strategies.

Policy communities do help. Policy community concepts could be of use to government officials in operating departments since many must comprehend their external environments in order to monitor, develop, and implement public policies.

Contingent upon department function and role of the official, dealing with several policy networks is more the reality than not, therefore, the official must assess and adjust to substantially different external environments.

The foregoing is difficult to achieve because there may be large gaps of misunderstanding about central agencies whose task it is to manage policy development across governments (from Cabinet to finance/treasury board to public or civil service commissions to multiple departments). Lindquist's main point in all this is that if one is to focus only on the outputs of central agencies or of particular bureaus, it is possible to miss where most of the decisions and innovations are actually made within government, and therefore fail to provide an accurate account of agency roles and influence (Lindquist in Dobuzinskis, 1996, p.228).

Specific professional function. An alternative way to envision a public service is in terms of specific professional function and tasks. For example, personnel, legal work, finance, budgets, regulation, employment equity, and the cadre of officials throughout a public service responsible for elements of those functions. Using community analysis, Lindquist would disaggregate the community, that is, identify different realms of administrative responsibilities and departments. The following are cited as examples: budget making; management innovation; human resource management; administrative policy; affirmative action; and financial management. His suggestion rests in part on the realization that the sheer size of some departments mitigates against action of any consequence. Central agency staff, for example, cannot challenge functional experts. Pressing items on the administrative agenda 'crowd out' other items. Some departments may be so innovative and active that they get too far ahead of the government agenda. Often it is the network position of ministers and their deputies that determines the degree of central agency control. Despite evolving environmental influences, many central bureaus remain stable over the years and maintain their status. This is due mostly to the task environment where the imperatives, regardless of policy or administrative disposition (including minister) are clear: budgets must be produced, collective agreements must be negotiated, and new policies must be costed.

Policy Communities/Networks can be influenced

Lindquist concludes that policy communities and networks of all kinds can be manipulated or at the very least influenced by individuals and institutions (Lindquist in Dobuzinskis, 1996, p.234). Change may also be induced by actors *within* policy communities. And, they may in turn be influenced by the following community concepts:

- Environmental Scanning – monitoring the capacity of actors in policy communities
- Instruments for Manipulation – the means by which political or bureaucratic leaders reshape or move a network in new directions
- Encouraging Stewardship- increasing the capacity of networks to learn
- Nurturing Expertise, Forums, and Networks – how academics and policy analysts can play a more effective and socially useful role in the policy process

Lindquist's major point is that the governance game is not the sole purview of any one person or group of actors—many can play the game. The desire to manipulate policy networks can be effected by ministers, key officials, leaders of business groups, labour unions, nonprofit organizations, new social movements, and public foundations (Lindquist in Dobuzinskis, 1996, p.237). In short, all energy should not be limited to influencing policy outcomes. Such effort will net only short-term gains. Increased focus on the management, evolution, and manipulation of policy and administrative communities will have more than practical implications. It should, posits Lindquist, make the inside policy and administrative networks more transparent and easier for observers to comprehend. Networking then has become far more important in the making of policy. The state, declares Leslie Pal, has had to adjust the policy-making fetters accordingly.

The Need for Networks

There will be no more modern policy-making directed by government, supplemented by representations from the public or interest groups. That model died years ago he claims. As for the state, "the image of a towering Leviathan has to be replaced with that of a prone Gulliver, tied with myriad strings to interests and policy sectors"(Pal, 1997, p.225). Times have changed for government. No longer able to mobilize all necessary policy resources within their own realm, governments have become dependent upon the cooperation and joint resource mobilization of policy actors outside their hierarchical control. For Pal, the central questions for network analysis are:

1. How to conceptualize the relationship between civil society and the state.

2. What differences certain patterns of relations make to policy outcomes.
3. How to manage and nurture relations between government agencies and their policy constituencies. (Pal, 1997, p.199)

Current policy thinking, says Pal, is that the wider the networks and the more competition among players, the better policy outcomes will be. Pal credits Paul Sabatier's advocacy coalition framework as being just such a network in that the framework maps out the players, issues, and debates in a policy subsystem. The relatively stable parameters, plus the belief systems inherent in the framework, are welcome approaches particularly when the idea of a coalition gets around the more rigid and insular conceptualization in the network literature that divides subsystems into decision-makers and attentive, but impotent, publics (Pal, 1997, p.207). Pal does however criticize the Sabatier framework describing it as relatively weak in describing patterns of relationships either among the coalitions themselves or among brokers. This same point is raised in a larger context as Pal asks if the network idea goes far enough in capturing the contemporary complexities of the policy process. And, if the realities continue to change, does this effect the need for refinement of the concept of networks?

The challenge of multiple networks. With the effects of economic globalization and worldwide web electronic communication so evident in daily operations of both public and private sector management, the idea that policy networks are primarily domestic needs rethinking (Pal, 1997, p.209). In particular, policy-makers in government have the added conundrum of having to maintain a democratic process balanced against a policy-making process that has become so complex that only 'experts' could possibly manage the process. For public policy theorists, the fear is that by using an overly rational policy process, that is, limited to a small clique, such policy-making may eliminate the notion of involving the public. This leaves the public manager in a difficult position. To serve the public and provide the best policy possible, scholars and researchers in a given policy area surely need to be courted. All the more obvious as governments encounter downsizing of so-called nonessential direct public service provision. With fewer personnel, government is forced to 'second' people from the private sector/university or 'contract out' to private consulting operations. Decreasing funds and 'offloading' impacts directly upon policy networks and partnerships between

government and the private sector. And these 'new' arrangements are changing the policy-making landscape. As Pal suggests:

> Policy communities and networks are important today not
> only because they represent interests that have to be integrated
> into the policy process, or information that is crucial to analysis,
> but because they are relatively untried sinews for implementation
> and delivery (Pal, 1997, p.214)

The policy manager is the one who is certainly in the 'hot seat'. It will demand of the policy manager cognizance of the communities and policy networks relevant to the area of policy development is critical. And the job for the policy manager is not going to get any easier. Consultation and partnerships come with their own set of problems.

When consultation with the 'public' does take place, the cynic might argue that the whole process is nothing but 'grandstanding' by the government; interest groups get a chance to trumpet their 'cause'; and decision-makers continue on their merry way regardless of the public input. Partnership arrangements on the other hand may be seen as attempts by government to shirk areas of responsibility and redirect finances away from direct government responsibility. All that being said, the policy manager still cannot escape from the reality that consultation in policy design and partnership in policy delivery are an important aspect of their jobs (Pal, 1997, p.217). Both aspects of consultation and partnership continue to be a balancing act. The challenge for consultation is juggling tough decisions with public demand that may exceed the capacity of government to deliver. For partnerships, the challenge is balancing autonomy with accountability. Is there some advice for the policy manager on how to perform the near impossible?

The key to successful networking. Where consultation is involved, the focus, says Pal, should be placed on the operational and programmatic level, not on broad values or directions. This means that the objective is to direct energies toward ongoing development/management of the policy or program, not the establishment of parameters for political discussion and debate. Moreover, the key to successful consultation is

- mutual respect and trust by participants
- clarity on objectives
- shared decision-making about the parameters of the consultation
- adequate information resources (Pal, 1997, p.218)

All good ideas but not immune from their own set of dilemmas. Consultation is only one of many avenues to travel on the road to policy-making. Too much openness can lengthen the process of resolution beyond what government is comfortable in permitting—not to mention the possible increase in oppositional attack the longer the process proceeds.[42] Perpetual confrontation is what an adversarial process may engender. It must somehow be redirected or even dispersed in some fashion. Pal's notion of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) has some potential.

Alternative dispute resolution. ADR is a process where all the parties voluntarily come together to discuss issues and develop solutions to meet each other's interests. Pal proposes that if ADR is to work, a paradigm shift from adversarial, interest-based lobbying, to negotiation grounded in rules the participants themselves design, shepherded by a mediator, and aimed at shared interests rather than compromises that give a little piece of something to everyone, must occur (Pal, 1997, p.221).[43] Given the enormity of some tasks and the time-frames for resolution, the overall effectiveness of ADR may be determined more by a problem's placement on the government agenda and the resources available than the more equitable process of canvassing all relevant constituencies and interests over a 'relaxed' consultation course. It may or may not be an effective process where partnerships are concerned.

Pal references Kernaghan's (1993) classification of partnerships which situates consultation as one end of a continuum of power sharing over decisions and implementation:

1. consultative partnerships: exchange of advice and information
2. contributory partnerships: money or other forms of support for projects managed by a third party
3. operational partnerships: share work together in achieving goals, but the main decisions are still made by one partner, usually government
4. collaborative partnerships: sharing both work and decision-making (Pal, 1997, p.221)

What must not be forgotten is that when governments enter into partnerships, of necessity they relinquish power and control argues Pal. The result is a Catch-22 scenario. Government, by engaging in partnerships, may see it as way to save money and offload services. On the other hand, in recognizing that government provision of all services may be impossible, partnerships might well effect improved service delivery; collect better

feedback, and in the process encourage civic engagement. Consultation and partnerships then each bring a unique set of issues to the problem of public policy-making. The same may be said of policy communities—specialists interacting with each other in a given policy area with a common concern with one area of policy problems (Kingdon, 1995, p.117).

Ideas Can Be Illusive

The possibility of policy fragmentation. Kingdon's metaphor of ideas floating around in a 'primeval soup' captures the essence of how ideas may surface or never surface contingent upon who is stirring the pot. Not to detract from his culinary course, much depends upon the compatibility of the kitchen staff. Some policy communities are extremely closed and tightly knit while others are more diverse and fragmented—the first consequence of what Kingdon calls system fragmentation is policy fragmentation. Fragmentation itself begets instability. However, in tightly knit policy communities, Kingdon found that there is less chance for the policy agenda to shift abruptly. And further, the fragmentation of a policy system affects the stability of the agenda within that system (Kingdon, 1995, p.121). All of which says that ideas themselves take on a momentum of importance that cannot be ignored.

The key is knowing the conditions under which said idea(s) survive. What Kingdon found is that "wholly new ideas do not suddenly appear...people recombine familiar elements into a new structure or a new proposal" (Kingdon, 1995, p.124). As for change, that turned out to be recombination more than mutation.[44] Policy-making, says Kingdon, is often a process of creating intellectual puzzles, getting into binds, and then extracting people from these dilemmas. The puzzle solving continues while the items may be held off the public policy agenda for some time. As he also found out, ideas sometimes fail to come to the surface of the soup because people find the subjects intellectually boring. In fact, the subject may be too commonplace, routine, and again, boring.[45] All the more reason then to consider doing the following. What Kingdon calls a 'softening up' approach.

Ideas need to 'float about'. Though it may take a while, let the idea drift about like a trial balloon. In a practical manner, share the idea by memorandum, an oral suggestion, or in a larger more important context, via discussion papers and feedback

survey. The point Kingdon makes is that to become a basis for action, an idea must both sweep a community and endure. And what are the criteria for ideas to survive?

The criteria for idea survival. Technical feasibility is first as this involves implementation concerns, that is, the actual mechanisms required to effect action (staffing requirements; time factors; administrative procedures; document preparation/distribution). Second, the proposals that survive in the policy community are compatible with the values of the specialists. This criterion could be described as the 'backbone' of any proposal and as strong as the prevailing majority view permits. In the United States, where Kingdon conducted his research, he reminds those that reference his work that some writers argue that a distinctive ideology or political culture dominates that country. It is an ideology that places much more emphasis on the virtues of private sector activity and the evils of government than the thinking that dominates the politics of other industrialized countries (Kingdon, 1995, p.133). This is surely an interesting consideration given the relative recent past of Manitoba's political history and the example of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (public management of automobile insurance). Indeed, Manitoba's experience with public versus private ownership of electric and communication utilities speaks to what Kingdon raises as a serious concern for the survival of policy in that area.

A third consideration is that of equity. Proposals frequently become prominent on governmental agendas because they are designed to redress inequities, imbalances or unfairness. This policy maker value inevitably runs up against the final value—efficiency. Cost benefit, cost allocation, tradeoff, cost justification, benefits, cost-effectiveness, taken together often spell doom for the requisite policy. What the policy-maker must consider is not only the above criteria but also what future constraints may alter the composition of the proposal. Enter the penultimate test for any policy proposal—budget constraint. The proposal must be financially acceptable or it will be dropped. If it survives that hurdle, then the finish line is in sight. And waiting to make the final judgment, the final test, is public acquiescence. The proposal must in the end argues Kingdon, be acceptable to the public.[46] And that proposal will be as strong as the idea(s) upon which it is based.

Kingdon reminds the policy field that a great deal may be missed if one attempts to understand public policy solely via the concepts of power, influence, pressure and strategy. It is the content of ideas that are the integral part of public policy decision-making and ideas themselves turn out to be as important as political pressure (Kingdon, 1995, p.143). And, as important as ideas are, sorting them out and determining which idea or set of ideas should be supported and which ideas are to be shelved or dismissed outright, recalls the process of agenda-setting except this time the focus is on decision-making.

The Decision-Making Process

Parsons (1995) posits that there can be no one explanation of decision-making particularly in modern government where the activity is complex, multi-layered or multi-sphered, and where policy is composed of numerous decision points. His analysis of the decision-making process involves some five approaches derived from the following social sciences: political science; sociology; organizational theory; economics; psychology; and management. First, power approaches to decision-making.

Power approaches. In very general theoretical terms, so-called elitist or neo-elitist models concentrate power in the hands of a few (corporations or professionals) and therefore disadvantage the vast majority. [47] Whether the example is a government encountering an apparent insurrection or significant challenge to its authority or a government operating in an industrialized democracy, if the decisions made are seen by the populace as too concentrated in the hands of a few then the entity making the contentious decision will be labeled as elitist and had better be ready to suffer the consequences. By the late 1980s, for example, corporatism as a model of policy-making has proved somewhat anachronistic (Parsons, 1995, p.259). As for professionals, Parsons cites the work of Laffin and Young (1990) – *Professionalism in Local Government* – where they claim that professionals, in both the private and public sectors, no longer enjoy the social status and influence they once enjoyed. This observation may in turn be challenged given the continued 'presence' and influence of such organizations as the Manitoba Medical Association, the Winnipeg Health Authority, and the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses on health policy. As *bona fide* policy networks, advocacy coalitions and/or 'interests', their collective 'professional' influence on the

determination of provincial health policy cannot be ignored.[48] If a power approach to decision-making is so potentially contentious, surely an rational one is less so!

Rationality – an 'economic' approach. With its roots in the construction of 'economic man', rationality sees *homo economicus* as a calculating self-interested individual. As such, choices are made based on all information necessary comparing information on different options then selecting the option that enables the attainment of goals and interests. So goes the first context. The second context—the ideal bureaucracy—Parsons attributes to Max Weber (1864–1920). The ideal Weberian model of bureaucracy has the following characteristics: speci. alization; hierarchy; rules; impersonality; appointed officials; full-time officials; career officials; and the separation of public and private. This rational imperative model, says Parsons, constitutes the starting point for the analysis of rationality in public policy. What has happened in the world of policy analysis is that Weber's ideal has been criticized in terms of the empirical reality of decision-making. That critical approach, argues Parsons, departs substantially from Weber's model, and the limitations and boundaries of rationality in human decision-making. Underscoring this point is the work of 1978 Nobel Prize for Economics recipient Herbert Simon.

'Bounded rationality'. For Simon, the dominant concept throughout his research has been decision-making in organizations (Parsons, 1995, p.274). That process of decision-making is limited but not irrational. It is what he calls 'bounded rationality'. Human decision-making, Simon says, is driven by reason and rationality demonstrated in the context of an economic idea of rationality. On the other hand, Freud, Pareto and Lasswell portray human behaviour as driven by passions, instincts and subconscious feelings and anxieties. In his book *Administrative Behaviour*, published in 1945, Simon attempted to portray organizations in real as opposed to ideal terms (Parsons, 1995, p.275). In later writings through to the early 1970s, his notion of bounded rationality was further clarified to suggest that human decision-making is to be understood as occupying a middle ground between the two extremes. His observation that it is impossible for any one person to reach a high degree of rationality because there are too many alternatives, too much information, and too many 'givens' perhaps arguably is even more defensible

today than back in the late 1950s when it was first formulated. From his publication in

1957, Simon argues that human rationality is limited in terms of:

- the incomplete and fragmented nature of knowledge
- consequences that cannot be known, so that the decision-maker relies on a capacity to make valuations
- limits of attention: problems must be dealt with on a serial, one-at-time basis, since decision-makers cannot think about too many issues at the same time; attention shifts from one value to another
- human beings learning through adjusting their behaviour in line with purposive goals; the powers of observation and communication limit this learning process
- limits on the storage (memory) capacity of the human mind: it can only think of a few things at a time
- human beings as creatures of habit and routine
- human beings as limited by their psychological environments
- human beings with limited attention spans
- initiated behaviour and attention that will tend to persist in a given direction for a considerable period of time
- decision-making as also bounded by an organizational environment which frames the processes of choice (Parsons, 1995, p.277)

What Simon was getting at is that rationality is essentially procedural, that is, viewed as

selecting goals and courses of action which will best achieve the values or purposes

sought. It must be remembered that his clarification of what he meant by rationality in

organizational decision-making relies on the use of the two models: economic man and

administrative man. [49] Simon characterizes decision-making by 'administrative man'

operating in a world of bounded rationality and as motivated by satisficing (a

compromise of values and goals) rather than maximizing. This means that he makes

decisions that are not derived from all the alternatives (as detailed above). To effect some

sorting of all the alternatives, Simon did offer some suggestions in his writings published

in the 1960s.

Programmed decision-making. What he suggested was an enlargement of the

scope of programmed as opposed to non-programmed decisions. This would improve

decision-making taking into account new techniques and technology—training and

management techniques and operations research reflecting human relations and

organizational theory developments. Programmed decision-making addressed routine,

standard procedures and repetitive decision-making. By shifting more decisions into the

programmed area, senior layers of management would be free to address non-

programmed issues (new problems where no routines are evident nor are operating

procedures established, that is, 'big picture' issues).[50] By the 1980s, though he still argued for the use of rational techniques and computers to solve problems, Simon had tempered his approach acknowledging that self-interest is a powerful human motivator. Reason can only be a mediator and enlightener of interests —it cannot solve conflicts (Parsons, 1995, p.281). Also, institutional rationality limits the attention span of human beings. He already had listed the problems posed by the existence of multiple values and the large measure of uncertainty encountered by decision-makers. Reason then, is simply an instrument, it cannot help in selecting goals, so much as 'help us to reach agreed-upon goals more effectively' (Parsons, 1995, p.283).

How to improve 'rational' decision-making. And, from at last one researcher from the 1990s – psychologist Stuart Sutherland – irrationality is a major fact of public and private decision-making and its results can be disastrous. To improve the rationality of decision-making, Sutherland offers some 'morals' for improving same:

- don't make decisions on the basis of a single case
- think about decisions before implementing them or before obeying an order
- make sure counter-arguments are expressed in group decisions
- managers should adopt a participatory and egalitarian style
- search for evidence which contradicts the conventional or accepted wisdom
- learn elementary statistics (Sutherland in Parsons, 1995, p. 281)

The 'normative-optimal' model – extra rational dimensions. Sutherland's admonition is useful and very practical given the reality of policy-making in the dawn of the new millennium. It speaks to Lindblom's 'disjointed incrementalism' and 'partisan mutual adjustment' referenced earlier (page 77) in that the process of policy-making and in particular the decision-making aspect of that process is not that finite nor rational as some would like the process to demonstrate. For example, Parsons (1995) cites the work of Yehezekel Dror (1989) that argued that incrementalism only reinforces conservatism and the forces of anti-innovation. Further, where incrementalism predominates, the powerful have the upper hand. Dror wanted to increase the rational content of government and to build into his model the 'extra-rational' dimensions of decision-making. His long-term strategy to improve decision-making involves an 18-phase process. Called the 'normative-optimal' model, it acknowledges that there is a realm of extra-rational understanding founded on tacit knowledge and personal experience.

Optimal policy-making induces decision-makers to expand their thinking and frameworks. The model's strength is not in terms of the prescriptive dimension but more in it's provision of a framework to analyze the policy process (Parsons, 1995, p.437). Parsons suggests that the process be read as a cycle. Presented in three stages, it aims to take account of the real world. Specifically, the metapolicy-making stage involves

1. processing values
2. processing reality
3. processing problems
4. surveying, processing, and developing resources
5. designing, evaluating, and redesigning the policy-making system
6. allocating problems, values and resources
7. determining policy-making strategy

The policy-making stage involves

8. suballocating resources
9. establishing operational goals, with some order of priority
10. establishing a set of their significant values, with some order of priority
11. preparing a set of major alternative policies, including some 'good ones'
12. preparing reliable predictions of the significant benefits and costs of the various alternatives
13. comparing the predicted benefits and costs of the various alternatives and identifying the 'best' ones
14. evaluating the benefits and costs of the 'best' alternatives and deciding whether they are 'good' or not

Post-policy making stage involves

15. motivating the execution of policy
16. executing the policy
17. evaluating policy-making after executing the policy
18. communication and feedback channels interconnecting all phases (Parsons, 1995, p.436-427)

Obviously a proponent of policy-making over a longer period of time, this approach is not amenable to public involvement particularly if 'staying the course' is the issue. It is difficult if not impossible for the public to stay intimately involved with policy formulation for the length of time Dror implies. Not a problem for Dror as he sees the role of the public as one restricted to evaluating how a policy is arrived at and what its value components are including personalities and policy-making styles than on trying to judge specific policies on their merit (Parsons, 1995, p.296). In fact, says Dror, if the success of democracy depended on the people's ability to judge the main policy issues on their merits, then democracy would surely have perished by now (Parsons, 1995, p.296). Less critical of the public but also not enamoured with rationalist approaches to decision-making is Amitai Etzioni again cited by Parsons (1995, p.297-298; p.435-436).

Associated with 'communitarianism' theory in the field of policy sciences, Etzioni believes that personal transformation is rooted in the 'joint act of the community transforming itself' (Parsons, 1995, p.535). Public policy, he argues, should promote a society in which people are active in their communities and in which political action and intellectual reflection would have a higher more public status. Knowledge élites, that is, intellectuals, experts and politicians should interact with publics in what he calls 'collective reality testing'. Because a rationalistic approach to decision-making requires greater resources than decision-makers command, and incremental strategies take into account the limited capacity of actors, the result is decisions are made which neglect basic societal innovations. Enter his response to the conservatism of the incrementalism model—mixed scanning.

Mixed scanning – a response to incrementalism. The model reduces the unrealistic aspects of rationalism by limiting the details required in fundamental decisions and helps to overcome the conservative slant of incrementalism by exploring long-term alternatives (Parsons, 1995, p.297). Etzioni's model recognizes that decision-makers have to take into account the costs of knowledge: not everything can be scanned, thus decision-makers endeavour (or should endeavour) to scan key areas fully and 'rationalistically', whilst other areas will be subject to a more 'truncated' review. As far as Etzioni is concerned, the rational model and incrementalsm are flawed—they cannot be the basis for promoting an 'active society' (Parsons, 1995, p.298). For Etzioni, the key is flexibility of decision-making in the light of change and uncertainty in the environment. What Simon, Lindblom, Dror and Etzioni have in common, is their belief in the improvement of decision-making through changing the relationship of the political process to knowledge and information. For others still, improvement of decision-making would only be achieved under the aegis of public-choice theory.

Public choice theory. Public-choice theory posited that the solution to the problem of big government was the introduction of market forces to combat bureaucratic self-interest and the pressures of the vote motive. Simply stated, the theory recommended the introduction of competition into bureaucracy through contracting out, privatization and increasing competition between government departments by rewarding performance. Leading advocate Anthony Downs (1967) for example, started from the untested

assumption (Parsons, 1995, p.308) that decision-making in bureaucracies is informed by the pursuit of self-interest. Further, concluded Downs, the motivations of individual officials are diverse and give rise to different kinds of bureaucrat. His categories are intriguing.

- Climbers – are concerned with their power, income and prestige
- Conservers – are concerned with minimizing change
- Zealots – are highly motivated officials committed to push for a policy or program
- Advocates – see their interests in terms of maximizing the role and resources for their bureau
- Statesmen – have a sense of the public interest which may be advanced by increasing their power so as to realize their goals (Parsons, 1995, p.309) [51]

William Niskanen's (1971)neo-classical economic model, similar to Downs, is based upon the assumption of self-interest maximization being demonstrated by government officials. In his case, bureaucrats seek to maximize their budgets and the size of the bureau. Again from Parsons, the model is difficult to test or falsify although arguably the same observation may be made in this case as the one made about Anthony Downs with respect to the Manitoba Education and Training experience. And, as the 1980s and 1990s have shown, at least in the industrialized countries, the notion that there is a realm of 'non-market' decision-making has been questioned (Parsons, 1995, p.312). As Parsons remarks, 'marketization', 'contracting out', and 'public sector management' is, in this sense, another way of saying 'industrialization': public agencies and services become businesses and factories. His conclusion is that management theories—though critical of the public-choice model—have in practice been incorporated within the framework (Parsons, 1995, p.317). However, public-choice theory is not the exclusive management theory tool belonging only to the Right.

Drawing upon experience with the civil service in Britain during the Margaret Thatcher years, P. Dunleavy (1986; 1991), contrary to what Downs and Niskanen propose, presents a view that shows how self-interest effects different outcomes.

Self-interest effects outcomes. Government budgets and personnel relationships can be large and complex respectively. What Dunleavy calls 'shaping' involves senior bureaucrats contouring their budgets and departments in the same direction as that desired by the politicians and business sector. The result? The self-interests of all three

are analogous. In fact, Dunleavy further argues that budget-maximization is not the sole rational motivation of bureaucrats and their *bureaux*. And, with reference to the problem of decision-making and policy conceptualization, his argument makes sense.

- budgets are not in the hands of one but a group of officials (competition for resources to lessen a possible reduction or maintain bureau status and prestige against other bureau moderates self-interest)
- different strategies maximize utility (different kinds of budgets exist, e.g., core versus program; regulatory; transfer; contracts; servicing; in these cases size depends on the type of bureau concerned)
- there is an optimum level at which budget maximizing will take place (it will be greatest within those which have a close relationship between core, bureau and program)
- the rank and seniority of officials will have a determining impact on whether an official will choose to pursue the maximization of individual welfare or collective interests (senior decision-makers will be far more interested in maximizing their own welfare than the collective interests of the respective department as a whole particularly if there *bureaux* is small and close to political power centres – they do not want to head up heavily staffed, large budget but routine, conflictual and low-status agencies) (Parsons, 1995, p.18)

Dunleavy argues that as the *bureaux* becomes more of a control, transfer or contracts agency, the interests of the bureaucratic elite separate from the maximization of the bureau or program budget. To accomplish this, 'shaping' strategies will:

- effect major internal reorganization – the policy-making domain will be strengthened; routine (line) functions will be separated
- transform internal work practices to increase the preeminence of control activities
- redefine relationships with external 'partners' to maximize policy control and promote greater decentralization of responsibility for routine issues
- effect competition with other *bureaux* to defend the scope of responsibilities thereby off-loading low-grade tasks
- effect off-loading, contracting out functions that do not conform with the desired shape to other agencies, tiers of government and administration

Dunleavy's experience is that public choice models of bureaucracy that predict open-ended budget maximization are badly flawed. Bureaucrats, he says, typically do not embark on collective action modes of improving their welfare unless they have exhausted individual welfare-boosting strategies. High-ranking officials have much less to gain from increments and confront substantial advocacy costs in seeking to push through increases in the agency's base budget. Regarding lower-ranking bureaucrats, although they have the most to gain from budgetary expansion, Dunleavy contends that such individuals will know that the attainment of increments is almost completely insensitive

to their individual advocacy. Even though their advocacy costs are small, campaigning for budgetary expansion is unlikely to advance their individual utility. Parsons in turn concludes that the Dunleavy bureau-shaping model has a better fit with the experience of bureaucracy in contemporary society than the approaches advocated by Downs and Niskanen (Parsons, 1995, p.319-320). A further reality is that so many bureaucrats operate on a daily basis using a groupthink model. Such situations demonstrate how decisions or policy is made by a group where often a strong *esprit de corps* and commitment to a certain line results such that it resists other interpretations of information and events. In that small working groups and committees reinforces individual views or beliefs, this Parsons posits, is what policy-making in modern government greatly relies upon. That being said, it is well to recall the much earlier discussion that focused on the impact of institutionalism on the policy process (page 94f). That same impact has special importance for the decision-making process *per se*. Citing from the work of B. R. Patton, K. Griffin and E.N. Patton (1989) – *Decision Making Group Interaction* – Parsons recounts their conclusion:

> no matter how carefully crafted a decision structure may appear
> in terms of the sequence of the analysis and choice to which it commits
> decision makers, its effective utilization is still reliant on the social,
> psychological and communicative environment in which responsible
> parties function (Parsons, 1995, p.349)[52]

Just such a notion about how parties function is advocated by Wharf and McKenzie (1998) in their study of how to connect policy to practice in the area of Human Services.

Sectoral interest negotiation – a shared decision-making model. Generalizing that the public are cynical about government effectiveness and fairness and that government in the process of reacting to end-runs makes *ad hoc* decisions unrelated to formal planning processes, Wharf and McKenzie posit that such practice creates inconsistency thereby enhancing public distrust and alienation (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.82). Their solution? Supplement representative government with greater public participation drawing on direct democracy and sectoral interest negotiation. Not a 'new' model to be sure but one perhaps that is unique in that it places enormous trust in the hands of all concerned. Participants must be open, responsible, balanced/fair and advisory. Their faith in open discourse is unequivocal. Governments take note:

> In public policy negotiation, where the fullest range of interests

> are effectively represented in a balanced process, the consensus reached
> should be politically irresistible to government, even without any
> formal devolution of decision-making authority. (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998,
> p.85)

Not unlike the benefits derived from policy learning, shared decision-making can effect mutual learning. Fundamental to the shared decision-making model is participants must demonstrate mutual respect and bargain in good faith. In so-doing, what should be observed about the process argue Wharf and McKenzie is that participants will

- develop understanding and respect
- be clear as to roles and responsibilities
- understand personal interests through mutual cooperation
- be ready to act (shared decision-making requires action)
- be clearer about the mandate placed within a policy and fiscal framework
- require information, technical and administrative support
- acknowledge the need for change
- acknowledge the interdependence of interest
- not be too rigid
- distinguish interests/values from demands or positions
- challenge 'first' principles against other points of view
- agree to thorough pre-negotiation assessment to ensure that all can take part effectively

'Listening' is the key. As idyllic as the above may appear to be and at the same time commendable for those as optimistic as Wharf and McKenzie, for the process to work, government must sincerely listen to the full range of public interest in the development of public policy. Further, government must discourage 'end runs' around the process through the direct lobbying of ministers (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.89). No small task for any politician to juggle given the multiplicity of responsibilities and roles that cabinet government demands today. Wharf and McKenzie suggest that if government officials fear having their authority reduced when they enter public shared decision-making negotiation, that fear can be overcome by demonstrating the empowering nature of consensus decision-making with the delivery of creative, integrated and widely supported solutions. As an approach to policy conceptualization, this decision-making process surely speaks to shared planning. That such public participation in policy development and implementation promotes self-analysis, communication and creative synergy is a strong possibility. Even if a full consensus is not reached, say Wharf and McKenzie, the resultant policy will be more balanced, stable,

and a wiser decision (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.91). And the key to such public interest negotiation?

A possibility that all parties must be cognizant 'going in' to the negotiation. Wharf and McKenzie call it the right of a party to fully analyze its Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA) and retain the right to withdraw from the process if it feels it can better serve its interests outside the process. Now that notion surely affects the negotiating temperature and consequent comfort level of the participants. Be that as it may, public interest negotiation still leads to informed, balanced and stable decisions say Wharf and McKenzie. It does so because the process provides the flexibility to respond to new information and experience facilitated by the understanding and respect developed among the parties. All of which requires some resolution to the very large and tough task for government at all levels, namely, to maintain public interest negotiation by keeping sector constituencies and the general community informed.

Information must be shared. Public participation through multi-sector public interest negotiation is an essential component in management for sustainability (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.95). Why? First, it enables government to obtain comprehensive and balanced information. Second, the process encourages the stability of integrated policy that is perceived to be rooted in and to reflect broad public interest. Third, multi-sector public interest negotiation builds good will and resilience within communities. How? Conflicting interests are encouraged to understand and reconcile differences. While this decision-making process was based on a resource management experience in British Columbia in the early 1990s, it nonetheless speaks to some of the fundamental difficulties inherent to policy conceptualization with respect to decision-making. How is information collected, who selects the information, and how is the decision made to effect action not to mention for whose benefit? Once again, perhaps rational choice theory is the immutable foundation for the decision-making process.

Rational choice theory – still the best approach! Rational choice theory has altered the face not only of political science, but also sociology and organizational theory (Boyd, Crowson, van Geel, 1994, p.127). It dates from the origins of microeconomic theory —how individuals and firms make choices taking into account the costs and benefits of the alternatives confronted.

Rational choice theorists attempt to make sense of the complexity of human action by declaring some assumptions or axioms about human motives and behaviours. By deduction, they develop the logical implications of the assumptions to explain and predict behaviour. Considered are the behaviours of people and different 'institutional' settings with respect to voting rules, agenda-setting rules, and incentive systems. Boyd *et al* further postulate that as a social science perspective resting on 'methodological individualism', rational choice theory claims that all social phenomena are derivable from the properties of individuals, after taking into account the setting in which they are located. It presumes, they say, that all political actors – voters, professional politicians, and bureaucrats – have preferences and make rationally calculated decisions to maximize the realization of their preferences at the least cost (Boyd et al, 1994, p.128-129). A virtue of the rational choice approach is that the paradigm immediately calls attention to the difference - and tension – between the goals of individuals (maximizing their own welfare) and the professed goals of organizations. All of which begs the question what are the prospects and limits of rational choice theory?

Some limitations. Boyd *et al* claim that because the theory is still in its infancy there are some important limitations, namely:

- some models point to a variety of possible outcomes thus failing to specify which will in fact be the outcome (rational choice thinking may effect seemingly contradictory conclusions, e.g., that democracy in the workplace will lead, on the one hand, to instability and inefficiency, but, on the other hand, to better more efficient decisions)
- people do not always behave the way some rational choice models say they will
- this mode of analysis has not been extended to explain a variety of social phenomena – why people have their basic preferences is not explained – these preferences instead are treated as a 'given'(e.g., the theory has not fully answered why people vote)
- should the world always be looked at in individualistic terms

Along with the above impediments, where work has been done in the rational choice tradition, the following challenge has been cited. With regard to economics-based policy analysis, the use of cost-benefit analysis ignores matters such as inequalities in the distribution of wealth. Further, the prescriptions that arise from cost-benefit analysis may aggravate inequalities in wealth distribution. Though perhaps stated too strongly, rational choice theory tends to dehumanize the decision-making process. As Boyd and his

colleagues have observed, rational choice does not really capture 'the meaning' of events from the subjective perspective of the participants. In short, if the models do not explain and/or are not predictive, then they need to be improved. After all, the true test of rational choice models is whether they offer sound explanation of phenomena employing a real causal mechanism, and whether they are predictive of a wide range of phenomena (Boyd et al, 1994, p.142). This surely has implications for the formulation of education policy particularly if one involves its academic community – the various schools of education!

The conclusions Boyd and his cohorts express arguably challenge the education community's perceived stance toward the use of rational choice theory. Few faculty members, they say, have been trained in or exposed to economics. The low visibility of economics in education is not entirely accidental. How so? Their response is interesting and cause for reflection. The perspectives of business, economics and administration tend to diverge from, and not easily harmonize with, the professional ideology of teachers and their mentors. Indeed, the dependent relationship between teachers and professional schools of teacher education involves much self-interest making critique of the respective systems much less palatable than declarations of improvement of same. What they are saying is that if calls for systemic reform of education continue, sooner or later the resultant reform discourse will need to contend with the issue of incentives. That in turn opens up the possibility of analysis and action more in accord with rational choice theory (Boyd et al, 1994, p.143). Finally, their prediction is that because rational choice theory is gaining more acceptance in other social sciences, including its central role in policy analysis, it will gain more attention and use in the study of education politics. It has potential in the field of education for those venturesome enough to exploit its potential. As for its role in policy analysis, some argue that the inherent messiness of politics militates against the naïve belief that decision-making can somehow be made more rational (Parsons, 1995, p.433).

Open policy-making is key to better decision-making. Parsons argues that the claims made through the 1980s for rational analysis improving 'problem-solving' were far too extravagant. While perhaps too obvious, public policy is made of language—written or oral—and argument is central in all stages of the policy process. That is why Etzioni's notion of 'communitarianism'—personal transformation rooted in

the 'joint act of the community transforming itself'— and Dror's 'extra-rational' understanding founded on tacit knowledge and personal experience, have maintained their critical rationalist stance. They reject the idea of incrementalism (Lindblom, 1993). Both rely upon the active involvement of people in their communities thereby raising their individual and societal consciousness. Further to the discussion regarding the limits of rational analysis, Parsons credits 'political realist' Charles Lindblom with the point that because political analysis is part of the political process it should complement political argumentation rather than replace it. Political analysis in this context raises the level of political debate. As Parsons notes, for Lindblom, whether rational analysis improves decision-making is not the real issue. The key to better decision-making is not analysis for the elite but a more open policy-making process in which policy is shaped by a wider range of ideas, interests, analysis and social learning (Parsons, 1995, p.438-439). A further extension of Lindblom's approach is the one represented by what Parsons identifies as the 'critical theorists'. They envisage policy analysis as an activity that should be informed by a radical commitment to social change and equality as a prerequisite for improving decision-making (Parsons, 1995, p.444). This means that the decision-making process is wide open and meant to empower citizens. Harold Lasswell's 'integrative' decision seminar and John Dryzek's 'communicative framework' are cited as examples.

The decision seminar. Parsons relays that for Lasswell, decision seminars could be used as a technique for developing contextual and conceptual maps for decision-making. The aim of such an approach would be to create situations in which 'permissive social environments' create the pre-conditions for creative thinking and open communication. The method is designed to help decision-makers develop tools for dealing with complex problems and in the process effect personal development and enlightenment for all participants. As with any such process there are pre-requisites. The decision seminar lists twenty. Briefly, the decision seminar calls for:

- 16-25 members of variant academic, cultural, professional, social backgrounds
- commitment to continue the seminar
- frequent 3 hour meetings daily, weekly, fortnightly with a room booked for the task
- commitment to the Lasswell model (see below) including proceedings files collection; AV and data processors to support the group

- a Lasswellian model facilitator that uses proceedings minutes to set agendas and encourages free association of ideas; fantasy; private meditation and simulations
- sharing of cognitive maps on problems/issues/values including open candid disclosure of data plus critical examination of presentations
- appearances of expert witnesses
- no restrictions on sources and methods of reporting to the seminar
- priority to be given to material introduced by the group
- close attention to the interconnections of items discussed
- re-evaluation of past constructs about the future
- awareness by all of the psychological dimensions of individual and group behaviour (Parsons, 1995, p.446)

Once the above has been satisfied, Lasswell's decision seminar framework then calls for the participants to go through some 27 concepts grouped under four sets of ideas—the intellectual tasks; a decision process model; the social process model; and categories of values and institutions.

The intellectual tasks focuses the attention of the decision seminar on five tasks designed to map out a strategy for problem solving: goal clarification; trend description; analysis of conditions; projection of developments; invention, evaluation and selection of alternatives.

The decision process model is comprised of seven phases. Analysis should focus on stakeholders who are involved in intelligence élites (intelligence); those who promote values, causes, and interests (promotion); those who prescribe policy (prescription); those who enforce it (invocation); those who implement it; those who appraise it (application); and those with the power to terminate a policy (termination). Also important is what they value; how they secure their values; and when (appraisal).

The social process model is designed to map the way in which participants (stakeholders) in a decision process seek to realize their values through institutions. This process seeks to define or identify the following: participants; participant perspectives; participant situations; participant base values; strategies used by the participants; participant outcomes; and what are the actual value and institutional effects of participation? The final set of ideas – the analysis of the value-institutions context of a problem - is a key tool for the decision seminar. The Lasswell decision seminar proposes an eight-fold classification of values and their corresponding institutions. He asks, what

values and what institutions are involved in problems/solutions (market, bureaucracy, and community)?

- Power: government, law, political parties
- Enlightenment: languages, mass media, scientific establishments
- Wealth: farms, factories, banks
- Well-being: hospitals, recreational facilities
- Skill: vocational, professional, art schools
- Affection: families, friendship circles
- Respect: social classes and castes
- Rectitude: ethical and religious associations (Parsons, 1995, p.446-447)

The decision seminar should proceed by mapping the problem at issue by applying the above four sets of conceptual tools.[53] Equally critical of rational analysis, and no less enamoured of attempts to exclude public participation, John Dryzek argues for a policy analysis which sides with 'open communication and unrestricted participation'— a process that involves a much less 'privileged group' than that described in the framework advocated by Lasswell.

Open and unrestricted policy analysis. Citing from John Dryzek's (1987) article "Complexity and rationality in public life"[54], Parsons recounts Dryzek's argument that there are three main kinds of instrumental rationality as a response to growing complexity: *analytical disaggregation* (decision analysis and other analytical tools that break down or decompose a problem to improve decision-making, e.g., Herbert Simon); *systems modeling* (approaches that model or simulate the interactions in a problem); and *integrative approaches* (pooling different people and disciplines to approach a problem in a multi-framed manner, e.g., Harold Lasswell). Dryzek further argues that there have been two main alternatives to instrumental rationality, namely, political rationality (Lindblom, 1959) and market rationality (Hayek, 1978) which he contends has clearly been the most significant alternative to 'rational analysis' from the 1980s onwards (Parsons, 1995, p.449). That said, what is most interesting is his contention that there is yet another alternative-communicative rationality with its philosophical roots grounded in the work of Hannah Arendt (1958) and Jurgen Habermas (1984).

A participatory democracy. The aim of the communicative approach is to resurrect authentic and reasonable public discourse, eroded says Dryzek, by centuries of instrumental rationality manifested by hierarchy, administration, and technocracy

(Parsons, 195, p.449). It is a form of social interaction that is free from domination (the exercise of power), strategic behaviour by the actors involved, and (self) deception. All actors, argues Dryzek, should be equally and fully capable of making and questioning arguments without restriction on their participation. The attraction of such an alternative is its practicality that can be complimentary to instrumental analysis. Analytical tools would still be used but in the context of an open 'argumentative' process and a more participatory democracy. Dryzek has been perhaps too optimistic regarding the success of his approach. He has conceded that much is still to be done to effect satisfactory results from the combination of communicative rationality and instrumental analysis. At least by the early 1990s, the argumentative approach could still be considered as an attempt to deliver on Lasswell's call for the evolution of a policy science of democracy (Parsons, 1995, p.450). But then the theme of equality as a means of improving decision-making is not confined to the 'critical' framework. 'Neo-pluralists' such as Lindblom are very close to what the critical theorist's demand for a more active public participation in the formulation of public policy.

Managerialism and public choice theory – the new way? Critical theorists must deal with the practicality of 'ideal speech' situations and the deliberative drudgery of decision seminars. The eventuality of a revolution in the social order that might facilitate a critical theorist scenario for public deliberation is a model perhaps only possible on the pages of professional journals.[55] A more patient pluralist model posited by Lindblom and Woodhouse of course argues that to improve decision-making, we must make pluralism work. Only by a more active political process is it possible for the assumptions of policy élites to be effectively challenged. Nor does such a process guarantee an easy route to policy conceptualization. Public policy making remains so very difficult to develop and implement. The incrementalist invocation that by reducing: the influence of business, the inequalities in the policy-making process, and the barriers to inquiry; and then encouraging more equal competition of diverse ideas, even when taken all together, is no less fanciful than the ideas of the critical theorists (Parsons, 1995, p.451). The paramount point to be made here is that in the real world of policy analysis Parsons concludes, little headway has been made by the critical theorists and pluralists with respect to tackling the issues of equality and power. By the 1990s, what has emerged

has been a predominantly accommodationist and conservative bias of the study of public policy and policy analysis. This has given way to a 'new' approach to decision-making, one which largely excludes the problems of inequality and the wider social, political and economic factors which impair participation in the policy process in favour of a narrower managerial focus (Parsons, 1995, p.452).

Managerialists view decision-making in public policy as involving issues and problems akin to the management of organizations in the private sector. The traditional or classical paradigm that framed policy analysis since its inception has been that public decision-making was different to decision-making in the private sector. What the managerialist approach kept in their challenge to the difference and uniqueness of public policy making was the shared belief of the rationalist position that 'politics' is not an effective mode of decision-making. This poses not only a theoretical but very practical threat to public policy formulation. Parsons warning is prophetic indeed! Managerialism juxtaposed with 'public choice' theory

> represents an on-going search to take decision-making out of a world where there are conflicts over values and beliefs into a realm where decisions can be made in a more rational (non-political) way...the analysis of public policy in terms of 'management' has come to dominate the way in which public policy is now discussed. (Parsons, 1995, p.454f)

So much for the notion of public policy development being facilitated by the notion of the 'oppositional contestation of ideas'. Decision-making, as it relates to public policy, must not succumb to the tenets of Managerialism or public choice theory. To do so would all but eliminate even a semblance of citizenry contribution to the development of public policy. And that 'semblance' becomes a major concern for the implementation of public policy.

Summary

Public policy making evolves not by some prescribed model or design. It is developed by people who attempt to make public policy as best they can using what ever financial and technical resources that are available. That the policy may be flawed or only of limited duration may reflect more the exigencies of societal factors more than the existence or not of a model or design for policy making. The main lesson to learn is that

by recognizing the mutability of public policy development, policy actors will be more vigilant—though at times perhaps too cautious—as they attempt to mediate a policy acceptable to all. After all, as the theorists suggest, ideas for policy formulation have no predetermined origin. We have to be prepared to accept or reject them based upon what ever criteria has been established to accomplish the task. Personally, I like the notion of contingency theory. While a challenge to be sure, I have found that people have risen to the task. The resultant policy has been improved, satisfactory to more participants, and best of all, intrinsically satisfying—I helped produce 'that' and it feels 'good' to so declare!

Critical to public policy making is the determination of what if any 'problem' exists. Here again, it is fascinating to listen to the many perceptions that circulate around the table as the task is clarified. One cannot be too limiting in the solicitation of feedback at this stage or at any stage of the policy making process. It is therefore patently obvious to me that policy making is and will continue to be a very 'political' activity. People's values and attitudes are involved. How they 'see' the problem are via the 'political vision' they use on a daily basis. To argue that policy making is neutral or that problem definition is somehow above the sordid process of policy debate ignores the fundamental reality of societal social, political and economic discourse. Anything less would be a denigration of the democratic process!

Though it is argued here that a model or design for policy making is not as important as the people in the process are, the fact that a process or model is used does not do the process any inordinate damage. Clarifying the context for public policy conceptualization by a process of 'framing' in many if not all circumstances will effect better understanding of what must be done to proceed with the policy making process. This is particularly important as the purpose of the 'institution' that facilitates the policy making process must be understood by the policy actors. Regarding the development of education policy, the term 'institution' really encompasses the entire provincial system: the department itself; school divisions/districts; schools, non-governmental organizations (NGOs); the private sector; and all of the many advocacy groups that have a stake in the success or not of the public education system. Unfortunately the monolith of education doesn't do well with either the occasional 'tinkering' or all pervasive alteration. That of

itself may be good in that less bandwagons are followed but perhaps not so good in that needed change is very slow to 'catch on'. Perhaps that is more a result of the action or inaction of the very people that occupy those same institutions. Perhaps John Kingdom's notion of policy streams is the appropriate metaphor after all! Certainly Manitoba has had ample experience with water flow in the physical world. To not stretch the point too far, what has altered the course of the policy 'streams' is not only a change in the political orientation of the Government but the volatility of the many advocacy coalitions in the province.

It is the activity of the advocacy groups that gives best testimony to the importance of the 'oppositional contention of ideas'. Sabatier's advocacy coalition framework, including his recommendations for improvement, provides a blueprint for policy formulation. But, as valuable as the framework is, true appreciation of how coalitions and subsystems function is as contentious as the very policy that they all help formulate. As Howlett and Ramesh relate, the process never has neutral effects—some win and some lose!

Certainly one of the most contentious issues occupying the attention of the policy community is the issue of governance. This involves the changing relations of the State to the educational arena. Discussions center on issues concerning the centralization and decentralization of the State or the devolution of power. There appears to have been a shift in the loci of power from the center to geographically local contexts through the community governance of education. A further discussion of note is the debate over the 'privatization' and 'marketization' of social policy. Commenting on this dynamic, Popkewitz (2000) has attempted to locate the problem of the state in the problematic of *regulation*.

To understand the patterns of regulation requires, he says, that we consider the notion of actor as problematic; to understand empirically the relations among groupings in their arena of practice and to consider the knowledge systems that give direction and interpretation to those practices (Popkewitz, 2000, p. 185). What he contends is that there has been a shift from bureaucratic centralism (rule governing) to 'goal steering'. Further, the new corporate structure is less hierarchical and pyramidal eliminating middle layers of management. This corporate restructuring embodies changing patterns of governance

toward work and productivity. What I like about Popkewitz's argument is that the 'new' approach accents individual autonomy and the capacity to adapt thereby the policy actor becomes an agent of change in a changing world—all of which is integral to one's self-fulfillment. What occurs is that the individual becomes less defined by the work assignment.

The 'new' psychology regards productive activity as the site of deployment of the person's personal skills. In fact, the equation becomes "I understand it" + "I can do it" + "I care about it" = "capacity". As Popkewitz suggests, there is a shift from the individual defined by having particular sets of competencies, skills, and knowledge to the individual who embodies pragmatic capabilities and dispositions. For example, in the world of the classroom, the capabilities of the teacher are self-confidence, self-discipline, problem solving, and a willingness to learn (Popkewitz, 2000, p. 187). The key here is that bureaucrats, researchers, teachers and children are situated in time and space. The refusal to make the subject problematic posits Popkewitz is one of the major difficulties of policy and studies of education. We cannot assume that the actors and their positions in the educational arena are stable and fixed categories. They are not monolithic and universalized groups but are instead historically formed and reformed groupings. This certainly speaks to the value of recognizing the potential of contingency theory.

In short Popkewitz concludes that discussions about conservative restorations, privatization, marketization, and the dichotomy between State and civil society obscure the changes occurring through their systems of reasoning. The assemblage of actors, techniques, and images that intersect in the construction of governing are left unscrutinized. And here is the important observation. There are long-term shifts in the problems of governing that require different analytical distinctions to interpret the alternatives offered than those of the State as an sovereign entity related to its territory (Popkewitz, 2000, p. 194).

Indeed, what has been discussed in terms of the role of policy communities, including such techniques as 'alternative dispute resolution', allowing ideas to 'float', and the recognition of policy fragmentation, may be some of the 'different analytical distinctions' that Popkewitz had in mind. Certainly the process of decision-making cannot be excluded from such a discussion.

Decision-making is arguably the most difficult stage of the policy making process. It is the point where all involved must listen, demonstrate respect for and encourage alternate viewpoints, and, in the end, acknowledge that whatever policy is declared, it has been arrived at by a process that has been fair, defensible, and the best possible under the circumstances.

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[25] As detailed in Chapter 2 with reference to globalization, transnational corporations, and the fragile nature of territorial boundaries.

[26] The systemic/public agenda Howlett and Ramesh define as all issues commonly perceived by members of the political community meriting public attention involving matters within the legitimate jurisdiction of governmental authority.

[27] Surely this notion places the task of Government's 'spin' doctors in perspective?

[28] Recent meetings of world leaders with respect to world trade have certainly captured the attention of Canadian officials – "Globalism at heart of world trade" *Winnipeg Free Press,* August 25, 1999, page A11; "Trade Minister aims to humanize globalization" *Globe and Mail,* October 25, 1999, page B1.

[29] Recent changes in the administration of financial accounting at Manitoba Education and Training known as the SAP (Systems Application Processes) system, while able to account for every penny budgeted, breaks down in that many of the expenditures are dependent upon people performing tasks as proposed. Bad weather, longer time spent developing material, changes in management/consultant planning, all may contribute to contingency theory being the only constant.

[30] The Manitoba Council for Intercultural Cooperation (MCIC) is an example. The Council attempted to coordinate the efforts of some dozen or so 'like' interests by lobbying the Manitoba government for financial grants to ensure the annual survival of each of the groups. The groups operating under the umbrella of MCIC included the local United Nations Association, the Brandon Marquis Project, Canadian Red Cross Society—all groups of citizens of good intention, legitimate and virtuous intent but alone not able to remain viable. The irony was that these same groups would constantly lobby/pressure the government to be more cognizant of the plight of the many 'constituencies' that each group represented.

[31] In the experience of the writer, this occurred in 1977-78 (the Lyon government's Blue Task Force Report on Government Reorganization) and again in 1994 (the Filmon/Manness "New Directions " policy for the department of Education and Training)

[32] During the last provincial election in the province of British Columbia, certain government members were reputed to have said that they would present a balanced budget if elected. Voter petitions and a pending legal decision are still trying to determine if what was said in the view of the electorate was indeed declared. That province has a 'recall' process that presents a serious scenario for the elected officials and the electorate. Was the voter's declaration on voting day in this case 'setting policy'? Endorsing policy?

[33] He cites Kingdon's 'fortuitous confluence of various streams of issues and opportunities' as an example of an extreme view of how agendas of governments are set as opposed to the result of more manifest political and social activity.

[34] Not mentioned in the Peters account of the March and Olsen approach is the very practical concern regarding the length of service a political actor has accumulated with an organization. And does that service commitment facilitate maintenance theory or encourage 'risk' and 'innovation'?

[35] Though hardly on the same level as major government policy activity in the health field, Mahwinney's point about delays created by the interaction with other policies, at least at a very practical and monthly operational level at Manitoba Education and Training, is the attempt to coordinate public school curriculum development, implementation, learning resource identification and system-wide student assessment. Never mind stages models or reliance on institutional wisdom necessarily. Contingency theory is the operative phenomenon. Even reliance upon Canadian research on change theory has failed to dissuade cabinet ministers who demonstrate an amazing ability to ignore the conventional wisdom about the development, implementation and evaluation of curriculum for public schools.

[36] The writer has participated in such activity many times over the past 25 years working in the Department of Education. Lindblom and Woodhouse are correct, trial and error, feedback, public consultation meetings, all the gathered data must be recorded and brought forward as discourse to be seriously considered in the eventual final document/policy released by the minister.

[37] While it is certainly not fair to take out-of-context what Lindblom and Woodhouse refer to as an agency, their observation certainly applies to a specific situation in Manitoba Education and Training. Creation of the Manitoba Text Book Bureau (MTBB) as a Special Operating Agency, that is, operating at 'arms length' from the department, generates specific policy concerns for the Program Development Branch. For example, learning resources selected for public schools Grade K-12 IN Manitoba do not have to be listed by the MTBB. By actual Memorandum of Understanding, the MTBB is under no obligation to list such learning resources. Because the MTBB must now operate to generate a profit, the MTBB obviously must stock what it can sell. In short, what the education (cum schools) 'market' demands. The potential for policy disagreement is enormous. In this case, the importance of the theory behind institutionalism is not only poignant but also essential for the sanity of the bureaucracy and for the 'field' (schools) who rely upon the MTBB for the acquisition of curriculum congruent learning resources.

[38] Specific experience with such a proposal occurred over the past two years when six Units and an SOA (Special Operating Agency) combined efforts to produce an internal policy manual for the selection of learning resources. Much adjustment to each other along with competition of ideas eventually resolved a complex policy problem. And, like most policies, it will be an on-going process of 'mutual adjustment' to ensure the viability of the policy.

[39] This too is changing as the strategies for public policy development incorporate more 'public' consultation via draft consultation position papers, public seminars, and solicited feedback procedures that use mail surveys.

[40] This is in keeping with the change theory research published in the 1980s particularly in the education field articulated by Michael Fullan, Kenneth Leithwood, and Andrew Hargreaves. Related comment was enunciated by Roland Barth and Seymour Sarason particularly in the area of school change and participant relationships within the institution of schooling. By the mid to late 1990s, some thinking was beginning to shift to more of an 'action' orientation as opposed to what had been proposed as a 'reflective' style of implementing change—what Fullan refers to as "fire, ready, aim" instead of the "ready, aim, fire" approach advocated in the 1980s.

[41] The characteristics of policy formulation listed by Jones provides an interesting screen through which one might filter the present process for policy, curriculum, and support document development and distribution to the education community external to the 'department'. There may be at least nine 'sign-off' signatures required before a policy document is published and released to the 'public'. (Project Consultant; Project Leader; Project Manager; Publications Editor; Branch Director; bulk mail distribution coordinator; Assistant Deputy Minister; Deputy Minister; and finally, Minister).

[42] Having experienced this very approach in the public consultation process to reorganize the Manitoba public secondary school system (1970-1971), the more 'public' meetings that were conducted the more opportunity the 'public' had to mount opposition to the overall proposal. Often audience members queried our collective sanity particularly with the proposal to introduce continuous progress in the secondary

system. Too many levels and phases plus too much to keep track of regarding a students progress they declared. The overall political reality at the time- and with the advantage of hindsight – the fact that the reorganization of the entire secondary school system was being orchestrated by the newly elected NDP government had not a little to do with the public perception about what various agendas where about. One agenda certainly was an attempt to decentralize an education system that had been dominated by the department of education from its inception prior to WWI, that is, transfer responsibility for assessment of student progress to local schools and encourage development of courses at the local level that met student need (the concept of School Initiated Courses and Student-Initiated Projects was proposed in the 1973 final report and still exists).

[43] This process has worked at an operational level recently within Manitoba Education and Training. Some eight different organizational Units within the School Programs Division collectively wrote a Project Charter and desired outcome statements to produce a policy manual for the selection of learning resources.

[44] The research on what effects change and how people react to change provides a fascinating backdrop to what Kingdon advances here. Writings of Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves posit that not enough attention has been paid to those who resist change. They are not listened too consequently their resistance becomes a critical factor in any attempt made toward innovation/implementation of a policy or set of ideas on curriculum, pedagogy or school improvement. Perhaps taking Kingdon's notion of recombination may in fact facilitate ease of understanding by the recipients of an intended innovation. In short, have them articulate what Fullan has called 'vocational identity' and relate that understanding to what the innovation is proposing to reach a common platform – a shared stage with a script that all can understand and feel comfortable before proceeding together toward a common set of goals.

[45] Such a subject for Manitoba Education and Training might be student assessment. Commonplace for sure – it never leaves the public agenda. Intellectually boring? That is certainly arguable given the range of professional and public opinion on the subject. The conundrum is that so much information becomes misused by the system. Politically driven, the subject determines so many facets of the total education agenda that *ennui* becomes an issue because the reactions of the various 'publics' are predictable and no one appears to learn from experience or honour very much what research has to offer on the topic. Perhaps a fault – if fault may be determined – is that the university, department of education, school division, school, and teachers, never seem to be on the same page much less book which leaves the parent sector having to interpret it all for themselves. How many times, for example, have national surveys shown that the public generally fails the public school system but continually gives their own school a more than passing grade? Or a parent might claim we need provincial standards tests to determine where my school stands against the rest of the province. Does anyone say that because there are some 850 public schools in Manitoba, no matter what your child and school cohorts do on the standards test, 425 schools are going to be somewhere above the standard while 425 are going to be below? And who wants to send their child to the school that is 799 on the list?

[46] The Manitoba general election of September 21, 1999 was arguably fought over health care ('hallway medicine') and education sector financing. The NDP government, in its attempt to redress the perceived and actual nursing shortage in the health care field, has decided to reinstate the 2-year diploma nursing training program. As a policy initiative, this example would be a fascinating one to test Kingdon's criteria for survival. At this juncture, (May 2000) the criteria stand!

[47] African nations are still trying to rid themselves of the remnants of colonialism, e.g., Zimbabwe and Serria Leone (April/May 2000). In both situations democracy may or may not be seen to be working given the apparent concentration of power in small groups who in turn are dependent upon the military for their hold on political power.

[48] The current NDP government ran their campaign on 'hallway medicine' and were victorious back on September 21, 1999. When the PCs were in power, Health policy was their Achilles Heel having spent millions on a professional consultant's recommendations that some argue is now the reason for the province's shortage of professional nurses.

[49] Simons use of gender and therefore apparent exclusion of the other 50% of humanity is not acceptable herein. Suffice to say that while his theory could certainly be attacked accordingly, that is not the purpose at this juncture. As Kathy Ferguson has argued in *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy* (1984), how women function within an organization has interesting similarities when compared to how men function in organizations. Liberal and radical feminism aside for the moment, both genders may claim or disclaim

attributes that are less than complimentary to successful operation of an organization. Power, it seems, can consume either gender.

[50] Programmed and non-programmed differentiation has been a recent operational conundrum within the Manitoba department of education. 'Routine' matters were monitored by management to the point where non-senior staff were being systematically 'deskilled'. Their historical knowledge of the organization was summarily ignored including their development and implementation skills to make way for what was perceived as a 'new direction' for the organization. The newly elected NDP government operational approach appears to be moving to what Simon suggested. Leave routine matters to staff and line managers. Senior management (assisted by a proposed research and planning group) will address holistic and heuristic problems.

[51] While perhaps some three decades since Downs published his findings, at the time of writing, Manitoba Education and Training has provided examples of all five categories. The Downs list of 'laws' which serves to codify his theory – law of increasing conservatism; law of imperfect control; law of decreasing co-ordination; law of self-serving loyalty; law of diminishing control – as examples all stand the personal test of this writer at least. Parsons says the model may be criticized for its claim to a predictive power. Too many assumptions are made with regard to self-interest, hierarchy, and size as defining the characteristics of bureaucratic development. This writer's quarter century experience in government argues that the Downs analysis is not far off the mark if not 'dead-on'!

[52] Reorganization of Branch/Unit structure coupled with reallocation of staff in the Spring of 2000 within the Manitoba Department of Education will be a genuine test of the Patton *et al* observations about institutional context. What had been working prior to the bureau operational changes will encounter not only new participant membership but new direction as well. How senior bureaucrats facilitate the transition will be a factor in determining the effectiveness of the groupthink process. Fortunately institutional history may be on both sides. Low-ranking bureaucrats have managed to survive many such organizational changes. That they should not continue to do so is a testament to their understanding of the social, psychological and communicative environment in which they function on a daily basis.

[53] Commendable for its thoroughness, Lasswell's decision seminar model and framework presents a gargantuan challenge to the human and material resources available particularly with respect to government. Tight deadlines determined by internal and external interests often mitigate circumstances less than conducive to resolution of problems based upon such an involved process.

[54] John Dryzek (1987) *Political Studies*, 35: 424-42

[55] Hardly an example of qualitative research, a recent local public meeting of residents at the neighbourhood community club met to try and resolve the problem of speeding vehicles on residential streets. The meeting produced no real resolution particularly when data supplied by the city revealed that the offending speeders were in fact local residents. The debate was spirited and open. Equal time to speak (a demand made often during the meeting), and apparent lack of any threatening form of an authority base allowed for an hour at least of delightful discourse. Pleasant until some began to argue that the volunteer group that called the meeting were really out to consolidate their 'interests' and who or what group called for all the stop signs in the first place, and on, and on, and on! Not just Herbert Simon would surely have been disappointed. Anyone interested in the efficacy of public participation and public policy formulation would have been disappointed. The volunteer committee said they would continue but this time with a focus on improving the neighbourhood's knowledge about the problem by preparing pamphlets and possible boulevard signs alerting drivers about the concern for the safety of children, residents and of course – tax payers!

CHAPTER 6

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine some of the theoretical foundations that support public policy implementation processes. Of particular interest is the relationship of implementation and governance. The impact of policy instruments, policy wording and when to use the knowledge of those elements is also explored. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how to 'situate' societal views about public policy and how those perceptions might impact policy implementation.

The chapter has been organized under the headings: "Implementation – An Execution Process"; "Civil Servants and Implementation"; "Implementation and Evaluation – Always Together?"; "Principles that Clarify Service and Governance"; "New Public Management"; "Implementation Effects Improved Policy Design"; "Policy Instruments and Implementation"; "A Theory for Instrument Choice"; "Alternative Policy Instruments"; "Resources and Constraints to Instrumental Choice"; "The Wording of Policy"; "Categories of Policy Language"; "'Opening' the Policy Window"; "'Impaired Inquiry' – A Challenge to be Confronted"; "Political Communities – 'A Web of Dependencies'"; and "Summary".

Implementation – An Execution Process

Though potentially an enormously complex process to effect, in brief, implementation is an execution process, an elaboration, a realization of schemes and conceptions, the building of links in often long chains of decisions and agreement (Pal, 1997, p.154). Conventional work on implementation says Pal, tends to highlight its multidimensionality, difficulty, ambiguity, and growing realization of its importance. That being said, implementation can also be viewed as a political process of bargaining among actors. They may not have equal access to resources nonetheless they can still affect outcomes. What is interesting about implementation is how its ambiguity reflects the complex symbiosis between theory and practice: policy is initially nothing more than ideas or conceptualizations, while implementation is the specific means of execution and elaboration in practice. As the saying goes, theory guides practice, but practice must, of necessity add details that were never contemplated in the origins of the policy (Pal, 1997,

p.155). One group of actors on the stage of policy conceptualization that is particularly cognizant of Pal's poignant observation is civil servants.

Civil Servants and Implementation

As pointed out by John Kingdon (1995), career civil servants have a far greater impact on implementation and alternative generation than agenda setting. As one of the major preoccupations of career bureaucrats, implementation involves administering existing programs, not concentrating on new agenda items. This, says Kingdon, is where the power of bureaucrats is often manifested (Kingdon, 1995, p.31). Implementation processes usually call for feedback to determine the effectiveness of the policy. It is at this juncture that the potential for innovation may arise thus further increasing the importance of the role of the bureaucrat. Assessed from a slightly different perspective, Lindblom and Woodhouse (1993) suggest that the implementation phase and evaluation phase cannot reliably be distinguished from the other steps of the public policy development process.

Implementation and Evaluation – Always Together?

An attempt to implement one policy almost always, they say, brings new problems onto the agenda. Indeed, Lindblom and Woodhouse posit that the step called *implementation* and the step called *agenda building* collapse into each other. Further, by way of a very practical observation of the process, both argue that one group's solution often is another group's problem. From the seedbed of implementation, conclude the policy field duo, new policy problems grow and are plucked for the agenda in never-ending succession. Dare one repeat their conclusion—policy making is a complexly interactive process without beginning or end (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1995, p.11).

Precedent 'spillover'. The above also speaks to what Kingdon (1995, p.192-193) refers to as 'spillover', that is, precedents established in one policy area may apply to an adjacent policy area. Success in one area increases the probability of success in adjacent areas. Successful coalitions may be transferred to new issues with the added inherent strength associated with the word that many if not all public servants rely upon as the immutable postulate of policy phraseology – precedent. Though possible to invoke for purposes of maintenance theory only with respect to a given public policy proposal, examples of past practice may also be cited to encourage an alternative policy to the one

proposed thereby lessening the chance of error repetition. Can policy makers not learn from mistakes? What is there about the interface between policy and practice—implementation—that facilitates the conceptualization of public policy?

Transfer of control. Wharf and McKenzie (1998) make a simple but significant observation about implementation. It is the stage in the policy process when control passes from the policy makers to practitioners. And it is those very people at the level of the local unit that determine whether policies will be changed, sabotaged, or implemented as intended. Their position is that controlling and regulating the behaviour of subordinates is not the critical issue, rather effecting efforts to enhance the capacity of the local delivery unit to implement the given policy initiative is what should be the emphasis. What Wharf and McKenzie found is that in their experience, policies dealing with human services involved street-level bureaucrats that were not simply passive respondents to bureaucratic characteristics. They challenged, changed or ignored the rules and regulations confronting them. The answer to the question about learning from mistakes —at least for these two commentators—is a resounding 'yes'! In fact, any gaps between policy and practice should be expected as a normal outcome of the differences in values and priorities between policy-makers and practitioners. As Wharf and McKenzie conclude:

> Even when objectives are clear, when resources are available,
> when the environment is stable, and when there are few
> clearance points, the process of implementation will
> often alter the intended policy. (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.73)

Certainly policy-makers would be very wise indeed to be more than cognizant of such 'practical' extensions of the policy process as revealed in the above observations about what happens during implementation of a policy. Even when all about the practitioners is shifting, Wharf and McKenzie are adamant concerning the primacy of the practitioners role, namely, they should stay with the one constant—the practice and day-to-day interaction with the people with whom they work. The lesson learned from the world of policy implementation is clear. Improving practice requires that practitioners must be centrally involved in the change process (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.74). Few would disagree with such a notion. The problem, again, is implementation.

Policy groups. Though exceedingly simple, their solution is to establish policy groups composed of representatives from each level of the organization as well as from the user population. The groups would meet regularly to develop and review policies (a vehicle to put 'backward-mapping' into place). Arguments for more control at the local level would surely be part of the discourse joined by recommendations from regional managers and their staff to develop plans suited to the communities concerned. All well and good if the 'control' issue is resolved. Wharf and McKenzie offer the following caution based n a conversation with a senior bureaucrat:

> ...all approaches to connecting practice and policy require policy-makers to surrender some of their power, an unlikely scenario for those individuals who are dedicated to acquiring rather than relinquishing power. (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.77)

Guidance is required. That the notions of control and power must be factored into any successful implementation of public policy is a given. What is arguably more important is to ensure that someone is 'about' to guide the policy through the implementation maze. As Wharf and McKenzie astutely state, it seems as though the work of key individuals as champions of the legislation is essential to successful implementation, particularly when political commitment to the content of the package and to 'equal partnerships' with community may be on the wane (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.106).[56] Equally significant, and a dynamic of the 'power' game, was the observation that government had ample administrative support. The government representatives that served on the committee served as part of their regular job. The community members were there as volunteers. The point to be made is important. If the conceptualization of public policy is to include those for whom it is designed to serve, independent. multi-year funding to sustain community engagement activities cannot be understated (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.112). That being said, what took place in their study is perhaps ironic. Concerns were expressed that community leaders had interacted so much with government that they no longer addressed issues from a community standpoint. [57] What this apparent irony speaks to is the issue of power and control, that is, governance. How a community deals with governance in whole or in part determines the degree of success or not of the implementation of public policy that deal with human services. Further, the issue of which services and programs are most

appropriately dealt with at what level is a contentious and slippery one say Wharf and McKenzie.

Principles that Clarify Service and Governance

Starting with their definition of community—a group of people having common interests and sharing a particular place—both suggest that clarity regarding the issue of which services and programs are most appropriately dealt with at what level can be obtained by examining four principles.

Values matter. First, the *principle of affinity* suggests that people committed to a religious faith or to cultural traditions, have a right to receive services from agencies and practitioners who are also committed to those values (e.g., church-sponsored agencies; First Nations agencies; and ethnic agencies). People accessing these agencies know up-front that they will receive counseling and other services consistent with their values and belief systems.

Involved decision-making. Second, the *principle of affected interests* holds that those affected by a decision or a program should have some say in making the decision or shaping the program (e.g., Associations of Community Living; transition houses; women's centres; anti-poverty organizations).

Access is critical. Third, the *principle of accessibility* is the determining factor in the use of services (e.g., day care services; meeting places for youth, senior citizens; neighbourhood-organizing activities).

Flat organization. Four, the *principle of a low level of bureaucratization* calls for a flat rather than a hierarchical structure in organizations (less managers facilitating a high degree of collaboration between the executive and front line staff).

'Practice' – essential to community governance. The primary argument with respect to the above four principles is that the more of these principles relate to a particular service, the more local governance there should be (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.118). They even reject any notion of a regional authority delegating service responsibilities to local units. Neighbourhoods differ substantially meaning that they have the capacity to tune programs to their unique needs. Their second reason for dismissing a regional approach is an important theoretical one—a regional arrangement returns to the familiar pattern of top-down authority for policy-making. They prefer a bottom-up

approach. And, for Wharf and McKenzie, bottom-up means the concept of 'practice' is an essential component of community governance.

A community work approach to practice means that the people being served

- become partners in developing and managing programs that affect them
- become partners in identifying and then taking action to change harmful and negative conditions that are present in their neighbourhood
- have reserved seats at policy-making tables to ensure that not just the professionals and other experienced volunteers participate

Community governance then has the capacity to reduce the number of agencies and thereby the number of service providers involved with one family. [58] This would be beneficial improvement facilitating not only common sites of operation but encouraging what Wharf and McKenzie call a 'radical innovation'—the installation of citizens as managers or co-managers in the planning and implementation of the services that affect them (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.120). Are there some advantages to community governance?

Advantages to community governance. The concept provides more space for people to participate, develop a constituency for the human services and to increase the sense of participants' self-worth. Also, people respect more those laws on which they have been consulted; they identify strongly with programs they have helped to plan; and finally, they perform better in projects they have assisted in setting up. And, to be fair to the discussion, Wharf and McKenzie equally detail some potential disadvantages of community governance.

Disadvantage one: 'acute localitis'. First is what they reference as the condition of 'acute localitis' or the potential for communities to become closed and intolerant of diverging patterns of behaviour. What they mean is the apparent dichotomy popularly associated with rural communities as being harbingers of support and mutual affection. We tend to forget, say Wharf and McKenzie, that rural communities may also be places of intolerance and even cruelty precipitating a change of residence for some to larger urban centres seeking in the process perhaps anonymity or neighbours tolerant of similar views.

Disadvantage two: 'offloading'. The second disadvantage involves a serious aspect of state organizational theory and political philosophy. Neoconservative

governments have been known to decentralize responsibilities on the grounds that local communities can do a better job of taking care of people. Otherwise known as 'offloading', the state policy leadership in the process not only redirects responsibility but at the same time reduces financial, human, and material resources availability. Certainly a reality for operating the modern state, how and why such approaches happen must be constantly monitored by all concerned and particularly by those who are the target of such policies. Community governance is specially significant and applicable for those policies that impact on purely local programs. At the level of program planning that involves delegated power, legislative and resource responsibility should be retained by the provincial or federal level but operating responsibilities are delegated to communities (e.g., child welfare and health services). Where the principle of equity is important, a partnership between community and senior levels of government is required. Wharf and McKenzie acknowledge that community governance has an important place in the scheme of public policy conceptualization as it affords an opportunity to reform the policy process and policy outcomes by involving people who are significantly affected by the outcomes. And, with respect to implementation, the effectiveness of policy is ultimately determined by the capacity of the local-level delivery unit and the relationships that prevail among staff members and those being served (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.125).

  Centralization or decentralization? Is centralization or the dispersal of political power the resolution to the conundrum of the implementation of state public policy? For Wharf and McKenzie, it is a combination of both with respect to the provision of human services by the state. That the representative system of governance is open only to those with the financial resources, the time, and the self-confidence to participate, is a reality that was referenced in Chapter 2 in the context of whether representative government will survive at all given the omnipresent phenomena of globalization and trans-national corporations operating across national boundaries. Wharf and McKenzie close their discussion of community governance with a sobering suggestion. It at least paves the way for some improvements in an otherwise severely restricted form of democracy (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.126).

New Public Management

Forms of governance then are being radically rethought and that is having fundamental implications for the way in which policy is both designed and implemented (Pal, 1997, p.156). What Pal refers to as 'New Public Management' (NPM), began in the late 1970s and early 1980s championed by the Conservative Party led by Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom. Similar aspects emerged in Canada during the Progressive Conservative government Brian Mulroney years. But then the concept was not the exclusive domain of the conservative 'right'. In New Zealand, the Labour government initiated reform as they sought to alter internal structures and connections with their social partners. Provincially, Canadian Premiers in Saskatchewan (NDP), British Columbia (NDP), Alberta (PC), and Manitoba (PC) all made overtures about their successes in presenting 'balanced' budgets even though human service sectors appeared to have been primary targets for fiscal restraint.

Key principles. The appeal to new public management, says Pal, though perceived by some to be politically 'popular', really has its origins in the same global phenomena detailed in Chapter 2. The key principles of NPM:

- are critical of traditional bureaucracies
- are doubtful about whether or not government should be involved in the policy area in the first place
- acknowledge that if government policy is appropriate to the problem, the mode of delivery or broad implementation strategy stresses the use of nongovernmental actors (communities, private corporations, citizens) as primary partners in delivery
- pay greater attention to outcomes and performance than previously demonstrated
- look for new hybrid forms of delivery having the flexibility to clearly distinguish between policy-making functions and the service area effecting far greater use of contract servicing and/or Special Operating Agency approaches

As Pal points out, based on research published by the Institute for Research on Public Policy (1995), as far as Canada is concerned, there still appears to be no interest in mounting a comprehensive program of public management reform (Pal, 1997, p.170-171). The other western democracies witnessed a very different scenario. Both New Zealand and the United Kingdom saw radical restructuring around the separation of

policy from operations, along with a determined focus on service that in turn demands the development and application of performance standards.

Fiscal restraint and 'partnering'. For Canada then, NPM and implementation—at least for the period up to 1995—fiscal restraint has been the driving force for management reform with alternative service delivery the order of the day (Pal, 1997, p.173). New organizational forms, clearer standards, the use of information technology, and partnerships herald the difference for implementation. The operative word is 'partnering'. The concept presents a challenge to the traditional paradigms of service delivery and its past reliance upon the top-down, centralized control model. What is new and exciting is the realization that NPM implementation practices seem to combine strategies of autonomy to reduce blockages in decision-making and include strategies of interdependence. Pal notes further that these changes in governance cut across ideological lines. The larger equation is not too difficult to fathom. A smaller public sector doing fewer things with reduced resources begs for innovation (Pal, 1997, p.181). Is a diminished civil bureaucracy a bad thing? Not so concludes Pal if the changes heralded by NPM benefit the citizenry insofar as service, efficiency and effectiveness are enhanced. Similar to Wharf and McKenzie, he supports the idea of decentralization and devolution as much as is feasible to community groups and local entities. To reiterate, policy-makers must therefore be willing to adapt to policy alteration effected by the implementation process.

Implementation Effects Improved Policy Design

Howlett and Ramesh (1995, p.155) make the point that for many agencies, implementation may be simply another opportunity for continuing the fight they may have lost at the policy formulation stage. As they state, there are some important realities of policy implementation that include: the very nature of the problem to be addressed; the varying degrees of technical difficulties; the diversity of the problems targeted; the size of the group; and the extent of the behavioural change the policy requires. To facilitate policy implementation, Howlett and Ramesh suggest some straightforward steps to improve policy design, namely:

- state policy goals in rank-order clearly
- causal theory (explicitly or implicitly) must state why the policy is expected to resolve the problem

- sufficient funds must be allocated
- procedures must be clear
- the implementing agency must have relevant experience and commitment (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.156)

All of which raises a critical component of the implementation phase of public policy, the type and range of policy instruments available to the state to effect the phase.

Policy Instruments and Implementation

The choice of instrument to effect policy implementation involves applying one or more of the basic techniques of government to policy problems. Whether policy tools, policy instruments or governing instruments, how they are used and linked with the various policy actors largely determines the effectiveness of the implementation process. Ramesh and Howlett argue that a nation's policy style, and political culture, and the depth of its social cleavage, have a bearing on the choice of instrument. Closer to the actual problem itself, the problem situation context, timing, and scope of actors, also affects instrument choice. In short, they contend that the choice of policy instruments is shaped by

- the characteristics of the instruments
- the nature of the problem
- government past experience
- the subjective preference of the decision-makers
- the likely reaction to the choice by affected social groups (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.162)

Economic models tend to emphasize the use of instruments that overcome market fluctuations. Public choice theory is used generally by neo-classical economists to explain patterns of instrument use. Political science models on the other hand begin with minimal activities such as exhortation and then move toward direct provision. Howlett and Ramesh make the point that regarding the substitutability among instruments, there are problems with the rationales for instrument choice. First, the complete range of instruments is not available to government. Second, the conception of changes in instrument choice consisting of a slow movement up the coercion scale does not conform to the empirical evidence (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.159). And third, the idea of social resistance provoking governments to move towards more coercive instruments is problematic. As they argue, in the area of social policy, social pressure often urges

greater regulation and expenditures than governments for fiscal or ideological reasons may be willing to provide.

State capacity and subsystem complexity – key determinants. The actual number of different types of instruments at the disposal of implementers is limited say Howlett and Ramesh. The range of policy tools covers four categories: 1) market, 2) family or community, 3) regulation, public enterprise, or direct provision, and 4) mixed instruments. Two interlinked general variables set out the framework. First is the extent of state planning capacity. Second is the subsystem complexity particularly the number and type of actors governments must deal with in program and policy implementation. In brief, when the state planning or organizational ability is high, market instruments will be used for highly complex policy subsystems and regulatory public enterprise, or direct provision instruments will be used for less complex policy subsystems. When the state is less organized it will tend to utilize incentives or propaganda or rely on existing voluntary, community, or family-based instruments. Where policies involve numerous and conflicting groups in implementing a complex subsystem, market or voluntary instruments capable of dealing with multiple actors and interests will be used. All of which boils down to the central assumption of the political science approach to instrument choice is that the decision process and its outcomes are shaped by political factors related to state capacity and subsystem complexity (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p. 164). How policy instruments[59] are perceived and the context in which that happens further clarifies the implementation process.

Perception of instrument impact choice. Linder and Peters (1989) argue that how decision-makers and their policy advisors perceive the instruments of government policy conditions their views of problem situations, biases their expectations of performance, and shapes their choices. Both authors wanted to find out what decision-makers believed that they were getting when policy instrument 'x' was used over policy instrument 'y' keeping in mind that much of the selection of policy instruments is done through familiarity, political tradition, or professional bias.

In order to link perception to choice it is critical to establish the context in which the policy maker operates. As they argue, organizational history matters in explaining instrument choice rather than when the choice was taken and it will impact on the

following two inquiries. Do decision-makers choose the same instruments regardless of the problem or do they select different instruments to match a given situation?

Institutions appear to embody certain approaches to policy problems contend Linder and Peters reasoning that

> ...the collective memory of an organization will tend to produce the same results from deliberations over time. Not only does the collective memory of an organization tend to be associated with the repetitive use of certain instruments, but the very nature of institutions may limit their choices. (Linder and Peters, 1989, p.42)

Making no claim to the reification of institutions, Linder and Peters then proceed to describe the four elements necessary to develop a theory of instrument choice and policy design.

A Theory for Instrument Choice

A basic set. The first element concerns the quest for a basic set of instruments. At least up until 1989, Linder and Peters claim that there was little agreement in the literature on a basic set of domestic policy instruments common to Western liberal democracies. Moreover, because few instruments are limited to only a single function, it is therefore no simple matter to compile a list of basic policy instruments. They arrived at seven classes as a classification scheme not to be 'tidy' but rather to capture experts' and decision-makers logic in use (direct provision; subsidy; tax; contract; authority; regulation; and exhortation) (Linder and Peters, 1989, p.44).

Design criteria and attributes. Element two is design criteria and the attributes of instruments. Within this element some interesting observations are made. For example, the higher the precision of the instrument, the less intrusive it is; the more complex it is and more money to administer. The less intrusive the instrument, the less likely it is to arouse public opinion. It is critical to note here that much of the work on policy instrument types is organized, say Linder and Peters, either implicitly or explicitly, around the theme of coerciveness. Important to realize is that this focus is grounded in a political tradition that supports a presumption against liberty-limiting uses of governmental power (Linder and Peters, 1989, p.46). The next point is important regarding the implementation phase, namely, the decision-maker will always choose the

least coercive untried instrument moving from least coercive to most coercive in any given policy area.[60] Element three is the ecology of contexts.

Ecology of contexts. Important for this aspect of their approach to building theory on instrument choice and policy design is the recognition that the policy context exerts considerable influence over both the course of events in policy making and the outcome. In what they reference as the *systemic context*, Linder and Peters argue that national styles are responsible for a fair amount of variation in instrument choice. While there may be different interpretations of political culture, what they mean is that the term captures the values of a statist tradition in different countries. For example, Germany and Scandinavia appear to be more accepting of centralized governmental intervention into the economy and society, that is, more intrusive policy instruments than in less statist countries. The point is that divided societies may require more coercive instruments while well-integrated, more homogenous societies could do with instruments such as public promotion and information. With regard to what they refer to as the *organizational context*, the characteristics of organizations in the public sector play a role—they have cultures and value systems.

Similar to nations, such organizations also have a mission and an institutional memory shaping the course of their intervention. As might be expected, this institutional context creates what amounts to a predisposition toward some instruments and against others. During periods of expansion, expenditure-based instruments (cash grants or the direct provision of government services) will be invoked because of the ethos of confidence in government including an ambitious sense of purpose. Or, as Linder and Peters present, during times of fiscal restraint, governments may use cautious measures of smaller scale that favour cheaper regulatory instruments. Another organizational factor affecting the selection of instruments is the nature of external contacts.

In this situation, it is the nature of the clientele served by the organization that dictates the type of instrument used. Their example is one that refers to disadvantaged populations and the concomitant reliance upon cash grants or in-kind transfers.[61] Equally significant in the determination of instrument identification and use is the whole scenario of the policy community within which the organization functions.

The fourth element for the Linder and Peters theory on instrument choice and policy design is types of users.

User type. What the proponents of the theory argue is that academics have been the producers of the analysis about instruments. Their observation is that very little of that analysis has penetrated to the target consumers of that knowledge—those in government who must actually make decisions (Linder and Peters, 1989, p.52). While that may be, more interesting is their observation that just as organizations may be influenced by the period in which they were formed, so too may individuals be influenced by the time period in which they were socialized politically and recruited to the organization.[62] That observation aside, Linder and Peters conclude that it is the policy-maker's criteria that structure judgments about instruments and serve as the basis for any working taxonomy. It is the policy-maker's judgments that determine whether a given instrument has succeeded or failed. And finally, it is the policy-maker's biases that shape the relative influence of context and of the perceived attributes of instruments on design choices (Linder and Peters, 1989, p.55). Moving from an emphasis on the policy-maker's perception of policy instruments, McDonnell and Elmore (1987) make the case for the importance of alternative policy instrument deployment in the implementation of policy.

Alternative Policy Instruments

Their observation is that the first generation of policy implementation research focused primarily on whether results were consistent with intentions. The second generation focused on variations in the response of individuals and institutions, and on the conditions of successful implementation. Research in the 1990s and beyond, they posit, should build on the lessons of the first two generations by focusing on the instruments common to different policies and on the conditions under which these instruments are most likely to produce the intended effects. To accomplish that they suggest four generic classes of instruments:

- mandates – are rules governing the action of individuals and agencies intended to produce compliance
- inducements – transfer money to individuals or agencies in return for certain actions
- capacity-building – is the transfer of money for the purpose of investment in material, intellectual, or human resources

- system-changing – transfers official authority among individuals and agencies in order to alter the system by which public goods and services are delivered

McDonnell and Elmore contend that policy implementation has focused upon one aspect of the process such as organizational context or practitioner response to new programs. A conceptual framework focused on policy instruments not only holds the potential for moving beyond static descriptions of the implementation process, but it also embeds key variables such as local response patterns in a larger theoretically richer context (McDonnell and Elmore, 1987, p.135). Their further claim is that their research clarifies what is meant by the successful application of a given instrument, and by identifying the conditions necessary for different policy instruments to work as intended.

Expanding the choice of instruments. Regarding policy-maker knowledge about instruments and the relative effectiveness of policy instruments in addressing different types of problems, McDonnell and Elmore echo the sentiments of Linder and Peters, namely, policy-makers lack information and systematic knowledge about the underlying dynamics, comparative costs, attendant problems, and how well they fit into the existing policy environment (McDonnell and Elmore, 1987, p.135).[63] Their goal is to correct that by expanding the policy community's range of choice in the instruments it uses to solve different policy problems. As they contend, policy-makers face a discrete number of potentially powerful choices when they respond to a policy problem. They can set rules, conditionally transfer money, invest in future capacity, and they can grant or withdraw authority to individuals and agencies. Each option is expected top carry a particular effect—compliance, production, capacity, or authority—and each carries a package of benefits and costs to different actors (McDonnell and Elmore, 1987, p.140). [64]

Policy maker values and instrument choice. How a policy-maker selects one instrument over another is shaped by the definition of the problem and the resources and constraints policy-makers face. Also, as discussed earlier, and now reiterated by McDonnell and Elmore, policy-makers hold values about the preferred state of the social system and which mechanisms should be used to achieve that condition. For example, if policy-makers perceive a policy problem as the need to move behaviour *beyond* an expected minimum, they will be more likely to choose inducements. If they view the purpose as moving behaviour *to* a specified minimum, they will be more likely to select a

mandate approach. The key point here is that regardless of what indicator data may suggest about a particular policy problem, policy-makers prefer policy instruments consistent with their own values (McDonnell and Elmore, 1987, p.145). And how the policy-maker defines the problem usually indicates a clear choice of instrument. The problem is that seldom do policy-makers act alone much less in an environment that is devoid of constraints that limit their range of choice.

Resources and Constraints to Instrument Choice

What McDonnell and Elmore argue is that with respect to resources and constraints, how they are identified is how policy-makers assess what is feasible. They identify six types of resources and constraints as significant in the choice of policy instruments.

The institution. First up is the *institutional context*. This includes the allocation of formal and informal authority among policy actors, and the structure of existing agencies. Usually the institutional context acts as a constraint on policy-makers particularly if a major departure from the past is contemplated. This context, say McDonnell and Elmore, often serves as a strong bias towards the status quo in choice of policy instruments.

Personnel. The second resource or constraint is *governmental capacity* and it defines both the ability of the initiating level to implement a policy and the ability of the target to meet the policy's requirements. Included are the numbers and types of personnel available, their level of expertise, and relevance to the demands of a particular policy instrument.

Capital. *Fiscal resources* is the third type and arguably the most critical in determining the eventual implementation of a given policy. As McDonnell and Elmore advise, if requisite fiscal resource levels are not considered in choosing a policy instrument, serious inefficiencies may result.

Players. Fourth on the list is *political support and opposition*. Again, based on the rather obvious realization that policy-makers seldom act alone, they need to anticipate other actors' preferences in order to build the political coalition necessary. For example, facing strong opposition, a policy-maker may find that an inducement (such as a small

grant program) may be the only option for addressing a policy problem as she or he has defined it. Their fifth type of resource and constraint is *information*.

Game plan. McDonnell and Elmore theorize that the information likely to shape the choice of policy instrument is shaped by the following: political intelligence (meaning what is preferred by other policy-makers, organized interests, and constituents); strategic information (data about the target, its capacity to implement and probable response to various instruments); and analytical information (data about the technical requirements of various instruments and which are likely to work under different conditions). They contend that the match between policy problem and instrument will be best when all three types of information are available and reliable.

Precedent. The last potential resource and constraint is what they refer to as *past policy choices.* Often as not, past policies may significantly influence what the public wants from government and how it expects those goals to be accomplished. Further, the cumulative effects of past policies may circumscribe the use of fiscal resources. As governments have discovered, the budgetary commitments made by past administrations can seriously limit the alternatives available to their successors (McDonnell and Elmore, 1987, p.149).

Instruments – the core of policy. What McDonnell and Elmore conclude from their research about getting the job done (implementation) is that the instruments through which substantive goals are translated into action are the core of any policy. They witnessed policy-makers search for alternatives to mandates. Coming up with a conceptual exercise that defined the range of policy instruments and examined the political and organizational conditions needed for each to work as intended, could, they argued, also generate practical applications. While they recognize that in selecting from a menu of options, policy-makers often choose a combination of strategies for achieving a particular policy goal. For any given policy problem, they hypothesize, policy-makers will select a dominant policy instrument. Now, based on their experience, policy-makers will select other instruments to supplement or follow the primary one.[65]

Large questions still remain about the impact of policy instruments. Do they explain why policies take the form they do and do they help predict their ultimate effects? And on a grander scale, does the notion about policy instruments presented by

McDonnell and Elmore provide policy-makers with additional insight about the range of alternatives available to them? To their credit, both also ask if their categorization provides a useful perspective for better understanding the links among policy, practice, and effects. Suffice it to say that if a policy-maker did not consider the findings and advice of McDonnell and Elmore, implementation of a given policy would suffer needlessly. At the same time, if their advice were followed, the realization of a successful implementation experience would be greatly enhanced.

The Wording of Policy

Of the many variables that impact on policy implementation one of the potentially most contentious but least researched is the matter of how a policy is worded. Borrowing from the title of the Johnston and Moore (1988) article, does the wording of policy make any difference in implementation? As they state, wording has great potential for answering the further question *why* a certain policy is or is not working.

Their study focused on the phenomenon of the impact of language itself, that is, what difference the tightness or looseness of the language of the policy makes in actual implementation of the policy. Though perhaps all too obvious, few would dispute their general observation that it is clear to policy makers, regulators, interest groups and those regulated that the way a policy is worded does make a difference (Johnston and Moore, 1988, p.24).

Categories of Policy Language

Using methodology suggested by content analysis, they constructed three categories of policy language: philosophical, professional and prescriptive. Each category was then described in terms of the following specific uses: purpose, evaluation, local discretion involved, locus of responsibility, and implied relationship between the locus of policy making and the place of implementation.

Philosophical. For the category type *Philosophical*, the *purpose* of philosophical language in a policy is to describe a broad goal, most often one that is difficult to *evaluate* reliably at a specific time or place. Such policy language requires *discretion* at the implementation site, and suggests the need for instructional and broad-based *responsibility*. In this category, the *relationship* of the policy-making body to the implementing body must, of necessity, be rather loose, and based largely on trust.

Professional. The *purpose* of *Professional* language is to describe a desired objective that relies upon qualitative methodology to *evaluate* its compliance to policy intent. The *discretion* of implementers is evident in that a variety of methods may lead to the desired objective, but the point is that methods may be specified and *responsibility* fixed to some group within the organization. The *relationship* between policy maker and policy implementater remains flexible and is based on trust, but specific oversight activities can and do occur.

Prescriptive. Category three – *Prescriptive* – presents a *purpose* of prescriptive language, which is to mandate a specific activity or conditions of an activity, a mandate which can be *evaluated* reliably at a specific time and place. There is little *discretion* for implementers in that a prescriptive statement specifically limits potential for local adaptation; and *responsibility* is fixed, narrow and identifiable. The implied *relationship* between policy maker and implementer is tightly and specifically drawn.

Sentence study. Once the categories and uses of language were established, the study analysed specific sentences from the State of Vermont's educational policy taken from the policy making and policy implementation stages. In both instances the degree of compliance with the policy statement was surveyed. Johnston and Moore also surveyed via self-assessment, interviews and observation, the impact of some seven independent variables [66]with the one dependent variable – policy – in terms of low, medium and high levels of relationship.

From the above analysis, Johnston and Moore's first conclusion was that interested groups and individuals engage in policy making for the purpose of modifying policy language in the apparent belief that the impact of that language has real consequences in implementation. Their second claim attempts to dispel an all too common set of assumptions upon the part of policy makers.

Too often policy makers assume that variables crucial to implementation are present and effective. This study said no! Further, policy makers in this study assumed that implementers had the capacity but lacked the willingness to comply. Again, this study said no! The notion as well that a policy by its own weight would improve schools and by its own authority would override all implementation considerations lacked

implementer validity as teachers found it impossible to comply given the conditions of implementation.

Conclusion three stated that policy implementers did not discriminate among policy language types in an environment that placed a low value on other implementation variables. The assumption that tight, prescriptive language, the language of regulation, would ensure enforcement of standards was valid only under specified conditions.

Policy implementers did discriminate among policy language types in an environment which placed a high value on other implementation variables such as resources, disposition of the implementers, and others. The language which policy makers struggled over during policy making did make a difference; their efforts were rewarded, when the conditions of implementation were considered. The last conclusion is general in nature.

The words that policy makers use carry subtle but powerful messages regarding the policy maker relationship to implementers. Each of the language categories contained implicit assumptions about the relationship. As one would anticipate, philosophical language assumed a relationship that was rather loose and visionary. It facilitated a productive relationship given mutually valued goals, one that was not a master-servant relationship. The notion of 'we-make-the-policy' and 'you-carry-it-out' was absent!

Professional language, while it assumed a flexible, collegial relationship, and promoted local interpretation and adaptation of policy, did suggest limits to that interpretation and adaptation. The operative caveat was that both policy maker and implementer share the same language and perspective—not an easy scenario to achieve given the multiplicity of conditions needed to connect policy and place to effect even a modicum of implementation success.

Prescriptive language assumes a tight, regulatory relationship, promoting minimal local interpretation and adaptation of policy intent. Here the policy-maker –implementer relationship assumes the classic stance of the former 'knowing' and the latter 'doing'.

Lessons for policy makers. And what is the main point of the Johnston and Moore study? Policy makers, they declare, should be aware of the reasons for word battles in policy; aware of the independent variables needed to implement the policy; and write the policy in language that is sensitive to the relationships between themselves and

implementers and the characteristics of the implementing organizations generally. In short, ignore the wording of the policy and the conditions of where the policy is directed at your peril!

'Opening' the Policy Window

Speaking of caution, even though the policy maker may be in a position to select the appropriate combination of policy instruments, and even though the policy has been written with as many contingencies as possible considered, the implementation process—while certainly not immune from policy actor influence—is a process that has no stranglehold on predictability. The implementation process is always in progress. The danger for the policy maker is to ever assume that the process is complete. In that sense, the stream and window metaphor used by Kingdon (1995) to describe the policy development and implementation process helps to clarify the topography of the policy process.

Timing. For Kingdon's approach to work, what he describes as the policy window—an opportunity for advocates to push pet solutions or to push attention to special problems—must open at critical moments. With respect to implementation, that 'opening' occurrence is contingent upon such factors as:

- the capacity of the system to process agenda items
- the constraint placed on items by strategic considerations
- the logical constraints posed by fiscal, logistical, and technical considerations
- the inconsistency of the systems capacity

The 'opening' occurs. If and when solutions and problems are joined under favourable political conditions—what he calls 'coupling' occurs and the policy window is opened. It opens, he argues, because a change occurs in the political stream or a problem is pressed. The decision-makers see a problem pressing and they reach into the policy stream for an alternative to be seen as a solution. When the political, problem and policy stream join, the item chance of rising on the decision agenda improves. Such activity may be enhanced, says Kingdon, by policy entrepreneurs (elected officials, career civil servants, lobbyists, academics, and journalists). In fact, these same individuals soften up potential resistance to an item by writing papers, provide testimony, seek press coverage, hold hearings and meet endlessly with people of varying system rank. As might be expected,

the process takes years of effort (Kingdon, 1995, p.205). Persistence is the operative word for such activity although there do exist some predictable windows which may expedite an items progress toward the decision agenda. These include situations where a policy is up for renewal, is part of the budget cycle or part of the regular report structure of the government.

The unpredictability of the policy climate. Determining what gets on the agenda therefore demands a thorough analysis of the condition presented by problem 'x' or problem 'y'—it is critical to agenda setting (Kingdon, 1995, p.198). According to Kingdon, this analysis involves facilitating an approach that relies upon consensus couched in a context of bargaining more than persuasion. Important as that may be, whether or not an idea/item gets implemented relies just as much on the combination of events more than a single event. As stated earlier, concentration on origins does not take us very far (Kingdon, 1995, p.206). Ideas can come from anywhere. It is the climate of receptivity that allows ideas to take off. That is why the notion of 'spillover' referenced earlier is important for implementation. It is much easier to work with something that has already worked rather than attempt to forge a whole new process. The larger issue is that unfortunately policy implementation has had a 'stream bed' that has not been properly dredged particularly in some sectors of the education community (Sarason, 1990; Fullan, 1991; Eisner, 1998; Robertson, 1998). As for policy determination and conceptualization, Kingdon does concede that a measure of unpredictability remains.

Subjects sometimes rise on agendas without our understanding completely why (Kingdon, 1995, p.206). We continue to suffer from considerable doses of messiness, accident, fortuitous couplings, and dumb luck he surmises. Is the process of policy formulation a prisoner of rampant randomness? Not if you believe in Dr. Kingdon's aquatic affirmation trilogy.

Process patterns can be discerned. There is some degree of pattern evident in three fundamental sources he argues. They include: the processes within each stream; the processes that structure couplings; and general constraints on the system. Regarding the problem stream, not every problem surfaces. Conditions that are not highlighted by indicators, focusing events, or feedback are less likely to be brought to the attention of government officials than conditions that do not have those advantages. As for the policy

stream, not every proposal surfaces. Selection criteria make patterns out of initial noise Kingdon argues. By this he means that proposals that meet such standards as technical feasibility, value acceptability, public acquiescence, politicians' receptivity, and budgetary stringency are more likely to survive than those that fail to meet such standards.

Regarding the processes that structure couplings, some are more likely than others. Problem and solution interaction relies on timing. A window may open, posits Kingdon, but a solution may not be available at that time in the policy stream.

Any constraints encountered in the system particularly in the political stream could involve anything from the impact of elections to the capacity of the institution including the pervasive one of fiscal accountability.

Kingdon concludes his response stating the obvious; that is, the scarcity of open windows constrains participants. They continually must compete for the limited space on agendas. The impact on implementation is very direct—no agenda placement means implementation is not even considered! At least Kingdon is very open about the plight of agendas, alternatives, and public policies. How he contextualizes his observations is important for an understanding about the implementation stage of public policy.

Playing the 'odds'. He declares that his ideas are all probabilistic. Events are likely to occur or their chances are improved if such and such were to happen. Hard-and-fast rules and the specification of conditions that must be met seem less fruitful than a quotation of odds. Constraints he says are not absolutes but rather conditions that make some events highly unlikely while others become more likely to occur. What he concludes is the closet he comes to relying completely upon contingency theory. Constraints do impose structure on the system but it is structure that still allows room for some gray areas and some unpredictability (Kingdon, 1995, p.208). Just such a notion about policy making and implementation can be found in the work of Lindblom and Woodhouse (1993) particularly in their discussion of what they call 'impaired inquiry'.

Impaired Inquiry – A Challenge to be Confronted

The privileged position of business. As a lead into the discussion about impaired inquiry, Lindblom and Woodhouse raise the specter of the position of business in policy making. In the grand scheme of policy making, for business people, electoral activity

merely supplements the control they already exercise through their privileged position in government (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.97). This in turn has implications for implementation as certain policy never gets developed, and what does get developed only represents certain 'privileged' sectors. At least in theory that is the perceived 'gray' area and consequently any policy conceptualization may be very unpredictable. Not to misrepresent Lindblom and Woodhouse by juxtaposing their interpretation with Kingdon, what they say about the impact of business on policy making bears heavily on the development of policy by the state and the problem of implementation. Lindblom and Woodhouse claim that

> The persuasive efforts of business spokespersons and government officials tend to remove important issues from policy debate. On fundamental issues pertaining to the structure of government and economy, a barrage of persuasion teaches citizens to accept corporate autonomy, the existing distribution of wealth, the limited authority of employees in business management, and close consultation between business and government as fundamental virtues of the established order not to be challenged. (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p. 98-99).

Policy making at risk. The paramount point to be made is that as a result of the above taking place—at least in the eyes of Lindblom and Woodhouse—what is omitted obviously do not become policy issues. They simply do not get on the state agenda. This has dramatic implications for the notion that public policy should be just that *public policy* and not the exclusive purview of a minority of the population. Again, as they declare, the very people who fare worst in economic life also are least able to be effective in political life (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.113). The entire process of public policy making is at risk and therefore so is the process that facilitates its development. Perhaps a little overstated but none the less a critical conundrum for Lindblom and Woodhouse. Their explanation and resolution for what they describe as 'impaired inquiry' provides not only a somber view of the process but also creates some hope for the future.

The founding principle of policy development. Speaking optimistically about public policy formulation, Lindblom and Woodhouse are crystal clear with respect to the founding principle of policy development—democratic political interaction is essential for wise policy making. It is perhaps self-evident then that also crucial is the quality of people's thinking in that same process. And both researchers are concerned whether

citizens and political elites will demonstrate societal thinking and skill levels. Concerned enough to pronounce that inquiry about such a concern may be among the most consequential investigations students of public policy can make in trying to understand what goes right and wrong in the effort to shape society (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.114). Their concerns and consequently challenge for researchers is based on some very practical observations on their part—the ground floor of their 'impaired inquiry' notion.

What's behind 'impaired inquiry'. We can only consider problems from a few angles and even then our perceptions and interpretations get distorted. Our capacity to store data doesn't match computers. Many problems are socially caused and are often so complex that we tend to retreat before resolution is satisfied. What Lindblom and Woodhouse posit is that impaired thinking reduces the intelligence of policy making because each individual is less capable of playing his or her role in partisan interaction. The critical point here is that policy making becomes less democratic they argue because impaired thinking makes it easier for elites to preserve their advantages. Not convinced? Try looking at what schooling has contributed as a source of impairment.

Schooling – the 'seedbed' for impairment thinking. What Lindblom and Woodhouse suggest in this area opens a massive area of debate. Arguably, they challenge the very existence and purpose of 'schooling' as we know it. Educational policy, they contend, has attempted to construct schooling to induce habits of compliance at the expense of children's development of skills useful for thoughtful dissent and inquiry (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.115). What they raise is the critique of schooling long advocated by exponents of the critical theorist position and social reconstructionism (Apple, 1979; 1993; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985; Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1988; and McLaren, 1989) suffice it to say at this juncture that Lindblom and Woodhouse are not alone in their observation particularly in light of their further observation that employers in particular have sought from schooling a docile workforce accustomed to following assignments with little question and to accepting the existing social, economic, and political order. Though not the place here to enter that debate, what the two policy theorists raise must not be lost. And it is a familiar tenet of critical theory as well, namely, that free speech does not ensure real competition of ideas. Access to mass

communication, for example, is costly and only those with capital have real access claim Lindblom and Woodhouse. What they claim is that government, business executives, and elites carry the same message to citizens—acceptance of the concentration of wealth and privilege; corporate autonomy and the privileged position of business. As stated before, this high degree of homogeneity on primary issues means that some possible alternative policies never appear on the policy-making agenda. Equally apparent is the observation that plausible options to those advocated by the above group are somehow being kept off the political agenda (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p. 123). And what do the two policy theorists suggest as a process to place the reduction of impairment higher on the agenda thereby starting a movement to ameliorate if not eradicate the notion of impaired inquiry?

Replant the entire garden. If families, schools and work organizations are important sources of impaired intelligence, then improvement in individual and collective capacities for thinking about problems presumably would require changes in these fundamental institutions. No small order indeed! Changing the way that families, schools and the workplace become involved in policy conceptualization is optimistic to be sure and certainly contingent at least upon a collective understanding and agreement on how the state and all who comprise that entity perceive the best path to walk along and share. Lindblom and Woodhouse do offer some encouragement.

Encourage the new growth. Aim for thoughtful and responsible partisanship. Prod political participants to frame policies capable of coping with uncertainty. Challenge the existing political/economic system and policy making process where warranted. Can policy professionals help? Yes they can and they must do so by helping to strengthen the competition of ideas.[67] Improved thinking by ordinary people, conclude Lindblom and Woodhouse, may be humanity's best hope (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p. 138).

Political Communities – A Web of Dependencies

Stone (1988) offers a similar thesis in that she argues that while interpretations divide people, aspirations unite people. Public policy, she suggests, is about communities trying to achieve something as communities. Both policy and thinking about policy are produced in what she describes as 'political communities' where much of the political activity is an effort to control interpretation. Her solutions to effect interpretation and

implementation of public policy involve the deployment of inducements, an understanding of the rules, facts, rights and powers associated with all involved in the arena of public policy.

Inducement deployment. Inducements may involve incentives that are positive and provide rewards or they may appear as sanctions that are negative and involve penalties. They work, says Stone, by getting people to change their mind. The key for any policy based on inducements is the concept of adaptability particularly because inducements are not based on any complex notion of causation. Further, Stone posits, there is no general rule about how inducements will affect behaviour. In fact, the astute analyst, she cautions, should remember that every new inducement must fight for attention with an existing array of penalties and rewards and will be filtered through the perceptions of the people to whom it applies (Stone, 1988, p.224). It is well to reiterate Stone's observation that incentives are promoted as the policy instrument that requires the least amount of government intervention in the economy or in private lives. Her examples remain arguably two of the most controversial issues for education policy development and implementation.

Vouchers have the capacity to replace standards such as teacher credentials, curricular controls, physical facilities, and student performance. They give parents choice and control and are attractive sources of revenue for administration.

Standards meanwhile, when they are explicit, serve as a scapegoat for society's values (Stone, 1988, p.229). Though they are more egalitarian than taxes in the large scheme of policy conceptualization and implementation, standards seem to offer the possibility of shaping people's motives argues Stone. However, as she reminds us, standards educate as well as forbid and they delineate what society will and will not tolerate—they exert moral suasion.

As a solution then, inducements are not self-executing, automatic or apolitical. They involve reciprocal influence negotiation where the givers exert power but the targets are adaptive. Their impact on behaviour depends on giver/receiver interpretation as the inducement's meaning is subject to on-going negotiation and change. This analysis is certainly consistent with Stone's thesis that policy is determined and implemented only in a community where people live in what she has described as a 'web of dependencies'.

Accordingly, rules as solutions to societal problems present an equally fertile ground for interactive political discourse.

Rules and societal problems. Rules, it is well to remember, have the potential to include, exclude, unite and divide. As Stone declares, problems worth making policy for are complicated, full of fuzzy boundaries and subtle distinctions. Therefore, specifying all possible applications and exceptions is impossible (Stone, 1988, p.239). Moreover, in politics, rules can never be stable. Her response makes sense. Rules are negotiated by interested parties—some lose and some gain by the process. Even more insightful is her reminder about the universal dilemma of rules. The dimensions of human activity we care about, she contends, are always far greater than what can be captured in formal rules, so rules always contain escape hatches. And how are they identified? Stone calls them 'perverse incentives'. They are incentives unwittingly built into a rule to comply with it in a way that creates new problems or exacerbates the very problems the rule is meant to cure (Stone, 1988, p.244). Ever the cognizant and very practical political analyst, Stone amplifies what she means about the room inherent with rule interpretation offering the advice that educating the targets about how to work the system can be a way for officials to enlarge their discretion (Stone, 1988, p.247). And the use of discretion raises some unique situations regarding the role of 'facts' as they relate to policy implementation.

Facts must be debated. Before relating Stone's position about the deployment of facts as a 'solution' for policy development and implementation, it is important to recall her notion of the rational ideal. That notion encourages reasoned and informed decisions based on formulated goals; gathered information; alternative evaluation; including the selection of the policy most likely to succeed. Her view of society is one that envisions a society where conflict is temporary and unnecessary. Further, it is a society where force is replaced by discussion. It is a society where government by persuasion brings out the highest human quality – the capacity to deliberate. And where persuasion is involved, propaganda and indoctrination are not far behind. Her question is how do we know whether persuasion represents enhancement of rational deliberation or manipulation of behaviour? Naming, she says, like counting and rule making, is classification, and thus a political act. The choice of names involves judgment, comparison, evaluation, and above all the potential for disagreement (Stone, 1988, p.253). Declaration of what is fact and

what is left out and therefore not fact, becomes the penultimate political problem and not insignificant contributor to the solution of policy development and implementation. Stone's perspective on the disclosure or not of information amplifies the anomaly.

> Democratic political theory [and]...policy analysis rhetorically embrace the principles of unrestricted access to information and use of complete information in policy decision making. But withholding information is a fundamental and essential part of strategy in all aspects of human affairs, from the highest level of international negotiations down to the most intimate level of personal relationships. Secrecy is integral to both markets and government. (Stone, 1988, p.261-262).

The point not to be missed here is that because secrecy is an integral part of strategy in the polis, policies about revelation and withholding are a common object of struggle. While Stone condones the notion of the rational ideal, she declares it to be spurious in its pretense that information is neutral or that people are primarily rational and independent creatures (Stone, 1988, p.264).[68] Could it be otherwise given the manner in which the world operates according to Dr. Deborah Stone?

Rights temper ambiguity. As for 'rights' contributing to the solution, they work, says Stone, by mobilizing new political alliances, transforming social institutions, and dramatizing the boundaries by which communities are constituted. Further, rights provide occasions for dramatic rituals that reaffirm society's cohesiveness and constantly redefines the nature of its internal rules and external boundaries. Finally, when legal decisions are well made, they offer compelling visions of society. In short, rights help to eliminate some ambiguity, and provide a foundation upon which to proceed with yet-to-be legally recognized or what are known as normative rights. Except that rights are not immune from variant interpretation. Examples from relatively recent history more than make the point about how difficult it has been for some societies to implement policy that has been sanctioned by the courts. Those that immediately come to mind are: integration of Black students into public schools in the southern United States; inclusion of physically and mentally challenged students into 'mainstream' classrooms in Manitoba; and French language instruction including the provision of public services in the English and French languages in Canada. In terms of state infrastructure, a closely related issue to 'rights' is that of 'powers', that is, in a very large sense how the state is organized has a

direct impact upon policy development and implementation. Stone's approach to the point is poignant indeed!

Power as constituted state authority. From what she refers to as constitutional engineering comes the notion that particular types of decision-making structures yield particular types of decisions. That perhaps is not all that profound but what it introduces for our purposes here merits close attention. And this point is rather critical to her overall thesis. The idea of federalism is a paradox. It combines autonomy of subunits with central authority of national institutions. For policy politics, a crucial issue she contends, is how the allocation of power distributes both political authority and material outcomes. One of the positive features exhibited by this federal paradox is the movement of growth-control authority to the higher level of state government. This in turn increases the possibility that growth will be distributed more evenly across communities. The possible 'downside' however is that the same higher level of authority retains the power to effect redistribution of the same subunits.[69]What determines that authority shift may be any one of or a combination of public interest, efficiency or justice. From Stone's perspective, the hope in proposals for structural change is to split up old or potential alliances, establish new ones, and so place a favoured interest in a position of dominance (Stone, 1988, p.304). That it happens at all depends on one's faith in political reasoning. As Stone concludes:

> Political reasoning may seem to lack constraints, but it still forces
> us to interact with an audience, to persuade others, and to look outside
> our own will for grounds for action. Boundary tensions may be the
> curse of our existence as thinking and communal beings. But political
> reason is our privilege. It allows us to conduct our border wars with
> imagination. (Stone, 1988, p.310)

Regarding the implementation of public policy, Stone has reminded those involved that regardless of solution or combination of solutions considered, none will even begin to work unless political discourse has been encouraged. Discourse that honours what some commentators on implementing change refer to as change implemented by 'mutual mutation' rather than 'unacceptable adaptation'.[70]

In summary, and without trying to trivialize the theoretical thinking of the above policy theorists, it may be argued that while the problems of implementing public policy are complex, they have all helped to increase understanding of implementation down to a

't' or rather series of 'ts'! Implementation has and will continue to involve timing (Kingdon, 1995); tenacity (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993); togetherness (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998); theory (Pal, 1997); tools (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995; Linder and Peters, 1989; McDonnell and Elmore, 1987); text (Johnston and Moore, 1998); and finally talk (Stone, 1998). How well the 'ts' have done or will do in the future raises the equally difficult task of policy evaluation.

Summary

All human action, all policy, has unforeseeable and unintended consequences.
(O'Hear, 1999, p.86)

Philosophy professor Anthony O'Hear's words are particularly applicable to the process of implementation. Whether public policy dealing with education, health or social welfare, the route to effecting change or making a difference is fraught with as many dangers as there are people for whom the policy is designed. Slightly overstated to be sure but all the same relatively accurate as "...there are no shortcuts or substitutes to living and learning in the rollercoaster of complex change" (Fullan, 1999, p.14). As Fullan further states, there never will be a definitive theory of change because it is a theoretical and empirical impossibility to generate a theory that applies to all situations. Each organization has its own special combination of personalities and prehistories, and 'firm specific' realities (Fullan, 1999, p.28). The message, however, is not to give up just because the future may be uncertain or that the road(s) to effecting implementation are many and not carved by a lapidary.

The implementation of policy is complex and better it should be—change theorists tell us that problems used to be our friends but more recent understanding declares that differences and conflict are even greater friends (Fullan, 1999, 22). Which is to say that we learn more from those who disagree with us than from colleagues who always 'agree'. In point of fact we should not shy away from matters complex. We should meet such matters 'head-on' for complexity creates change. More on complexity theory later. In the interim, what about the theoretical foundations, implementation and governance, policy instruments, and societal perceptions and policy implementation?

Because so much of what constitutes 'implementation' is contingent upon processes that facilitate 'change' it is important to recognize what 'forces' are steering

the implementation process. Who are the people involved, where do they work, and to whom are they responsible. Equally so, full cognizance of the conditions and circumstances of the intended audience for the policy must be shared by all concerned. Total centralization does not work nor does its opposite. Aspects of decentralization and centralization must work in tandem, that is, together for effective implementation to take place—a process that demonstrates movement away from the 'now' to a discernable 'future'. Governance then must reflect a recognition of people's values; involve as many of the participants as possible; present a 'flat' organization; and encourage multiple as opposed to singular models including 'alternative' approaches. If the implementation plan is a facilitative process that encourages reciprocal feedback on the strength or weakness of the policy, and if the 'management' of the policy implementation is open to constructive criticism, the resultant policy that emerges will be much more effective and meaningful to all concerned.

Certainly the choice of instrument(s) and the inherent clarity of the policy is crucial to the success of any implementation process. Too often I have been personally taken to task with the observation that the policy is acceptable but where are the human and financial resources to support the initiative? Having a template of instrument choices available along with the implications of human resource capacity, while perhaps not a theoretical foundation, certainly serves as a very practical possible solution to potential serious embarrassment 'down-the-road'.

It is hard not to agree with Kingdon's observation that successful policy implementation owes as much to 'chance' as it does to the best laid plans of public servants and their 'masters. As Professor O'Hear says, there exist certain anomalies for which few of us can predict much less plan to deal with whatever they may present at whatever time they choose to surface. In light of that notion, 'impaired inquiry' would seem to fit rather comfortably.

Then again, Stone's 'web of dependencies' theory captures a reality that must be honoured and supported as perhaps the only plausible approach to what the vicissitudes of society present in the 21st century. Heaven knows, we have been advised many times that rationally constructed reform strategies do not work (Fullan, 1999, p. 3). Such strategies, says Fullan, can never work in the face of rapidly changing environments.

Managing change the old way does not work any more he advises. We must approach the new millennium differently. Enter complexity theory!

The point has been made herein that the development and implementation of policy is complex. Not only is policy extremely difficult to manage but it is also a process absorbed by anticipated and unanticipated human interaction occurring within and without organizations that are situated in social, political and economic environments that continually challenge the process. In short, an intricate scenario that often borders on disorder. Fine says at least one student of change. Let's deal with it!

Complexity and chaos theory are the same thing argues Canadian change theorist and educator Dr. Michael Fullan. Given a choice, he prefers 'complexity' because it is more accurately descriptive. And what does this 'new' science of complexity claim?

First, the link between cause and effect is difficult to trace. Second, change (planned and otherwise) unfolds in nonlinear ways. Third, paradoxes and contradictions abound. And finally, creative solutions arise out of interaction under conditions of uncertainty, diversity and instability. I raise the issue of what complexity may mean at this point because throughout the discussion of implementation, though techniques were offered to 'manage' the process, it is when policy enters the 'public' arena and becomes exposed to the vagaries of human discourse anything may happen. That it usually does makes the task of implementation somewhat akin to trying to ensure the safety of aircraft attempting to land and depart without the benefit of air traffic controllers—chaotic to say the least!

Complexity theory then is built on the following propositions:

- all organizations are webs of nonlinear feedback loops connected to other people and organizations (its environments) by webs of nonlinear feedback loops
- such nonlinear feedback systems are capable of operating in states of stable and unstable equilibrium
- all organizations are paradoxes – powerfully pulled toward stability by the forces of integration, maintenance controls, human desires for security and certainty; and pulled to the opposite direction by the forces of decentralization, human desires for excitement and innovation, and isolation from the environment
- success lies in sustaining an organization in the borders between stability and instability. This is a state of chaos, a difficult-to-maintain dissipative structure
- the dynamics of the successful organization are irregular cycles and discontinuous trends, falling within qualitative patterns, fuzzy but recognizable categories taking the form of archetypes and templates

- because of its own internal dynamic, a successful organization faces completely unknowable specific futures
- agents within the system cannot be in control of its own long-term future – they can only do things in relation to the short term
- long-term development is a spontaneously self-organizing process from which new strategic directions may emerge. Spontaneous self-organization is political interaction and learning in groups. Managers have to use reasoning by analogy.
- In this way managers create and discover their environments and long-term futures of the organizations (Fullan, 1999, p. 4-5).

Citing the research of R. Stacey (1996), Fullan relates that the science of complexity studies the fundamental properties of nonlinear-feedback networks. These non-linear feedback networks involve a number of components or agents that interact with each other according to sets of rules. The rules require them to examine and respond to each other's behaviour in order to improve their behaviour and thus the behaviour of the system they comprise—a system, in short, that operates in a manner that constitutes learning. What is further intriguing about complexity theory is the claim that adaptation is most effective in systems that are only partially connected. Too much structure creates gridlock while too little creates chaos. Key to effective change is to stay poised on this edge of chaos. Complexity theory focuses managerial thinking on the interrelationships among different parts of an organization and on the trade-off of less control for greater adaptation. Would that the department leaders managing the institution (Department of Education) during the 1994-1999 period had been more cognizant of that observation. It was my experience that there was too much control over policy and too little room for any adaptation. This observation relies upon the assumption that the Ministers responsible for education policy during the last half of the 90s decade believed that what had occurred prior to their tenure was not acceptable in terms of direction for the public school system. The entire 'system' had become too lax, lacked any sense of accountability and therefore had to be made more 'rigorous'. That in turn translated into the development of standards-based testing and the development of curricula that spawned thousands of general and specific student learning outcomes for teahers to attempt to incorporate as part of their daily lesson planning.

In short, what I had understood were sound theoretical and practical lessons learned during the 1980s and early 1990s about policy implementation was not what the regime of *New Directions* demonstrated. As the 21st century begins, I am starting to see

that what I thought was the approach to follow was not that far removed from the experience prior to 1994. Given the sheer volume of policy and curriculum documents that teachers and the school system must now attempt to absorb, my conclusion is that the department's task for the foreseeable future will be to devote all its human and material resources to policy implementation. Realization, as well, by all involved, that complexity theory as the guiding intermittent beacon may be the constant that guides the process. What is scary but challenging all the same is the conclusion that no one can solve one's change problems but onself (Fullan, 1999, p. 29). That notion is something that I tried to encourage teachers to consider back in the 1980s. Take a chance, be a risk-taker and 'go with the kids' in the classroom. The problem is that 'standards', 'outcomes' and system accountability tends to negate the excitement of 'trying it' and changing it if it doesn't work. If only the state could see its way clear to support the teacher more and stand by an education policy that encourages excellence through innovation, experimentation and creativity, I am convinced that the 'public' would continue to be appreciative and completely supportive of the local school. The state could do its part by being more attentive to policy evaluation.

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[56] It is important to note that Wharf and McKenzie's observations are based on their review of the implementation of guardianship legislation in British Columbia during the early and mid 1990s. For example, they talk about a co-creation versus a consultation process with respect to the notion of 'partnership'. The conclusion was that partnership with community meant working with community 'advisers' who would provide feedback on the government's conceptualization and draft of the new legislation. Partnership was not a co-creation model at all—the feeling was that government and communities were not, in fact, equal partners (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, 110).

[57] This has also been noted by implementation and change theorists reporting on the implementation of curriculum. Teachers serving on curriculum development or curriculum implementation committees at the provincial level become so identified with the 'word' from the centre, i.e., provincial department of education, that classroom teachers become suspicious about the real intent of their department 'assimilated' former colleagues.

[58] This very point was encountered while the writer was a consultant working in the Regional Services Branch of Manitoba Education and Training (1990-1991). Along with education attempting to support families with children having stressful reading difficulties and cultural adaptation problems, up to six or as many as eight different agencies representing Family Services, Health, Immigration, Justice, Town, Church

Group, and Community Service Club were collectively trying to assist families new to the community. At times, it appeared that a family worker was required to coordinate all the services targeted at one family.
[59] Linder and Peters (1989) list the following as a tentative enumeration of representative policy instruments: cash grant, loan guarantee, certification/screening, administered contract, quality standard, information/demonstration, loan, public investment, government sponsored enterprise, 'tax break', government provision, quota, procedural 'guideline', license/permit, franchise, in-kind transfer, fee/charge, fine, prohibition, public promotion, insurance, and price control (Appendix, 56).
[60] Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, during many orientation sessions conducted with classroom teachers in the area of social studies, this less to more coercive notion was always present. Who would ensure that the then 'new' curriculum would be implemented? Was there a problem if certain aspects of the curriculum were omitted? What aspects of the curriculum were compulsory? The work of Michael Fullan (1982; 1991) was often used to try and ease the teaching force into accepting CHANGE as a process rather than a cataclysmic event! The travesty of all that is that as the 1990s drew to a close, what became the operative phrase to ensure pedagogical compliance was the spectacle of outcomes-based education and all the restrictive trappings of standards tests. It was the testing program in Grade 3, Grade 6, Senior 1 and Senior 4 that provided the pedagogical prod to ensure that the curriculum was being implemented – at least at those four grades. Very few indeed seem to have appreciated the wisdom of Andrew Hargreaves with respect to standards testing. His claim that standards tests are the quickest route to mediocrity seems to have not taken the education community in Manitoba by anything resembling a breeze much less a storm.
[61] From 1992-1994, the writer worked in the Student Support Branch of Manitoba Education and Training. Schools that were eligible for what were called Innovation ($60,000 and up) and Special Project (up to $30,000) grants to address the needs of students socially, economically, mentally, and physically challenged, were assisted by the Student Support Branch infrastructure to help teachers help the identified student population 'survive' with 'Stay-in-School' initiatives; conflict resolution strategies; remedial reading strategies, etc. including a plethora of pedagogical approaches to facilitate student, care-giver, and school partnerships.
[62] This notion presents a fascinating scenario for further research and begs the question-among many- of the potential for politicization of the civil service. Less volatile a topic would be an analysis of the decade in which an actor entered the organization. What social, political, cultural values and attitudes were prevalent at the time of entry to the organization. What was the prevailing organizational 'culture' with respect to such massive system macro issues as curriculum design, student assessment, student rights, school management, etc., etc.
[63] Both teams of researchers are correct in their observations about policy-maker knowledge at least as far as the writer is concerned. Though not meant to be an excuse, human and financial resources are required to formulate and execute research initiatives. In the 1970s, the Manitoba Department of Education had a such an entity called the Research and Policy Branch that was innovative and proactive to the point that it was so far ahead of the 'field' (classrooms and local authorities) that various projects began to alienate the traditional education community. What folks forget is that the Branch was trying to move projects and approaches that were addressing issues heretofore not even considered in the 'regular' curriculum. The Branch and its driving force – Dr. Lionel Orlikow – became the primary target of the Official Opposition (Progressive Conservative Party). When elected in October 1977 – even before he was officially sworn in – premier-elect Sterling Lyon fired Orlikow. Subsequent to 1977 and all the way through to the late 1980s, policy research done by the department was much less proactive and far less 'visible'. The context for research appeared to be less overtly 'political'. By the early 1990s, a research unit was a part of the larger department providing information on implementation and on critical issues such as the difficulties associated with Students-at-Risk. Very recently (Spring 2000) the attempt to reconstitute a research and policy presence within Manitoba Education and Training has been initiated by the Deputy Minister.
[64] While working as a consultant in the Regional Services Branch and the Student Support Branch (1991-1994), the writer encountered what McDonnell and Elmore conclude about policy-maker choice. The department policy was to use all four categories – mandate to system changing – via financial grants that were guaranteed or categorical. As a consultant, it was my task to facilitate and monitor such activity. Even to the point of being proactive on the client's (school or division/district) behalf. The policy – to subsidize local projects or support teacher professional development - was articulated by regulation and criteria. The client had a notion of how that was to happen and often that perception did not match the intent of the policy which then meant that the instrument has to be adapted. The factors involved were enormous now

that I look back on the process. Everything including: authority transfer, local autonomy, systemic operational change, student and teacher operational behaviour change, alternate educational delivery system, parent/community involvement, leadership issues, even to educational practice that challenged the traditional 'norm' with respect to curriculum design, assessment and daily operation of the school per se. The grants were called Special Project and Innovative – they lived up to their name thanks to the many hard working professional staff in Manitoba schools.

[65] Their emphasis on the importance of policy instruments have import for education. In a footnote they suggest that the idea of examining policy instruments, used in combination with one another as part of an overall policy strategy, is particularly appropriate for examining state education reform.

[66] The seven independent variables were: clarity of the policy itself; characteristics of the implementing organization; disposition of the implementers; characteristics of inter-organizational relationships; level of available resources; degree of environmental stability (the social, economic, and political conditions within the implementing organization's jurisdiction); and validity of the policy design.

[67] Precisely the paramount point of the organizational/institutional operational theory so eloquently stated by T. B. Greenfield (1985). See beginning of Chapter 2-Policy Analysis.

[68] An example of what Stone contends is the publication of student performance on province-wide Grade 3 math tests. The 'facts' were published in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, September 24, 1998, page A6. The item headline was "Winnipeg One falls behind". It listed all the division's schools in alphabetical order with the school average mark posted. The provincial average was 60.7 some 7.5 points higher than the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 average. What the 'average' reader was supposed to deduce about the school 'average', the division 'average' and the provincial 'average' surely speaks to Stone's argument. The test 'information' is not neutral, not rational, and not helpful to anyone. What is the reader – citizen – to do with such cursory data? What is not said publicly is arguably more important than what the news item shows. If your child attends one of the fifty odd schools and an average is taken of those fifty plus the 600 plus schools from across the province, of course some are going to be below average and others will be below the average. Now what? Is the policy to have every child/school score 100%? Is it to raise the 'average'? And to what? What is the acceptable average? Is it the government's call? Who decides and on what basis? Stone is correct! Hopefully open deliberation will eventually determine how much information should remain secret if any at all.

[69] On a provincial scale, such restructuring has taken place in Nova Scotia (removal of local school boards); and in a municipal sense in Toronto with the creation of a super council amalgamating many of the adjacent 'cities'. To a lesser degree Manitoba has experienced a recent amalgamation of two school divisions into one – Prairie Spirit School Division. Indeed, the 1994 report – *Manitoba School Divisions/Districts Boundaries Review Commission* – recommended that the then 57 school divisions and districts be reduced to 21. Not only would jurisdictional infrastructure change but also the impact upon human resources would require sensitive implementation procedures.

[70] See R.W. Common (1985) – *A Manual for Implementing Change*.

CHAPTER 7
POLICY EVALUATION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role evaluation plays upon policy design and implementation. The impact of 'people' on the process along with various alternative approaches is also presented. The chapter concludes with the observation that policy evaluation is and will arguably continue to be a political activity.

The chapter has been organized under the headings: "Performance Indicators"; "Summative Evaluation"; "Policy and People Evaluation"; "Alternative Approaches"; "Policy Evaluation – A Political Activity"; "Categories of Program Evaluation"; "Policy Evaluation Serves Policy Development"; and "Summary"

Evaluation of policy has two interrelated aspects:

- the evaluation of policy and its constituent programs
- the evaluation of people who work in the organizations which are responsible for implementing policy and programs (Parsons, 1995, p.542)

Policy evaluation defined. Beginning with a broad definition, Parsons cites the words of Thomas Dye (1987) stating that policy evaluation is learning about the consequences of public policy. Further, policy evaluation research is the objective, systematic, empirical examination of the effects ongoing policies and public programs have on their targets in terms of the goals they are meant to achieve. Made up of two dimensions, evaluation research addresses how a policy may be measured against the goals it sets out to attain, and the actual impact of the policy. In order to accomplish this, various techniques may be used that are designed to measure the relation of costs to benefits and utility; that measure performance; and that use experiments to evaluate policy and programs. To better understand the role of these techniques, Parsons describes their functioning by relating the 'policy cycle' to the information cycle based upon the research of D.J.Palumbo (1987).

The policy cycle and information cycle. For example, in the agenda-setting/problem-definition phase, evaluation research helps to define the size and distribution of a problem, the forecasting of needs and the defining of target groups and areas.

The 'policy design' phase involves techniques of decision analysis in identifying alternative means of achieving program ends with the purpose of achieving the cost-effective alternative. Such measures as Management by Objectives, Zero Based Budgeting and Program Policy and Budgetary Systems used over the last three decades come to mind.

Policy legitimation—determination of a policy's acceptance by the public and stakeholders—involves the use of opinion polls/surveys as a measure of support or antipathy toward a given policy. Though hardly an example of a 'rational' approach to evaluation it is one favoured by decision-makers says Parsons. Published tables of 'customer' satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the delivery of public services is another example.[71]

Formative evaluation and information management. Not unlike the evaluation procedures a teacher might use in the classroom, the policy implementation phase also requires formative evaluation that monitors the way in which a program is being administered or managed so as to provide feedback which may serve to improve the implementation process. Ideally, this phase would facilitate an opportunity to develop 'corrective' measures thereby improving the delivery of the given policy. In the world of policy development and implementation, especially during the 1980s, what came to be known as 'management information systems' (MIS) —a data management system that was highly centralized and deployed particularly to routinize the collection of information. One of the techniques used by MIS, and hence an approach to evaluation, was performance measurement. A key aim of this technique is to arrive at a ratio of input to service outputs. While not an optimum or desirable feature to attach to personnel activity, it did present a viable instrument to be used to control public finances and attain higher levels of value for money, efficiency and effectiveness. Yet MIS is not immune from serious problems.

Still to be resolved are some very big questions. First, who sets up the criteria for measurement? Second, how is it calculated? Third, who asks the questions? And finally, what is the time period for assessment? Never mind who determines what counts as efficient and effective! In short, as detailed much earlier with respect to the problems inherent with rational analysis/decision-making theory, there are limits to quantification.

Performance Indicators

As Parsons declares, measures of performance in themselves mean nothing. The values and politics, however, which have constructed the measures and the interpretation which is placed on the data, does mean something. Regarding the role of respective performance indicators (PIs), some contend that they determine progress in moving towards goals; identify problem areas; and contribute to improving personnel management. Still others from a more critical perspective argue that PIs simply increase the capacity of the state to control organizations and people (Parsons, 1995, p.548). For pro-PI advocates, the key is the integrity and professionalism of those who devise and implement the audit. Again, for those in the opposite camp, PIs merely signal a shift in power within government and delivery organizations from professionals and administrators to auditors and accountants. Perhaps the last word on the importance of performance indicators should rest with the person Parsons cites as the primary publicist in the area—P.M. Jackson (1988).

Upon listing some nine characteristics of performance indicators[72], he quotes Jackson as being at least very realistic about PIs. They are a means of assisting responsible management to make efficient decisions, he says, however—and this is most revealing about the reliance upon so-called 'rational' systems—they are not a mechanical substitute for good judgment, political wisdom or leadership (Parsons, 1995, p.549).

Summative Evaluation

Closing out the analysis of evaluation of policy and its constituent programs is the omnipresent concept of summative evaluation. Again referencing Palumbo's policy cycle dealing with 'impact', summative evaluation seeks to measure how the policy/program has actually impacted upon the problems to which it was addressed. In point of fact, regardless of whatever measurement is used says Parsons, evaluating impact is an activity which is knee-deep in values, beliefs, party politics and ideology. All of which makes 'proving' that this policy has had this or that impact a notion which he concludes is deeply suspect. Parsons also is skeptical about the use of experimental models for measuring implementation impact.

Experimental models. Briefly, he contends that because society is so complex, therefore, how can an experiment be conducted which excludes so many factors? What

judgments are involved in setting the parameters of which factors will be examined? Fiscal financial limits and time constraints will further limit the research. Management and implementation problems accompany the foregoing. He also doesn't like the possibility of humans being part of such an experiment—they will be too suspicious he feels. Along with obvious moral issue problems, the real point behind opposition to such an experiment is from a political point of view. Policy-makers may not have the time required. Anyway, by the time the experiment concluded, the situation under original study for implementation impact may have changed. The problem of stabilizing the conditions for the evaluation of implementation is also a large issue for the area of evaluation and the management of human resources.

Policy and People Evaluation

The main issue here is that 'evaluation' in public policy also involves control through the appraisal/assessment/performance-measurement/monitoring of the people who work in the public-sector at both the 'street level' and at policy/managerial levels. What this involves primarily is the notion of human resource management via the techniques known as Management by Objectives (MBO). Designed to be less of a top-down approach to appraisal, that is, more 'participative', it has functioned along side another range of techniques under the banner of Organizational Development (OD). This approach attempts to have organizations change their internal environment in order to achieve a 'good fit' with their 'external' environment. Partnerships and shared decision-making is the preferred route. Indeed, the major organizational/managerial concepts include: decentralization of decision-making; co-operation rather than competition; development of systems where conflicts can be brought into the open; responsiveness of people to situational needs; increased communication among workers; changing structures which impede performance; and improvement and development of people's capacities in the organization. Total Quality Management (TQM) is similar in management structure extolling the virtues of organizations satisfying 'customer needs' and 'customer satisfaction' rather than by internal needs and assessments. The point here is that while the evaluation literature in public policy is mostly concerned with the evaluation of programs and policies, in a managerialist framework, it also encompasses the evaluation of people (Parsons, 1995, p.554).

Human resource management. The aim of a Human Resource Management (HRM) strategy is to change people so that they demonstrate behaviour that the strategy can ameliorate. For example, an employee's commitment, competency, and ability to be cost-effective and in sympathy with the aims of the organization, are all attributes that can be 'improved' by the organization. Key to the HRM approach is the integration of 'personnel' management into the corporate strategy by decentralizing the management of human resources to the level of line managers rather than separating it off into tasks performed by specialist personnel officers and managers.[73] HRM strategies can improve 'performance' says the theory and Parsons cites three studies all done in the early 1990s to make the point. The HRM approach stresses that the aim is to improve 'performance' by developing a sense of commitment in each employee rather than just compliance to hierarchical command or instruction. This increase in commitment is to be achieved through

- recruiting the right kind of people
- an emphasis on training at all levels
- regular staff appraisal
- rewarding performance

Not all may be well however as the above implies that public bureaucracies and services respond given the above 'conditions'. The problem that Parsons notes is that analytical, managerial, and corporate planning techniques of previous decades, were focused on improving the rationality of decision-making and of the 'system'. HRM is concerned with improving rationality (in terms of performance) by changing the motivation, culture and attitudes of the 'humans' who work in the black box of public policy (Parsons, 1995, p. 556). What Parsons is hinting at and then declaring outright is that the emergence of HRM in the 'evaluative state' may be seen, as he says, from a critical perspective as the extension of the power of the state to survey and control organizational processes and their target 'customers' and 'clients'.

Renewed Taylorism? Referencing the new managerialism, Parsons recalls the shift in organizational power from the administrator and professional to the 'manager' and the 'accountant' including the concomitant shift from personnel to human resource management. The major point here is that the trend in evaluation has been to move increasingly towards modifying the behavior of people in organizations rather than

organizations as systems (Parsons, 1995, p.558). What has resulted in reality, he concludes, is a more developed form of the Tayloristic surveillance. Moreover, this focus on 'people' evaluation rather than policies or programs has precipitated the belief that more control is needed over bureaucrats and professionals to ensure that, individually and collectively, the objectives which are defined by policy-makers are implemented efficiently and effectively. Indeed, Parsons finishing note on the reincarnation so-to-speak of Taylor's task theory with respect to modern organizations and the people who work therein pulls no punches. What is really at work in capitalist society is

> ...a process of Tayloristic de-skilling...which began in the factories
> of Victorian Britain and continues apace in contemporary 'post-
> industrial'/'post-entrepreneurial' public institutions in which pro-
> fessional autonomy and bureaucratic rationality are being challenged and eroded.
> (Parsons, 1995, p.562)

This is a strong condemnation of what is happening in organizations. It also speaks to much of what critical theorists have been saying about education policy that trumpets the cause of outcomes-based education and the slant placed on education system goals and objectives as perceived by the 'Right' '(Apple, 1993; Barlow and Robertson, 1994; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985). As these commentators offer alternatives, are there any alternative frameworks for evaluation of policy implementation?

Alternative Approaches

To date, particularly as it affects public policy, analysis of evaluation has been framed by positivist assumptions about knowledge and methods. The fundamental predicate of evaluative techniques is that it is possible to obtain measurements of performance in an objective fashion (Parsons, 1995, p.563). Not unlike the position of the critical theorists cited above, critics of the positivist paradigm regarding evaluation techniques view analysis of programs or problems as essentially a political process, full of values rather than some kind of scientific quest for truth or an objective answer (Parsons, 1995). Three approaches have been identified as illustrative of what may be termed 'post-positivist' evaluation—the multiplist; the design and naturalistic approach.

The multiplist approach maintains that there can be no 'correct' policy option or evaluation. Several or multiple measures should be used. Policy-makers should aim to use a wide variety of options and data. The key point is that explanations or options are

not 'proved' but pitted against one another to determine which one is superior or most useful as opposed to which one is 'true'. As the originator (Cook, 1985) argues, social science is concerned not with guaranteeing truth or utility but with offering defensible interpretations of what is in the outside world. Evaluation is seen therefore as a test of argumentation rather than a defense of what is truth or the correct solution. And what is the result of a multiplistic approach? The policy process and the evaluation of that policy should be predicated on the importance of securing a pluralistic, multi-disciplinary, and open exchange of knowledge. That this approach relies upon an involved, informed, interactive citizenry is self-evident. As to its success in effecting implementation and eventual policy adaptation and alteration one must surely acknowledge the thinking of many of the policy theorists cited herein. They have all argued that the future of public policy development and implementation must consider an approach similar to what Parsons references from the work of T.D. Cook (1985).[74]

The design approach. The design approach assumes that a design is both a means for understanding reality as well as acting upon it. It views policy-making as an activity that is about the pursuit of values or goals. So far so good except it is humans that design the reality which surrounds policy-making. The idea then that we can be 'objective' towards a product of human values is an erroneous basis upon which to 'evaluate' a reality which is ever-changing and shaped by the meanings which human beings create and impose on the world. As Parsons relates, the design approach rejects the idea of analysis as neutral, or the belief that the policy problems can be studied in a positivistic way (Parsons, 1995, p.564-565). The design approach argues that we should articulate and define the values to be achieved in different circumstances. Parsons cites from the work of J.S. Dryzek (1993) to further clarify what is involved with the design approach. His views again reinforce arguments quoted earlier about policy development and implementation (Stone, 1988; Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993; Wharf and McKenzie, 1998). Defensible policy analysis says Dryzek, must side with open communication and unrestricted participation: in other words, with participatory and discursive democracy (Parsons, 1995, p.565).

Stages of the design approach. To continue, the design approach is rooted in the apprehension of the political and value-loaded multiple-reality and multi-framed context

of policy-making and analysis. It is no secret the world is and continues to be a messy place. Values and interests abound making articulation of policy perplexing to effect. This 'design' approach then proposes a schema or procedure for policy analysis by design. It is not a mechanical linear set of stages but a recursive process in which the latter stages can both advance upon and reopen earlier phases. The stages are as follows:

1. address values (clarify in terms of complexity, timing, quantity, priority)
2. capture context (the milieu external to the policy process, and the policy process within which the policy will take effect)
3. select appropriate approaches (What frameworks may be used to analyse a problem/policy/program?)
4. apply the appropriate approaches (interpretation of problem and performance goals from the perspective of different frameworks:
   - identification and collection of needed information
   - invention and stipulation of policy alternatives
   - assessment and comparison of policy alternatives

The aim of the design approach is to examine different ways of looking at problems from the perspective of different frameworks of values and methodology. The focus is on the construction of arguments and the improvement of the quality of debate—very close to what Greenfield (1985) said about the 'oppositional contention of ideas'—eventually the truth 'will out'.

The post-positivist approach. The third approach to evaluation—'post-positivist'—is the naturalist approach that Parsons attributes to Guba and Lincoln (1987). Developed in the context of evaluation research, they describe four generations of evaluation. Beginning with the post World War I era, with the development of intelligence, aptitude and achievement tests, they argue that evaluation was seen as a technical exercise of measurement. The evaluator's role was seen to be that of a technician hence the *technical* generation.

Again in the context of worldwide conflagration, generation two—*descriptive*—witnessed evaluation that focused on the description of patterns, strengths and weaknesses of stated objectives. The evaluator had become a describer as well as a technician.

Some thirty years later, and following the flower-child 'hippie' decade of the 1960s, evaluation had evolved into a judgemental science say Guba and Lincoln. An evaluation approach in which objective research and standards were used to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of programs. The role of the evaluator had become that of a

judge in this third era called the *judgement* generation. Finally, by the late 1980s, evaluation research had reached what Guba and Lincoln labeled 'responsive' models of evaluation.

Responsive evaluation. This 'fourth generation' of evaluation research focuses not on objectives or decisions, but the claims, concerns, and issues put forth by members of a variety of stakeholding audiences—audiences that in some way are involved with the evaluation (Parsons, 1995, p.567).[75] Critical not only to what Guba and Lincoln contend as a model of evaluation research, that is, an emphasis on a belief in value-pluralism and evaluation as a form of negotiation, this 'responsive' approach speaks particularly to what research has said about the implementation of education policy. Barth (1990), Sarason (1990), Fullan (1982, 1991, 1999), and Hargreaves (2000), all say again and again, neither the developer nor the assigned or identified target of the implementation of a given policy can effect implementation alone. It is a process that involves a multiplicity of people interacting in environments that facilitate cooperation in order to get through tough and 'good' times as the 'policy' is shared, worked, and reworked by all involved. As this 'responsive' model suggests, it is the constructions of 'stakeholders' that is the primary focus of inquiry. And, as Stone (1988) has argued, such involvement really is a political process in which knowledge is the result of negotiation, that is, political discourse in her 'web of dependencies' vision. For Lincoln and Guba, the model begs for evaluation that is predicated upon wide and full collaboration. Opportunity to contribute to the input at all stages of evaluation should be available to all. That the process is a learning/teaching process, divergent, open, and pluralistic is perhaps all too obvious. But lest their approach be seen as problem-free, they do acknowledge at least two possible implications that may jeopardize its success.

First, it is not an approach that can be readily co-opted into existing 'legitimate' approaches. The naturalistic-qualitative-negotiated evaluation advocated by Guba and Lincoln suggests that social inquiry involves power relations and that dimension alone, if not addressed, can imperil the implementation plans of any policy venture. Second, the wide-open 'give-and-take' of the approach may severely strain the monetary and time allocation budgeted for the process.[76] But then Guba and Lincoln are not alone in declaring the value of such alternative approaches to the evaluation of implementation.

Policy Evaluation – A Political Activity

Howlett and Ramesh (1995) view policy evaluation as the process of finding out about a policy in action, the means being employed and the objectives being served. Indeed, policy evaluation, they contend, is a political activity. It is naïve to believe, they continue, that policy evaluation is always designed to reveal the effects of a policy. For them, the greatest benefit is the process of policy learning that accompanies it (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.170). Their three broad categories of policy evaluation effect such a process.

Administrative evaluation. The first one is *administrative evaluation* and it takes place within government. Administrative evaluation ensures that policies are accomplished at least cost and least burden to the public. Precise information is required on program delivery to effect compilation in a standardized fashion to allow comparison of costs/outcomes over time and across policy sectors. To minimize costs, government agencies generally undertake the following types of evaluation:

Type of Evaluation	Description	Purpose
Effort	Measures the quantity of program inputs (personnel, office space, communication, transportation	To establish baseline data for further evaluations of efficiency or quality of service delivery
Performance	Measures program outputs	To determine what the policy is producing regardless of the stated objectives
Effectiveness	The performance of a given program is compared to its intended goals	To find out if the program is doing what it is supposed to be doing
Efficiency	Input and output evaluations are the foundation of this form of evaluation	Attempts to assess the costs of a program and judge if the same amount and quality of outputs could be achieved more efficiently – at a lower cost
Process	Strategic planning, financial management, or clients' claim evaluation is used to streamline the process	To examine the organizational methods, rules and operating procedures used to deliver programs

Judicial evaluation. *Judicial evaluation* is the second category. In this case, judges assess whether the policy was developed and implemented in a non-capricious and non-arbitrary fashion according to principles of due process and accepted administrative law.

Political evaluation. The third category—*political evaluation*—involves consultation with policy subsystems and the public. Surely the most volatile of the three, this category uses such mechanisms as administrative forums, public hearings, special consultative committees, and task forces. As the researchers have observed, this process, because it is usually neither systematic nor technically sophisticated, tends to be inherently one-sided and biased (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.174). Often accompanied by attempts to label a policy a success or failure, the concern to continue or change the policy may precipitate a sense of perceived urgency. What Howlett and Ramesh argue about government willingness to revise policy based on *political evaluation* challenges the notion of participant input. Effectiveness, they posit, often depends on whether the views heard are congruent with those of the government, which in turn depends upon the criteria utilized to assess success or failure of a particular policy or program (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.175). In short, the state 'calls the shot'! Hopefully the process has effected some 'learning' along the way and that public discourse has contributed to that realization.

Howlett and Ramesh appear to concur citing policy learning perspectives from the research of Peter Hall (1993) and Hugh Heclo (1974). Both authorities credit governments with adjusting the goals or techniques of policy formulation based on past experience including the use of new information to better attain the ultimate objects of governance. Still, the fact remains that policy evaluation, like the other stages of the policy cycle, is an inherently political exercise (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.178). And, to the extent that policy analysis may be defined as the disciplined application of intellect to public problems (Pal, 1997, p.233), it would be difficult to treat policy evaluation as anything other than a political exercise.

Categories of Program Evaluation

Whenever queries are attached to analysis, the process inherently demands that the source of the interrogation clarify purpose, position, and hence perception with respect to the issue under scrutiny. Pal's core categories of program evaluation are a case in point.

Evaluators – policy profession 'accountants'. For the category of *process evaluation* (program activities), he poses two questions. What are the components of the program? How is the program delivered? *Impact evaluation* (outcomes) asks if the program had the intended effects. If not, why not? And finally, *efficiency evaluation* (expenditures) queries the ratio of benefits to costs in the program. Plus, given what was spent, was the most benefit derived from the program? Interestingly stated, and given the categorization he uses, Pal argues that evaluators are the accountants of the policy profession. A further notion that should be noted is that a policy or program never has a direct influence on behaviour. It is always targeted on some factor that is assumed to influence behaviour, and by influencing that factor, in turn yields desired outcomes (Pal, 1997, p.237). Because Pal sees the program as the independent or causal variable, impact evaluation tries to isolate its effect from other influences in the environment.

Process evaluation monitors an existing program to assess the effort put into it—a focus on how something happens. For example, information is tabulated on the target population; extent of coverage; delivery mechanisms; review of program guidelines; field office organization and staff training.

Efficiency evaluation, as the title implies, involves cost-benefit analysis and cost-effectiveness analysis. As Pal clarifies, cost-benefit analysis is not concerned with distributional or equity issues. It relies on a social welfare criterion known as Pareto optimality—a change is worthwhile if at least one person is made better off while no one else is worse off (Pal, 1997, p.244). Net benefit is never an easy issue consideration to determine. To increase the flexibility, economists, Pal cites, further devised what is called the Kaldor-Hicks criterion which identifies potential Pareto improvements as those which, assuming net gainers could compensate losers, would leave at least one person better of without anyone else worse off. The larger problem of course is to determine whose costs and benefits are to be measured: the individual, the government, and society.

Cost-effectiveness analysis compares different program alternatives for achieving a given set of goals. Program goals are taken as a given but the process assesses different strategies for achieving those goals. It assumes that the least-cost strategy is the preferred alternative. This process can also be used in reverse, that is, a fixed budget is assumed and the alternatives selected are the ones that provide the highest rate of goal achievement. As Pal suggests, a cost-effectiveness analysis may help to determine the cheapest way to build a military jet but it is incapable of showing whether the use of the allocated funds would be of greater benefit to society. All of which begs the larger question; does evaluation of policy and the implementation of public policy make for 'better' policy?

Policy Evaluation Serves Policy Development

Pal's response is that policy as intervention depends on some idea of causal connections. Every policy or program is a guess, a hypothesis about social problems. Evaluation serves the vital function of providing empirical feedback on those hypotheses in action. Did they work, what impact did the intervention have, and at what cost? Paramount for public policy theory then is the notion that policy evaluation be integrated into every stage of the policy process (Pal, 1997, p.258-259). Commendable as this may be, it surely taxes human resource availability for one and material resource acquisition for another. Few would argue the benefit of a focus on impact-oriented evaluation particularly if the data accumulated has been collated using such devices as client polling, focus groups, paper reporting or any other type of feedback technique. The potential inherent danger is the very one that Pal highlights, namely, the evaluation process may become concentrated in the hands of a few thereby distancing those polled (citizens, teachers, parents) even further from the policy formulation/reformulation phase. Pal's closing remarks about this process, that such a fear is "surely overdrawn" given the limited role evaluation has played in Canadian policy-making, is cause for concern about the place of policy evaluation. That being said, Pal is very clear about the future of policy development and implementation evaluation. Canadian efforts, he urges, should continue to emphasize the importance of broad evaluation of policy, as well as the wider exposure and dissemination of evaluation results (Pal, 1997, p.264).

Summary

Policy evaluation provides definition and manageable parameters for the determination and improvement of policy development and implementation. By using established indicators throughout the formative and summative evaluation stages, the progress of policy formulation can be tracked and altered as required. Further, the use of multiple evaluation approaches enhances the overall effectiveness of the policy purpose, design, and anticipated outcomes.

Highlighting the importance of policy actors in their respective institutions including how they interact with the policy development process, will improve the process especially if the ensuing discourse encourages alternate evaluation procedures including positive constructive use of whatever empirical data is collected.

Brazilian educator Paulo Freire argued that educators must ask themselves for whom and on whose behalf they are working. And, those same educators, if they do their work uncritically, just to preserve their jobs, have not yet grasped the political nature of education (Freire, 1985, p.180). While not commenting upon policy evaluation *per se*, the foregoing sentiment captures the essence of what I feel is the condition under which I have had to work as a public servant for close to 25 years. Policy evaluation is a very political process and well it should be as education—along with health policy—is arguably one of the two most important concerns for politicians and public servants to address. I can live with that! What became almost impossible to accept were the collapsed time-frames adamantly pursued by the Minister's staff. Their perception of policy development, implementation and evaluation defied what I had understood to be viable processes gleaned from my experience during the previous two decades— development, implementation and evaluation of policy must be inclusive, interactive and adaptive to the conditions for which the policy was designed. This last point, recognition of the various environments that the local school evidenced, was something that my colleagues had realized more and more as the cycle of policy and curriculum development was nearing completion in the early 1990s. If only we had been able to use the mass of evaluative curriculum data gathered in 1984 and 1989. Projects that were designed to work with teachers and schools were terminated based upon a different political agenda. I believe the 'popular' phrase was Students-at-Risk. Money was

redirected to address what the Minister perceived was the approach to solve the problem of struggling learners, 'drop-outs' or challenged youth. As a public servant who was reassigned to the Branch that had the responsibility for implementing and evaluating the at-risk strategy policy, while commendable and sincere as an attempt to address the problem, it relied too heavily upon immediate financial incentives. The continuance of such projects without funding is precarious. Long-term implementation and improvement of curriculum policy based upon interactive interpretation of policy evaluation I believe is the more practical process to pursue. It is far less threatening to teachers, the schools and effective in providing parents information about the children's progress in school.

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71 An example of this type of 'table' has already been referenced herein (endnote # 68).

[72] The nine say that performance indicators should: be consistent over time and between units; compare like with like; be clear and well defined; only measure what is the responsibility of the manager; not be independent of the environment in which the decisions are made; be comprehensive and reflect important areas of concern; be limited to key areas of performance; be relevant to the specific needs and conditions of the organization; be realistic in the targets they set (P.M. Jackson "The management of performance in the public sector", *Public Money and Management,* **10(4)**: 13-21.

[73] This was a designed and intensive approach by management from 1994-1995 within the operation of Manitoba Education and Training. Within the last month (May 2000) Amalgamated Human Resources has also placed a 'specialist' HRM personnel officer on location at 1970 Ness Avenue – the current office of the School Programs Division. Time will tell what affect this placement will have on the morale of staff and how they do their tasks of development and implementation of government policy.

74 See T.D. Cook (1985) "Postpositivist critical multiplism", in R.L. Shotland and M.M. Mark (eds.), *Social Science and Social Policy* – newbury Park: CA.

[75] This 'responsive' model certainly speaks to the notions of community involvement extolled by Wharf and McKenzie (1998) and what Lindblom and Woodhouse (1993) consider as the future hope of policy conceptualization, namely the ordinary citizenry of the state.

[76] The Minister of Education's mission to implement education (curriculum) policy through the vehicle of curriculum documents from 1995 to 1999 at a pace that defied all research to the contrary, attests to Lincoln and Guba's concern that their 'naturalistic' alternative would have experienced a difficult reception by the 'legitimate' ones deployed—legitimate, that is, in the eyes of the Minister of Education! In short, the pace outstripped the capacity of the school system to absorb the content of the common curriculum frameworks, foundation of outcomes and standards and foundation for implementation documents. If the pace of development/implementation document production were to continue at its current pace, a teacher entering the profession for the first time in September 2001 at the Grade 6 level, would have to peruse some 6000 pages of documentation in order to prepare for the teaching of science, social studies, mathematics, and English language arts.

CHAPTER 8

PUBLIC POLICY IN THE FUTURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide closure to the discussion about the conceptualization of public policy. That the process of policy making is difficult, demanding of so many people's time, and constantly in a 'sate of flux', is perhaps an understatement. More important is the realization that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and it will be challenging and rewarding to get there together (public and private sector). Some positive approaches to achieve that have emerged based upon research conducted in the last decade. Though some might argue that the proposed suggestions are a retooling of much earlier work on organizational theory and human resource capacity— Max Weber and Walter Edwards Deming—the notions that have been presented in the late 1990s are nonetheless just as exciting given the context in which they have been enunciated, that is, the context discussed in Chapter 2.

This chapter has been organized under the headings: "The Kingdon Policy River"; "Obstacle to Policy Making"; "Proposals to Improve Policy Making"; "the Policy Cycle Model"; "Changes to Modern Democratic Governance"; "Integrity in the Policy Process"; "Connecting People to the Practitioners"; "Another 'Future' – Globalization Needs More Study"; "The Wider Purpose of Public Policy"; "Governance in the Information Age"; "The Learning Organization"; "The Public Judgment Model"; "The Scenario Strategy"; "A More Distributed System of Governance"; "Renewed Governance and Government Learning in the Information Age - Summary".

> ...if we are to build a civilization that is recognizably more humane and decent than our own, it will assuredly require a citizenry aware of the hidden attractions of both power and submissiveness, of the fine line between rationality and paranoia, of the Janus-faced character of so many events and the dialectical and psychological unity of so many opposites. (Heilbroner, 1995, p.118)

What more appropriate than the Roman god of gates and doors, and of beginnings and endings to herald a discussion of the future of public policy conceptualization and implementation. The process does on occasion take on mythic characteristics relying as it does upon metaphoric story, divine intervention or chance juxtaposition of some *deus ex*

machina. Probably no better example is provided than the exhaustive work of John Kingdon.

The Kingdon Policy River

Residual randomness. Adamant in his stance that a fluid model is preferable to one that is more mechanical, he remains convinced that the confluence of separate streams at a critical juncture, facilitated by entrepreneurs alert to the coupling of divergent forces will, in the end, contribute best to our understanding of events. While the formation of policy agendas and the determination of alternatives are not tidy and tight, his model, though structured, recognizes room for residual randomness. To get this notion under some modicum of control, Kingdon argues that the following factors are not random:

- which participants are invited to a meeting
- which solutions are in the queue
- solution availability at the time of a pressing problem
- some problems are more pressing than others
- which proposals survive/which die/which get joined

In fact given the above list, he further suggests that complexity theory, chaos theory, and the 'garbage can' model all share at least three properties. First, they find pattern and structure in complicated, fluid, unpredictable phenomena. Second, residual randomness remains even after structure is defined. Third, the models are historically contingent—what happens at one time depends on what happens before. Beyond this apparent relationship, what is seemingly irrefutable is what Kingdon refers to as a system dependence upon initial conditions.

Initial conditions awareness. Know the initial conditions of an issue or problem and the outcomes can be predicted more reliably than if they were not known. As he says, individuals do not control events or structures, but can anticipate them and bend them to their purposes to some degree (Kingdon, 1995, p.225). Recognition of residual randomness is important in the Kingdon scheme of things for policy conceptualization. It must be remembered that he prefers to see the development of policy proposals as evolutionary—ideas are floated after long periods of gestation, translated into proposals, discussed, revised/honed and floated again. Finally, because institutions at least constitute

important constraints on policy-making, Kingdon offers some solid advice for anyone in a position to effect policy in the future. Scholars, he says:

> ...need to avoid opting for one or the other view, and to do more work on specifying the conditions under which and the ways in which policy making works from the top down or the bottom up. (Kingdon, 1995, p.230).

Processes are complex. Though perhaps all too obvious, at least Kingdon says it unabashedly, the processes by which public policies are formed are exceedingly complex (Kingdon, 1995, p.230). Many forces are at work and influence the choices that dictate both agenda setting and the development of alternatives. An occasional submission to the music of the spheres therefore is certainly understandable but probably not condoned by The Honourable Minister.[77]

Obstacles to Policy Making

Similar to Kingdon, Lindblom and Woodhouse (1993) are certainly very clear about the conditions required to effect policy-making. First is their list of what they describe as obstacles to intelligent democratic policy-making:

1. actual/potential participants do not bring requisite skills/motivations
2. high levels of factual uncertainty
3. government is a clumsy, biased, only partly controllable instrument for social problem solving
4. elections are not good; functionaries are not wise/responsive nor punished for poor performance
5. bureaucracy is impossible to control
6. interest groups are biased and financially self-serving
7. business has unrivalled access
8. inequality of citizens
9. social impairments of family, school, peers and work (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.139-140)

Hardly an optimistic blueprint for the future, both authors further conclude that policy-making at its best will never live up to the hymns of praise sometimes sung on behalf of democracy. So what does the future hold for policy-making?

Proposals to Improve Policy Making

As gloom and doom as they appear to be, Lindblom and Woodhouse, not unlike their contemporaries, declare that policy-making is political, produced by the interactions of a myriad of participants in a setting of shared power. What it would take to promote diverse debate is partisan probing and reconsideration aided by intellectuals and policy

professionals. In the process they would also reduce at least three obstacles to fuller/intelligent democracy. First—and this will raise some eyebrows—diminish the privileged position of business. Second, decrease inequality among citizens. Third, overcome impaired thought.

Intelligent democratic governance. Their views on inequality are exciting and doable! Ban campaign contributions and lessen the gap inherent in the distribution of income/wealth. Although on this one they are not totally naïve. Unfortunately, such proposals are absurd, they say, in the present climate of opinion.[78] As for eliminating social impairment, they suggest a concentrated effort should be shouldered by the state to circulate diverse ideas, get more people involved and encourage thinking. With respect to the business sector and its role in effecting public policy conceptualization, their comment is classic and therefore bears repeating in full. Lindblom and Woodhouse argue:

> As long as what we have called the rival policy-making system of business, along with its many valuable contributions has the legal right and political might to produce disruptive innovations, throw large numbers of people out of work, endanger humans and the environment, and otherwise create significant social problems, there will be sharp constraints on the prospects for intelligent democratic governance. (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.143)

As they clearly state, business activists and their allies are well positioned to slow down or thwart social problem solving. While hardly boosters of the business sector, they also make what for some may be a startling statement.

Thoughtful citizens needed. Contemporary political science and concomitant policy discussions tend to accept or omit the fact that many if not the majority are relatively incompetent citizens (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993, p.149). Moreover, until the challenge of developing a thoughtful citizenry is put on the agenda of technological societies, we cannot, they say, rightfully claim to be working toward wiser policy-making. More doom and gloom? Not really! To their credit, Lindblom and Woodhouse have their ear pretty close to the ground and certainly want to attempt to eradicate the Janus-faced nature of public policy-making.

Public policy may disappoint. Difficult as policy-making is, as complex as the world may be, and cognizant of the limitations of human understanding, it is hardly surprising that public policies often will turn out to disappoint. They have already hinted

that the policy-making process is insufficiently intelligent and insufficiently responsive to ordinary people. Their final comment on the entire process is realistic and encouraging and speaks again to Geenfield's notion of the 'oppositional contention of ideas'.

The Policy Cycle Model

Any society, they posit, that is serious about moving toward intelligent democratic governance must be willing to debate fundamental features of the economic, political, and social organization. It will have to acknowledge the inevitability of proceeding—now wait for it—via trial and error. And that means, among other things, a more equal competition of ideas. Howlett and Ramesh (1995) concur except they see that happening as a continuing cycle of the public policy-making process, namely:

- agenda-setting
- policy formulation
- decision-making
- policy implementation
- policy evaluation

Sub-processes. The advantages of maintaining such a policy cycle model are that it facilitates understanding of the public policy process by breaking it into sub-processes—each can be investigated alone or in relationship to the other stages. Further, its empirical orientation enables analysis of a wide range of different factors at work at the various stages. The factors to be considered at each stage of the policy cycle include: the actors; institutions; ideas presented; and the instruments available. While none of the foregoing is controversial, a slightly different 'spin' results from their conclusion that public policy-making is not simply a process of conflict resolution. It is also very much a process influenced by past experience and by the development of new ideas (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p.200)—this certainly coincides with the notion of policy learning. And it certainly leads to some fundamental questions about the future of the policy-making process and the role of the state.

Changes to Modern Democratic Governance

Pal (1997) asks if businesslike government is the zenith of democratic aspiration? Are customers *cum* citizen's interests the consuming concern of the state given over to the notion of effecting client satisfaction? How far can decentralization go before a sense

of common standards and shared community is lost? And finally but not least, is the content of policy always to be at loggerheads with the process of policy-making?

Financial factors. Interestingly enough, Pal observes that along with the pursuit of answers to the above questions, both rationalists and post-positivists have failed to come to terms with changes in modern democratic governance driven by globalization, technological change, and shifts in political culture. The traditional categories of problem definition, design, implementation, policy communities, and evaluation continue to apply but the content of the categories has shifted creating a new conceptual context institutionalized through the dominance of treasury or finance departments in the policy-making machinery. Deficit reduction/elimination strategies have assumed a dominance precipitated by globalization and financial markets. Through the 1990s, governments, argues Pal, have preferred to design policies around self-regulation instruments, or set framework regulations that look to results rather than micro-management of behaviour (Pal, 1997, p.272).

Partnerships. Of particular interest is Pal's observation that implementation of policy is everywhere less top-down and more explicitly designed around partnerships with a clearer division between policy design and delivery.[79] His inclusion of the recommendation from the Privy Council Office (1995) that the public service must develop ways to better address horizontal, cross-cutting issues but that it has not yet occurred probably says that there is a very large actualization abyss that must be extirpated. More positive is his contention that based on three events[80] that took place while he was writing the conclusion to his book *Beyond Policy Analysis – Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times,* notions of integrity in the policy process may be described.

Integrity in the Policy Process

Integrity of persons. First, in public policy terms, integrity means that one acts in full accordance with the duties and responsibilities of one's office. Second, it means having a regard for truth. Third, it means being responsible for one's actions, and accountable. Finally, it means behaving with civility and sympathy. Taken together he calls *integrity of persons.*

Integrity of process. The *integrity of process* involves the understanding that:

- the nation exists for the people
- not all programs are of equal value
- consistency is important
- the process refuses to exclude some with views that do not meet the approval of elites
- right and wrong will be discussed without mentioning the Constitution
- politics of integrity must appeal to one's higher self
- all are willing to do the hard work of discernment, to test personal views to be sure that they are right the other side wins (Pal, 1997, p.277)

Integrity of government. A tall order indeed given what he refers to as *integrity of government.* By this Pal means it is essential for civilized society—a space where one may fulfill or enjoy responsibilities and privileges as citizens. Pal does remind us however that some see the client-service relationship espoused by NPM as too limited a vision of the range of possibilities and rationales of the public sector. As he states, a world of customers and clients might be a paradise of consumption and service, but it would not be a democratic commonwealth (Pal, 1997, p.279). His last category – *integrity of purpose* – is encouraging indeed.

Integrity of purpose. Public policy, he concludes:

> ...should not cater to narrow, sectional interests. Nor should it pander to purely material interests. It should keep its eye firmly on its broadest goal—the conditions for a good life for all citizens.... The ingredients for a good life is not mysterious: health, education, shelter, economic opportunity, respect, civility, and leisure. (Pal, 1997, p.279)

Connecting People to the Practitioners

The principle of inclusiveness. Equally aware of 'the hidden dangers of both power and submissiveness', Wharf and McKenzie (1998) propose to abridge any apparent abyss between policy-maker and the recipient of public policy with what they affirm as the *principle of inclusiveness*. While concerned primarily with policies affecting human services, they argue that policies that exclude the knowledge of those who receive services and of practitioners will be incomplete and inappropriate (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.27). Their thinking is that participation is cost effective through cost avoidance—listening to opinions during the policy-making process can avoid delays and difficulties that often occur during implementation. What has not been discussed at length along this same line of thinking is something that is most important to these two social scientists, that is, the development of alliances between practitioners and the people

served. The point made is that the challenge is formidable because both lack the power and resources often necessary to effect implementation. Behind such a problem is of course the issue of who defines the question. As Wharf and McKenzie have noted in their research, when the capacity to define the problem becomes a professional prerogative, citizens no longer exist (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.128). That concern will probably be eventually eradicated particularly if policy makers of the future take on the persona of Wharf and McKenzie's 'new kind of professional'!

A 'new' professional. That individual should:

1. listen and incorporate into practice the experience of the served
2. respect the served – treat them as citizens
3. provide relevant information and research
4. analyse the information declaring the pros and cons of alternatives
5. communicate plainly
6. draft reports
7. organize meetings
8. chair the meeting when appropriate
9. ensure participation
10. possess knowledge of the community

No easy task to be sure but then the professional should be cognizant of the above along with a positive familiarity with not only the policy-making process but the preferences of government and the context of the financial resources available to the project. Though not ground-breaking proposals, when the foregoing is openly shared with all concerned the degree of trust and integrity Pal refers to above cannot help but to ensure a collective feeling of empowerment and involvement to the eventual realization of the policy's goals. That is of itself a 'good thing' but more is required. Developing a sense of involvement is what Wharf and McKenzie reference as the process of *framing*.[81]

Frame reflection. Described as a process where policies are framed by the ideologies and experiences of those in a policy-making process, frame *reflection* is not without its difficulties. For example, resolution may be arduous because everyone reflects on their own as well as others' constructions of the problem at hand. The theory behind *frame reflection* is that it has been a tri-adic relationship—policy, practice and research. To date, the process has excluded those who receive the service. Enter Wharf and McKenzie! Their refinement of the process is to add the service users making it a quadratic relationship—the fourth side reserved for the service users. As they supplied

direction for the 'new professional', Wharf and McKenzie further reference the requirements to effect *frame reflection*. They include:

- the principle of *civitas* – a willingness to consider and address the broad purposes of government
- the creation and maintenance of a climate of mutual trust
- an emphasis on others (where they are coming from personally and institutionally)
- working with a personal 'frame' while cultivating alternate frames
- appreciation of the political character of policy design without cynicism
- invention of new policy modifications while helping to resolve 'frame' conflicts (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.132)

Only service users and practitioners know. Though demanding to be sure, the above speaks to what is essential for the design of social programs, namely, partnership arrangements between government and local communities particularly involving service delivery responsibilities. As Wharf and McKenzie reiterate, only the service users and practitioners know how policies are implemented and understand the real effects of such policy. Unless that notion is included as an integral part of the policy process, the outcomes from policy-making will inevitably fail to respond adequately to the needs of service users (Wharf and McKenzie, 1998, p.134). As the recipients of state policy must be alert to the vicissitudes of public policy, so must those same concerned citizens and public policy academicians ensure that the 'Janus-faced character of so many [political] events' does not subvert the primary purpose of the state—to serve all who dwell therein.

Another 'Future' – Globalization Needs More Study

Writing about 'new' directions in Canadian policy studies,[82] University of Toronto political scientist Richard Simeon advocates that more work is required to determine the impact of globalization on public policy. For example, he asks to what extent does globalization shape the policy agenda? On the national scene, the increase in the social/ideological diversity and emergence of new social movements will demand public policy response. The work doesn't stop. As he suggests, the policy of debts and deficits, including the long-term effect of legislative restrictions on governments to not exceed legal requirements, will require closer scrutiny as these 'laws' impact on the policy process. For theorists, however, the larger issue by far is the following.

Democratic deliberation or domination by democracy. How can the requirements of democracy—representative openness, participation, consultation—be

reconciled with concerns for greater policy effectiveness—the ability to take hard decisions, to act decisively, to allocate costs, to orient policy to the longer term? As Simeon suggests, we have to rethink the role, purpose and nature of government and the state in light of the massive social and economic changes both nationally and globally. The task will surely be the responsibility of all members of society as

> ...it is essential to keep our eye on the context, the environment, the social, economic, and attitudinal settings in which governing structures and policy networks are embedded, and to underline the need to trace the linkages between them. (Simeon in Dobuzinskis, et al, 1996, p.381)

Simeon's sentiments about the future of democratic governments are similar to those echoed by United Kingdom policy analyst Wayne Parsons.

The Wider Purpose of Public Policy

Government is the institution with singular obligations to facilitate societal choice making and action. Government's ability to make decisions and act are the dominant dimensions by which government performance should be judged posits Parsons. Further, the wider purpose of public policy should go much beyond the delivery of 'goods and services'. Public policy should encourage

- enlightenment
- fuller development of the individual in society
- the development of consent, consensus, social awareness, and legitimacy

More 'bottom-up'. Simple efficiency and effectiveness then in the delivery of services is decidedly not what is envisioned for the future. And this notion will surely challenge the extant efforts of governments at least in the 'developed' industrial regions of the world. Parsons 'call to arms' requires no deciphering. This means, he says,

> ...extending democratic control over the managerialist arrangements— consultants and quangoes—which have thrived in market-driven public policy through reinvigorating and reforming constitutional arrangements and more bottom-up accountability and evaluation. (Parsons, 1995, p.614)

Public policy – a mode of public learning. What is apparent for the future of public policy conceptualization is that public policy must assume its aim to be one of the formation of values other than those promoted by managerialism, namely, the transmission and application of knowledge and democratic skills to as wide a public as possible. This reorientation of public policy as a mode of public learning will involve the

redesign of the constitutional control of policy-making. It will further build on and develop existing social institutions and where necessary exploit the potential of new communication technologies. For Parsons, institutions do matter.

Clarification of values – the core task of public policy. The challenge is to design and adapt political/social institutions to improve the communicative rather than instrumental rationality of democratic societies. In order to precipitate such a phenomenon, at least as far as Parsons is willing to project (2005), the policy analysts mission is to help foster a genuine dialogue between policy-makers, policy specialists and an 'active' society. Policy analysis must cease to be the preserve of the powerful and organized and endeavour to reach as wide a public as possible to enrich political argument and debate; promote competition between ideas and values. In short, the core/vital task of the theory and practice of public policy is the clarification/shaping of values to extend/enhance democratization (Parsons, 1995, p.616). It means nothing short of what Steven Rosell (1999) calls 'governing by learning in the information age'.

Governance in the Information Age

Governance—the process by which a society or organization steers itself—originates from the same Greek root – *kybernaien* – as the word cybernetics. And, as the *Gage Canadian Dictionary* says, cybernetics is the comparative study of complex calculating machines and the human nervous system in order to understand better the functioning of the human brain. One supposes that is why in the world of computer machine malfunction, that is, 'when they simply breakdown', we are all consumed by the elevated vernacular attributing human characteristics to the wires and chips of this technology. When the computers arterial pathways become clogged or infected with a 'virus' or when they become confused by a 'love bug' precipitated by an electronic extrovert or 'hacker', the entire workforce and privately connected converts to the internet become victims and at the mercy of the plastic plague. And what has all this to do with public policy conceptualization and implementation?

Learning-based governance and shifting boundaries. The advent of the computer, and particularly the tether that connects it—the internet—has the foreseeable capability to revolutionize what Rosell references as the relationship between 'learning-based governance' and decision-making and how that same interaction deals with the

myriad of 'shifting boundaries' that characterize present and future global societies. Over a period of seven years (1990-1997), senior Canadian government officials, private sector executives, and internationally known researchers, met in a series of roundtable discussions in an attempt to better understand the changing environment for governance and to make recommendations to ameliorate the extant governance environment.

To this point, many policy analysts have detailed the threat to democratic institutions precipitated by trans-national corporations, and the national problems created by the downsizing and off-loading by 'senior' governments to 'local' governments and smaller communities responsibilities for which few have the human and financial resources to cope. While all these organizational and structural changes occur, they have not operated in an information vacuum. Quite the contrary, the 'information society', at least according to the group that Rosell references, has very discernable characteristics. **Characteristics of the information society.** They include:

- globalization – interconnected stock exchanges; borderless capital markets; world-wide technological production and marketing; business rationalization regionally, nationally, and globally; the emergence of supranational forums dealing with trade, environment, and human rights
- atomization, democratization, and fragmentation – growing regionalism; proliferation of voices;
- breakdown of the bureaucratic/industrial model of organizing – downsizing; extirpation of middle management; contracting out; networks; 'client-centred' ways of organizing
- decreasing possibility of secrecy – freedom of information legislation; changing notions of what 'confidentiality' means in government
- growing importance of human resources – well-qualified personnel in both public and private sector operations are becoming essential assets
- changing boundaries and a fundamental restructuring – speed of light transactions impose an 'immediacy' to operational decision-making that has redefined both the daily work function and the capacity to 'deliver' what ever it is that the institution has been designed to deliver (Rosell, 1999, p.3-4)

As the above list suggests, public policy formulation is no less immune from such pervasive characteristics. In order for public policy to become inclusive, responsive, effective, and adaptive to the vicissitudes of society's daily issues and problems, public policy and all those responsible for its development and implementation must seriously consider what the roundtable considered and recommended.

Challenges facing governance. To reiterate, and confirmed by the roundtable discussions, the challenges facing governance include the emergence of a multiplicity of

belief systems; the loss of legitimacy by old sources of authority; and an apparent lack of opportunity for shared frameworks to connect. They saw the role of government as being one that could possibly be much more facilitative and perhaps redirect the above trend through the encouragement of public dialogue. They further saw that the family, school, neighbourhood and community workplace is where *social capital* is constructed. To accomplish this notion means building a *civic infrastructure*. For that to occur, public, private, and non-profit players must work collaboratively. Though the result of possible greater decentralization and the inherent risk of greater variation at the local level, it also encourages greater flexibility and innovation. To in turn effect this process, and due largely to the rapid changing environment of the information society, *social cohesion* needs continually to be constructed. The roundtable, along with the advice from their consultants, made some telling observations about social cohesion—it depends on our capacity to construct a learning society and *that* is not the sole responsibility of the school. Moreover,

> schools cannot be expected to compensate for the failure of families
> to provide adequately for early childhood development, or the failure
> of the labour market to offer people opportunities to develop their
> skills and learning capacity. (Rosell, 1999, p.55)

Obviously the schools cannot do it alone, it must be a truly community effort. So what kind of learning organization did the roundtable envision to develop the learning capacity of society?

The Learning Organization

The learning organization described by Rosell is one that must be capable of adapting over time to changing conditions in a way that is productive both for the organization and the members. It will further exhibit what is called 'distributed intelligence', that is, a thinking function distributed throughout the organization. But most important, the organization will demonstrate more horizontal information flow and less vertical decision-making. Interestingly enough, the roundtable did not shy away at all from the possibility of such a learning organization dealing with conflict, they said there is a need to focus on conflict rather than tip toe around it! Their reasoning is fascinating.

The capacity to learn – shared frameworks. They contend that a failure of today's political system is that everything seems to be 'solution-driven'. The learning

society, they argue, needs to be based on the assumption of continuing change, one that recognizes that the only sustainable competitive advantage in that changing environment is the capacity to learn. To effect such a process they recommend the construction of *shared frameworks*. And that requires those in governance to develop a new competence that exhibits:

1. acknowledging and using uncertainty
2. embracing error
3. moving from control to resilience as a goal of management policy
4. developing the capacity to span boundaries
5. becoming educators (Rosell, 1999, p.59)[33]

But then a learning organization is hardly a new phenomenon. Then again, could it be that such a seemingly simple notion could be the answer to Heilbroner's concern about the 'hidden attractions of both power and submissiveness'?

Enhanced organizational learning is essential. One of the international consultants available to the roundtable was Donald Schön, at the time Professor Emeritus and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His observation was that in situations of continuing uncertainty and turbulence, the assumptions underlying any particular action do not hold for long. The result? Private companies, he reported, have concluded that enhancing organizational learning is essential to cope effectively with an environment that is increasingly competitive and subject to rapid change. The implication is that the idea of organizational learning seems to have filtered into the public sector from the private one (Rosell, 1999, p.62). As Schön details, the reasons the private sector appears to have embraced the notion has been triggered by

- new forms of global business competition
- dismantling of the welfare state
- the growing prestige of free-market capitalism
- the view of the nation state is a problem, an impediment to economic progress
- a new emphasis on downsizing of government
- rendering government services more productive
- reducing the role of the state
- devolving federal government functions to local government
- privatizing government services

With the above as a given, what is the definition of 'organizational learning'?

Organized learning defined. Organizations 'learn', says Schön, when their individual members interact with one another in such a way as to yield a change in organizational theory of action—the action strategies, values, and assumptions, or models of the world, that inform the regular patterns of organizational action—a change that achieves some degree of permanence by becoming embedded not only in the images of the organization held in the heads of its members, but in organizational artifacts, such as programs, files and maps, that serve as embodiments of organizational memory (Rosell, 1999, p.63). In that the process could be productive or destructive, Schön differentiates between two types of learning.

Feedback loops. *Single-loop organizational learning* is instrumental, means-end learning within an existing framework of values and objectives. *Double-loop organizational learning* is when an organization learns to examine and revise the values that determine the direction of its single-loop learning, that is, it learns to reframe problems, redefine purposes, reset the values that guide the organizational behaviour. Engagement in double-loop learning depends on the degree of openness, trust and cooperativeness in the organization. The point here is that an information based organization—government—needs to adopt an ethic that sees errors as opportunities to learn to treat error as a feedback loop in a learning process. This new system creates not only a shared body of data and information, but also a shared framework within which to interpret it. Not to be accused of being too optimistic or even naive when it comes to the daily operation of government, the roundtable did acknowledge that the public-sector environment might impose some constraints. And what follows is clear evidence that the roundtable members 'knew of what they spoke'! In a government bureaucracy, we have the wrong people, with the wrong skill set, and so need a great deal of retraining and reorientation to make the new learning organization feasible. They further noted that there might also be a fundamental problem of organizational culture. [84] The new 'learning organization' then is not without its own track of hurdles to overcome especially when the notion of accountability and responsibility is addressed. Policy 'x' may be close to what the public or client may be demanding but can the public sector, as an organization be client-driven?

Enter the parliamentary convention of ministerial responsibility! Says Rosell:

> At the most fundamental level, the public sector in Canada operates
> on the principle of ministerial responsibility, which means that every
> department must give priority to protecting and preserving the authority of its
> minister. This limits the extent to which a public-sector organization can
> be truly client-driven. (Rosell, 1999, p.70)

From the 'culture of risk aversion' to knowledge workers. In fact, this notion is so evident within the bureaucracy that traditional forms of accountability have created a 'culture of risk aversion'. Any learning organizational strategy that encourages debate, critical discourse, views contrary to that of 'senior management', will encounter some skepticism on the part of the 'rank-and-file'. As one of the former federal government ministers Marcel Massé remarked, there is a need for public servants who have developed in their minds new maps and the ability to change those maps. The implication is that public servants in a learning organization would move from being essentially administrators to being knowledge workers translating data and information into shared frameworks of interpretation. That this may require a different sort of public service, one that is more attuned to change, better able to learn and adapt, and better equipped to address longer-term issues that cut across departmental boundaries, was an observation that was paramount in the roundtables overall deliberations.

  Common conceptual frameworks. With respect to the aspect of 'working across boundaries', this means not only intra-departmental cooperation within government but also work with 'outside' agencies that provide expertise not found within the 'service'. Though sounding simple to effect, the notion of people working together both inside government and outside government necessitates the development of common conceptual frameworks. This happens when people work together for extended periods of time. Learning to become a practitioner and not learning about practice is the key. As roundtable consultant Edgar Schien (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) advised the group, a practitioner is a member of a subculture that adopts the mental map and framework of the group. So, what is new about that? It is somewhat akin to learning the professional vernacular of a different academic discipline—the historian using the concepts associated with anthropology and political science. There is, says Schien, the critical need to communicate and learn across the boundaries— of language, frameworks of interpretation, assumptions—that divide different communities of practice (Rosell,

1999, p.80). It is the 'getting there' that is important. Some valuable pointers to do that include:

1. providing a context which is safe and open (the lack of a sense of safety creates timidity and an unwillingness to engage in frank dialogue)
2. defining problems before leaping to solutions
3. sharing overarching goals
4. realizing that all problems are not soluble
5. the realization that it takes TIME

Would that senior management would take more cognizance of point number five particularly as it applies to policy development. Though one must appreciate that 'forever' is not a popular concept with those whose agenda is driven often by the ebb and flow of the 'political stream', dialogue is a valuable way of building the relationship of trust. It is the social capital on which organizations and societies depend. As Schien advised the roundtable participants, it takes years to build trust and social capital, yet often it is destroyed without a second thought because it is not adequately appreciated for its importance and value. Indeed, the development of a *shared framework* requires a safe environment to consider different perspectives. It requires, writes Rosell, an ethic that fosters innovation, experimentation, and risk-taking, that acknowledges uncertainty and embraces error as an opportunity for learning (Rosell, 1999, p.85).[85] In short, it befalls to the government in an information society to establish the shared framework.

Consultation and mutual learning. The issues need to be framed so people can understand them and address them—no room for hidden agendas here—open operation is the order of the day! Developing a consensus-based approach to governance requires that the public service culture change from a model of confrontation to one of consultation and mutual learning. As Rosell observes, politicians are coming to realize that involving a wider range of stakeholders in the policy process actually reduces political risks (Rosell, 1999, p.98). The trick is to effect such a process of public participation. The approach proposed to the roundtable by public opinion researcher Daniel Yankelovich is called the Public Judgment Model (PJM).

The Public Judgment Model

The public voice is constitutive of the process – it is central to formulating policies posits Yankelovich. Critical to understanding the PJM is his gradation of public opinion. What he refers to as public 'raw opinion' encompasses first reactions;

spontaneous, impulsive, unconsidered, top-of-the-mind, incoherent views. 'Public judgment', on the other hand, he describes as thoughtful, considerate, considered and firm public opinion. The problem is that it takes some seven stages [86]to get to the public judgment position. And, as Rosell editorializes, we lack the institutions to complete all seven stages of the PJM. Even more difficult would be the determination of what Yankelovich argues is needed for democracy to work, namely, there must be a critical mass of public judgment on key issues: roughly 70 per cent of the electorate need to have thought through a position and endorse it (Rosell, 1999, p.99). Nonetheless, the roundtable did appreciate that any process that helps people engage in a strategic conversation, develops shared frameworks and mental maps, facilitates public discourse and is therefore an important social adaptation and contributor to the construction of a learning society.

Citizen participation – the public policy jury. As the roundtable deliberated through the 1990s, there is no question that citizen participation in the public policy process was uppermost in their meetings. Though not described in any detail, an example of their thought is the Public Policy Jury. This would be a group of selected citizens who would serve for a week on a public policy jury to which different levels of government could present policy issues. Such a jury would employ the PJM process. As the roundtable suggests, we should not underestimate citizens' willingness or ability to engage in a process of public deliberation. Nor should the following substantive point be ignored. Any major public policy initiative, Rosell cites, must reflect and be supported by the values of the society; both the legitimacy and the effectiveness of a policy depend on that value basis (Rosell, 1999, p.106).

Sharing knowledge in a civil society. Critical to the roundtable's macro-analysis of Canada's public and private sectors, is the realization of a 'civil society'. Such a society would demonstrate via civil discourse (public voice) the following characteristics: commonality; deliberativeness (turns back and examines itself); inclusiveness; provisionality (ongoing – no finality); listening; learning (mutability of opinion); lateral communication; imagination (the tolerant citizen is the one capable of imagining others' lives); and finally, empowerment. If all that doesn't work, and while perhaps not all will agree, Rosell presents the notion that it is to government that we turn when cooperative

mechanisms of civil society are not sufficient to promote the public interest (Rosell, 1999, p.109). Central then to governance are not basic data or information but the different ways in which information is understood, that is, translated into knowledge. As the roundtable participants agreed, what is needed is a shift in the basic assumption from 'knowledge is power' to the realization that sharing knowledge is the key to effective governance and leadership. The goal for the learning-based approach is to continually develop shared mental maps, shared frameworks, myths and stories, which cross-cultural boundaries constructed through dialogue and strategic conversation. Such mental maps, frameworks, myths and stories just don't happen. The opportunity must be created and facilitated. Again, while not revolutionary, the suggested strategy is the 'scenario' approach.

The Scenario Strategy

The scenario approach is nothing less than the development of a shared perception of the external contexts within which people begin to develop options and strategies for their specific operations. The 'trick', if there is one, is to get the participants to see alternate visions, acknowledge uncertainty, and in the process get people to think outside their usual mental boxes. Important for the public servant and any citizen participants is the realization that scenarios are not predictions, they tell alternative stories of how the future may unfold. Now that can create a conundrum for the public sector as government may be seen to be thinking the unthinkable! That concern, juxtaposed with the electoral cycle, tends to reinforce short-term perspectives. Though an important concern to be sure, good scenarios evidence the following:

1. they must be logically consistent, clear, and simple
2. they need to be plausible
3. they have a role as 'transitional objects' that people can play with and use to learn about sensitive subjects
4. they exhibit an internally consistent hypotheses about how the future might unfold – to repeat – it is not a prediction

Finally, and essential to the success of scenarios, key factors must be present. They include

- time – no short cuts allowed – you cannot 'arrive' without the experience of getting there
- continuity of membership in the group
- being defined at the appropriate level of detail

- the encouragement of a playful attitude where belief may be suspended and inhibitions are dropped to exercise creativity
- provision of a safe, neutral setting (Rosell, 1999, p.148-149)

Shared mental maps. If the above is followed, the claim is that once a shared mental map is drawn, and the various players in a distributed power system begin to coordinate their actions within that framework, individual decisions are made almost as by-products (Rosell, 1999, p.150). But then any particular solution is likely to be short given the rapidly changing information society. Continued strengthening of the learning process is therefore crucial to the 'ever-greening' of shared mental maps, shared objectives and shared frameworks of interpretation.

A More Distributed System of Governance

Effective governance in this 'new' expanding information society may be judged then by how effective it is in constructing and changing shared frameworks. That it will require greater public participation and more ongoing processes of public learning is perhaps all too obvious. It may be more than is feasible for current governance structures. The mission for such an endeavour, as described by Rosell, appears to be nothing short of a major turn-about in how policy is developed and implemented—indeed, it is a societal shift of gargantuan proportions. Building social cohesion involves, he challenges, shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to feel they are engaged in a common enterprise (Rosell, 1999, p.155). What it means is the development of a more distributed system of governance, that is, away from vertical bureaucratic structures to more horizontal network-style structures. Such structures would demonstrate widely distributed authority to make decisions and to innovate. They would also be flexible in order to adjust to rapidly changing environments. To encourage continued participation, the proceeds of the work would be distributed equitably among the members. The glue needed to hold this approach together is the resultant rich communication and shared framework of goals and values. What has to be 'bought' regarding this strategy is the notion that the process of public learning is not about decision-making but about establishing a shared context and language including better working relationships to make future debate and decision-making more productive. Is this possible and what is the role of government?

Overall framework preparation – a state responsibility. Based on the lengthy deliberations of the roundtable participants, Rosell summarizes that in order to build social cohesion and a learning society, not only will a reasonable distribution of the proceeds of that society be necessary, but opportunities for lifelong learning, employment, service, and a reasonable income will be required. As for the role of the state, it can no longer solely rely upon the traditional instruments of regulation, taxation, and spending. In a distributed governance system inherent with a learning society, the state would provide leadership in preparing an overall framework of goals, plus encourage a wide range of players. Specifically, the state's capacity must be enhanced to:

1. frame issues so people understand them
2. ensure that the process by which issues are addressed is structured to have a balance of perspectives represented to result in a consensus that will be in the public interest
3. determine when it is best for government to convene processes of public dialogue and when to support outside organizations to do it
4. bring closure to the process and interpret the results

Sharing knowledge. Effecting the above points would be no small task to be sure. However, to be fair, the above 'enhancement' does recognize that leadership in the information age is rapidly coming to be understood as: a process of making meaning; identifying vision/mission; framing problems; setting goals; arguing/engaging in dialogue; and finally but not least, theory building. What it all seems to come down to is the very clearly stated position of the roundtable, government will need to become much better at sharing knowledge (Rosell, 1999, p.164). And 'spin-doctoring' is not the way to go!

Ever the scourge of political parties when they assume the 'trappings of power', the major problem becomes how to 'share' what they perceive to be valuable information. Often as not, those in opposition view such efforts as pure propaganda hence the reliance by the Government upon press secretaries and offices of 'public information'. The daily media 'scrums' and press releases prepared by well-meaning but politically motivated propaganda practitioners is not what Rosell and the roundtable would like to see determine the operation of the learning society. Such activity, they suggest, gradually erodes credibility, openness and consistency about objectives and

values. How practical they are is open for debate but the roundtable does offer some suggestions for improving the sharing of knowledge. The roundtable proposed to:

- increase the use of parliamentary committees
- move from the notion of 'fixed' briefs to experimenting with political parties framing issues by dealing with each other
- reduce 'confidence' votes
- refer bills to Committee for approval in principle
- allow parliament to examine proposals before budgets are formally presented

Knowledge workers. Accompanying such changes would be a public service attuned to change, better equipped to adapt to turbulent environments, more capable of addressing longer-term issues cutting across organizational boundaries, and more practiced in the art of constructing changing shared frameworks. Needed are knowledge workers not administrators. Ministers, deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers and directors would set the overall objectives and frameworks. So far not something to shout about! The next part does warrant applause. Delegate to junior officials the authority to INNOVATE and learn better ways to achieve objectives. Rosell's declaration on this point deserves vociferous vindication.[87] Regarding the working relationship among senior and junior management in government he says:

> ...relations between ministers and public servants, and between senior and junior officials, must be based on openness, trust, and frank expressions of differing views and ideas, even to those in positions of power. (Rosell, 199, p.167)

A parallel learning structure. Most recognize that such a proposal will take time. As long as all concerned are patient and willing to facilitate the capacity to develop policies that transcend department boundaries, strengthen the capacity for inter-department networking, and be comfortable with learning together across those same boundaries, then much will be achieved in creating the learning organization envisioned by the roundtable. It is important nonetheless to sincerely recognize the implications for public policy conceptualization. The context for a learning organization recommended by the roundtable deliberations is best established, Rosell records, outside any formal decision-making system, by creating a (usually temporary) parallel learning structure, namely, the roundtable scenario (Rosell, 1999, p.154). Their reasons for so concluding detail 'the why'.

The roundtable scenario was successful as a learning organization strategy because:

- many departments were represented – a broad participation base
- adequate time was allowed
- membership continuity was emphasized
- participants attended in their own right – they did not have to 'speak' for a unit/branch/department
- the forum was on neutral 'turf' therefore 'safe'
- the resource people were exemplary
- secretarial support was provided
- opportunity to explore and innovate was encouraged
- there was a link between experimentation (action) and broader reflection
- regular feedback enabled participants to review, work through the implications, and where needed reset the learning agenda

Renewed Governance and Government Learning in the Information Age

Summary

Returning to the questions of government role and is it possible to effect renewed governance and government by learning in the information age, it is fair to conclude that Rosell and the roundtable discussions certainly outlined a role for government in the 'new' information age. It will be possible to implement such a vision contingent upon the 'will' of the players. Certainly all indications from the 'inside' of the department of education are clear—the answer is 'yes'! Where it is not so clear is how the 'public' will be invited to participate and pronounce policy on a collaborative course with a collectively created implementation calendar that everyone endorses. Public forums require commitments from many 'constituencies' in both the public and private sectors. Commitment to listen, debate, change positions, and admit mistakes without 'selling the farm' requires time and agendas that recognize that fact. In education that 'time' recognition has not happened during the late 1990s. Whether or not that will change involves the political stream and all who determine its flow, volume, and quality. On the surface at least, HMS Department of Education, after a selective crew change, is a craft that has a difficult voyage ahead. If the school divisions/districts be ports of call and the schools the some 850 villages contained therein, then much help will be required from all who sail in her and all who choose to 'get-on-board' (adhere to the policies developed).

As has been detailed herein, the amount of policy, curriculum and support documentation extant and in some cases still sitting on the quay, is enormous. For the HMS Department of Education, policy implementation and whatever 'lifeboats' are required to encourage that happening surely must be the 'sealed orders' and the course to sail. Policy development, at least for education, must become less concentrated and in the process become more evident across departments. Plans to incorporate the departments of health, education, family services, and the youth section of corrections are long overdue. This is surely an area for much public policy discourse. Rosell's and the roundtable's notion of governing by learning has much to say for it. The possibility of a four-department collaboration would provide a perfect proving ground!

The future of public policy development and implementation rests with the public and the people in public institutions. Their capacity to conduct and share the responsibility inherent in public policy conceptualization will rely both on new information technologies and face-to-face discourse.

All will learn in the process—public sector worker, private sector 'interests', and the 'public at large'—and that is a huge bonus. Whether 'reflective' time will be sacrificed to the insatiable capacity of cyberspace will be a challenge to be sure. As for the State, its strength and capacity to endure and ameliorate the human condition depends largely upon the cerebral capacity of the citizens it serves. As many have found out, when the electorate is angry and has lost its patience, intellectually incisive or not, the ballot becomes the final arbiter. And that is the way it should be! Public policy is as good as the people who propose it—no more and no less!

I endorse the notion of 'shared frameworks' and the challenge of doing whatever it takes to facilitate a 'capacity to learn' in the organization that has so occupied my professional career for a quarter century. The concept of 'organizational learning' rests upon the sharing of knowledge not only within the organization but as well with those external to the department. That public administration scholars think that it can be done in an environment that encourages risk-taking and where it is 'safe' to register dissent places the future of public servants in a very exciting scenario indeed! To date, senior management—including the Minister—have so-declared in their discourse with Staff. That is a major turn-around from the previous administration.

With respect to the immediate and distant future of public policy development, implementation and evaluation, what the Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science suggests as a prophecy merits very serious consideration. The battleground of the twenty-first century, Anthony Giddens says, will pit fundamentalism against cosmopolitan tolerance (Giddens, 2000, p. 22). That prophecy, if at all accurate, will test the patience and integrity of all who participate in public discourse regarding the multiplicity of directions and options available to the public and private sectors in the next decade or two. What Rosell and company have outlined as the possible future for the public service will be both intellectually challenging and emotionally exciting for all who work in that capacity. HMS Education – full steam ahead!

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[77] Ministers of the crown must be seen as responsible for and defenders of whatever policy is released by the institution he or she is sworn to uphold. That the 'constituency' the minister represents is so diverse and susceptible to multiple contingencies is hardly something that should be held against the office. Whether or not those who work for that office on a permanent basis can eliminate the Janus-faced character of so many events is of course the key question to resolve. After some 24 years working within or behind the 'gate' as it were, one is tempted to conclude that the only thing permanent about policy is that it is not permanent. As people change so do the conditions that precipitated the policy in the first place. Have we made any progress at all? In the field of education it is fair to say that information processing and access may be faster but all the old questions remain. And scholars are still wrestling with the notion if any of the current releases are at all representative. See Anthony O'Hear's *After Progress-Finding the Old way Forward* (1999) or Neil Postman's *Building a Bridge to the Eighteenth Century- How the Past Can Improve Our Future* (1999).

[78] Maybe they are not that far removed from reality. The Premier of Manitoba announced in June 2000 a proposal for severely limiting the election campaign contributions for both corporations and unions. Legislation, he suggested, that would create a more level playing field for all political parties.

[79] This has particular poignancy as the Manitoba Department of Education and Training is readjusting its priorities as the 'new' government sets policy and organizational priorities. Specifically, the former Program Implementation Branch has been dissolved and amalgamated with the Program Development Branch. At the same time a Research and Policy Branch has been given renewed impetus. It remains to be seen if 'partnerships' and shared decision-making becomes the operative strategy for the immediate future. One can only take note of Dr. Pal's reference that departmental boundaries and vertical accountability must not impede effective policy development in the public service (Pal, 1999, 273).

[80] These were the Republican Party convention in the U.S.A. of 1996; the Canadian inquiry in the Somalia affair of 1993; and the annual meeting of provincial premiers held in Jasper, Alberta chaired by Ralph Klein (August, 1996).

[81] For the theoretical background to the notion of framing, Wharf and McKenzie cite the work of D. Schon and M. Rein (1994). *Frame Reflection: Toward the Resolution of Intractable Policy Controversies.*

[82] The article appears as Chapter 19 *"Afterword: 'New' Directions in Canadian Policy Studies"* in Laurent Dobuzinskis, et al (1996) Policy Studies in Canada: The State of the Art.

[83] This entire list captures the current management strategy of the Manitoba Department of Education and Training. Both the Deputy Minister and the Assistant Deputy Minister have via their e-mail messages to all personnel within the School Programs Division provided updates on their department commitments and encouraged discourse that addresses the culture of the organization. This dramatic turnabout from what was experienced under the previous administration from 1994 to 1999, may take some time to engender trust and a 'safe' forum where personnel feel at ease to critique senior management and in turn be challenged by them all in the process of making the governance of public education responsive to the needs of the people it serves – the students and teachers across Manitoba.

[84] As detailed in endnote #82.

[85] Risk-taking or the notion of error leading to an opportunity for learning was not a part of the working environment at Manitoba Education and Training from 1994 to 1999. However, to the credit of senior management and the ministers involved, an enormous volume of documentation was produced that addressed policy, curriculum and support documentation for educators in Manitoba over the same period. As to its reception and degree of implementation most would agree that the jury is still out on that determination. One wonders how some of the teachers will be able to absorb it all. For example, a Senior Years English language arts teacher at the Senior 3 and Senior 4 level will have some 1600 pages of curriculum documents to peruse prior to teaching the area. Again, at Grade 6, a 'rookie' teacher tackling all four-foundation subjects at that grade level – at the present rate of document production – will have over 6000 pages of curriculum information to digest.

[86] The PJM stages are: 1. Citizens become ware of an issue. 2. Urgency develops – whether encouraged or not by how government frames the issue. 3. A search for solutions (first reaction to possible solution emerges). 4. Citizens resist solution – the government deals with resistance (the most interesting/least understood stage). 5. Citizens do 'choice work', wrestling with the choices available. 6. Citizens make up their minds intellectually. 7. The resolution is accepted in emotional and moral terms.

[87] As stated earlier, the current senior management and Minister are doing what Rosell and the roundtable recommends. It has caught the employees at the consultant level a little by surprise. The professed working environment now (2000) is almost the direct opposite to that experienced from 1994 to 1999. As a result, it may take some time for trust to develop where all involved feel 'safe' and offer opinion openly.

CHAPTER 9

PUBLIC POLICY CONCEPTUALIZATION – A PERSONAL REFLECTION

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect upon two examples of policy development and implementation that I have encountered in my experience as a participant both outside and inside the organization currently called Manitoba Education and Training but known by all 'locally' as the 'department'. Membership on the Committee to Reorganize Secondary Education (1969-1973) in Manitoba is the first example. The second one is more recent. From 1994 to 1999, the department produced and distributed a number of documents that detailed the policy direction of the department for a range of educational issues. Organized under the general heading *New Directions*, each policy document including curriculum and support documents for classroom teachers, provided detailed descriptions regarding the aims and goals, suggested procedures and overall outcome expectations for each of the respective items addressed in each document. Included in the analysis will be references to the observations and theory presented in Chapters 2-8. Though perhaps too critical at times (the advantage of hindsight) I try to end on a positive note by way of agreeing with the conclusions presented by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

This chapter has been organized under the headings: "The CORE Committee – First 'Policy' Experience"; "Manitoba in 1969"; "Renegade Rookie Lobbyist"; "Some Very 'Political' Educators"; "A View of the National 'Context' in 1969-70"; "Public Opinion Solicited"; "A View from the Inside"; " The 'Flow' of the Political Stream"; "Institutional Reorganization – A Stressful Time"; "Standards – A Mechanism for Controlling Local Institutions"; "Public Debate Encouraged"; and "The Public Service – Protector and Provider".

The CORE Committee – First 'Policy' Experience

The *Report of the Core Committee on the Reorganization of the Secondary School* (Department of Education, Province of Manitoba, 1973) was the result of four years of deliberation. Its release marked the culmination of a collective effort to create a 'new' secondary public school system that attempted to address all that it was mandated to examine, that is, every aspect of the public secondary school system (Grade 9 to Grade

12). The group or CORE committee as it came to be known, had representatives from all the extant advocacy coalitions.[88] CORE began its meetings in July 1969 in an atmosphere of 'heady' enthusiasm and optimism that in part reflected a little the tenor of the times.

Manitoba in 1969

Internationally in the summer of 1969, the Berlin Wall was still very much the societal barrier it had been since its erection in 1961. President Richard Nixon was in year two of his first term and attempting to expedite an American presence in The Republic of China. Canada was in its second year of 'Trudeaumania" and trying to fully understand what "the state has no presence in the bedrooms of the nation" really meant. Closer to home, Manitobans had just elected a New Democratic Party government on June 25, 1969. That people were shocked at this first time election of a socialist government in the history of Manitoba is perhaps best stated by the red-inked front page headlines of the *Winnipeg Tribune*, the day after the election – "Manitobans signal left turn". Said the *Tribune 's* rival and historically supportive of Liberal politics *Winnipeg Free Press*, "Probably not even the most optimistic New Democrat anticipated the results of Wednesday's election in Manitoba". [89] To say that the political climate was volatile in Manitoba as the CORE committee began its sessions is perhaps an understatement. Did that same political 'climate' create a perception that in Manitoba social, political and economic issues were going to be addressed by some alternative approaches not seen during the previous 11 years of Progressive Conservative government? Was education to be immune from such change?

Renegade Rookie Lobbyist

In looking back at the time period of March to July, 1969, my own involvement with educational issues in a 'political' sense began with my term as President of the Transcona-Springfield Teachers' Association (1968-1969). In March 1969, I had to represent my teaching colleagues at the Annual General Meeting of the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS). The resolutions that my division had asked me to pursue were highly critical of the senior management of the MTS. So controversial in fact that I was urged to withdraw the critical resolutions prior to the AGM by the MTS Provincial Secretary. Feeling that critique was always healthy in an organization, and not wanting to let the some 350 teachers that I represented down, I remained adamant that the

resolutions should be printed in the MTS AGM Resolutions Book and subsequently debated on the floor of the AGM in March 1969. And what happened?

All five resolutions were debated and defeated but not before some six other division/district delegations also expressed some dissatisfaction about the operation of the provincial MTS. And what has all this to do with public policy conceptualization?

The healthy debate was important to the provincial MTS – it reminded them that policy and those who prepare it is not immune from critique and that complacency is not a card to be constantly 'drawn from the bottom' of the deck. And this is what took place inside the operation of the primary teacher lobby group for the entire province of Manitoba representing about 11, 000 teachers. I mention this now because I am convinced – with the advantage of some 30 years more mature hindsight – that my appointment to the Department of Education's CORE committee back in 1969 as one of the 10 provincial MTS teacher representatives was directly related to my role as a 'perceived' thorn in the side of the MTS. Co-opt the young teacher and get him 'onside'! One can appreciate further my surprise to find myself two years later 'appointed' in 1971 to the MTS Provincial Executive – the very group that ran the organization that I had argued was not doing the 'job' back in March 1969.

Some Very 'Political' Educators

My final duty as President of the local teachers group in June, 1969, was to introduce the new superintendent – Mr. R.F.B. Cramer (the same person who was to encourage my entry to the department of education in 1976 by which time he had left Transcona-Springfield School Division as Superintendent to become the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education). Cramer was to replace R.W. (Bobby) Bend who had taken a leave of absence as Superintendent of Transcona-Springfield School Division to serve as Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party. Unfortunately, Mr. Bend not only lost his own riding but the Liberals that he led went from 14 members in 1966 to 5 members as of June 25, 1969. Incidental, but an important aside for me personally, one of the primary targets of those five critical resolutions was the then Senior Staff Officer responsible for provincial MTS Public Affairs – Howard Loewen. His support of myself later in 1975 was sincerely appreciated particularly when he became Chief Superintendent of

Winnipeg School Division where I had also worked as a Career Counselor at an alternative high school.

A View of the National 'Context' in 1969-70

Committee appointments aside, the CORE committee began its deliberations with a July seminar to review the educational environment extant at the time. The context of the time was captured by no less an educational personage than Dr. Murray G. Ross, president of York University, Toronto, in an article published in the June 1970 journal *Education Canada* – "A Decade of Upheaval". Referencing protest marches, drugs, hippies, beatniks, and the new status of women, Ross focused on changes in culture, power structures, and the organization and management of large complex organizations. Something that the CORE committee certainly debated was what Ross cited as well, namely, the notion of the 'plurality of self', the 'autonomous individual', 'self-directed' and searching for 'self-fulfillment'—too often popularly called 'do your own thing'. As important as well was the reference to the rise of the New Left at the time – a kind of distrust of the 'establishment'. For some it did mean "participatory democracy" and a very different attitude toward 'authority'. External discipline and a suspicion of established procedures either in the work place or – for the purview of the CORE deliberations – classrooms and schools – was very much a part of the initial debate to reassess the public school secondary system structure as it was in 1969-1970. As Ross stated, participatory democracy requires its own commitment and discipline. He was worried that a complete commitment to participatory democracy stood in danger of substituting participation for competence. That decision-making was critical was more than self-evident to Ross. A profound change in the attitude towards authority will, he argued, if it continued to grow and expand, lead to major changes in the structure and organization of all large corporate bodies. Now in fairness to Dr. Ross, he was speaking from his own frame of reference – the university. But his comments still stand as a perspective of institutions at the time with particular reference to the public school system as I had experienced it at the time.

External examinations. My own teaching had been directed by the restrictions of provincial examinations. Again, from *Education Canada* (June 1969), the Canadian Education Association reported on a national survey that indicated that the trend was

away from external exams (provincially prepared and marked). Manitoba, for example, had eliminated final provincial exams for the General Program of Studies for Grade 11 in 1968 and Grade 12 in 1969. Provincial exams for University Entrance Course students were not eliminated until 1971 – the third year of the CORE committee's deliberations. As a policy issue, such examinations were anathema to the CORE proposals for 'continuous progress' and 'local' evaluation/assessment teaching practices. And, while such deliberations were in progress, across Canada said the September 1969 issue of *Education Canada*, the major trends were reorganization of school districts/divisions that focused on the organizational concept of decentralization.

Governance then was very much a part of the educational environment of the late 1960s and early 1970s. John Kingdon's metaphor of political and policy streams converging at the appropriate moment (policy window) closely describes the period of the CORE committee's discussions. Such a 'scenario' was further precipitated by CORE's concern that public participation be honoured during the policy development phase.

Public Opinion Solicited

Dated November 1970, CORE distributed a proposal and discussion guide called "A Proposal for the Reorganization of the Secondary Schools of Manitoba". The media certainly helped spread the word. "Students' Own Pace Favored – Report On Secondary Schools Will Urge Basic Changes" said the *Winnipeg Free Press* (December 1, 1970). The *Winnipeg Tribune* (December 2, 1970) greeted its readership with "Work at own pace – Abolish grades in high school, report suggests". And, from the Discussion Guide's To the Reader page, 'public' input was important—"…it cannot be over-emphasized that the Core Committee regards the results of the discussions that it anticipates will take place between now and February, 1971, as an extension of its own deliberations, and as an essential input to its final report."

Societal and student critique. I remember in particular deliberations at my own high school. Because I was a member of CORE, I deliberately tried to listen very carefully to what students said (to the credit of our Division and school, an entire day of school was devoted to a frank exchange of opinion about the CORE proposals). Such staff-student interaction did not take place everywhere in Manitoba. I had the advantage

of attending many of the scheduled public meetings held across the province. The notion of student/staff discussions being held that might on occasion critique what was actually happening in the classroom was a very 'new' process in 1971. It spoke further to the notion that the teacher was not the omniscient one after all, that learning was a cooperative effort. The teacher could learn along with the student. That alone was to become a huge policy shift for many secondary institutions. School administrations often did not take kindly to criticism much less that voiced by students. At least the media continued to do its part.

The media and CORE. A full page article was carried by the *Winnipeg Tribune* on February 13, 1971 covered by the following sub-headlines in large bold type: "CORE: an in-depth report"; "What it's all about..."; "First target: reaction"; "Options offer relevancy"; "...and some opinions on it"; "it's going to take a long time"(a school trustee); "Radical departure from tradition" (a Metro teacher); "Don't think it goes far enough" (a student president); " Philosophy is basically sound"(rural, urban principals). The media outside of Winnipeg also assisted. The *Brandon Sun* (January 25, 1971) carried the headline announcement "C.O.R.E. committee meeting tonight". The 'community' was certainly involved. An article in the February 17, 1971 issue of the *Winnipeg Tribune* read "MMA concerned with the student". The Manitoba Medical Association's committee on physical education and recreation had become concerned that the CORE report was attempting to make 'Phys Ed' a non-compulsory credit at the secondary level (in retrospect this lobby group was correct in its concern).

The final report was released in August 1973. Along with recommendations made to the minister, the report detailed the results of the 45 question public opinionnaire (3, 567 administrators and teachers; 142 students and 421 parents and citizens responded). Twenty-nine public meetings were held across Manitoba in 1971. Although some 'opinions' were recorded in the final report, by and large the report stated that from all the evidence that it had, the Core Committee had no difficulty in concluding that there existed, in all groups, very substantial agreement with its basic philosophy and recommendations. The *Winnipeg Free Press* (August 23, 1973) carried the headline "University-Style credits: Pupils Plan Own Course - Grade 9 To 12 Revamping Recommended" on its front page upon the release of the CORE report, only to be

countered by an editorial of August 28, 1971 headed cryptically "No". The editor concluded with an admonition that urged the government to accept the committee's recommendations, thank it for its efforts and reply to its recommendations with a resounding No. Interestingly enough, all three provincial organizations, the teachers, trustees and superintendents gave the report a qualified endorsement as reported in the *Winnipeg Free Press* (March 9, 1974). Internally, that is within the department of education, public servants were attempting to implement the CORE recommendations as best they could. A letter to the members of the Core Committee (March 7, 1974) signed by the Director of the Curriculum Branch, stated that "...while there are still many aspects of the CORE report remaining under study, the efforts of the last several years are beginning to bear fruit. Further developments, it is hoped, will be possible in the future." Indeed, the task was not a small one. From 1974 to 1976, what became known as the Revised High School Program sought to implement aspects of the CORE recommendations. What should be noted is that the Deputy Minister during this phase was the same person who when asked at a Provincial Executive meeting of the MTS in 1972 to comment on the CORE report called it a "bowl of jelly" (as I was in attendance I will never forget that moment).

The 'department' at work. By 1974, the CORE report was 'history' to be replaced by the Revised High School Program implementation apparatus. I had just graduated with an M.A. from the University of Manitoba and was employed as a Career Counselor at Argyle Alternative High School in Winnipeg School Division. It should be noted that the CORE committee was chaired by a department public servant. While that person did a very professional job, and was very competent indeed, I remember clearly wondering at the time how serious the 'department' was at changing how the secondary school system operated especially when it was the department who was responsible for administering it in the first place. In fact, the former secretary of the CORE committee became the Chair of the Revised High School Program Implementation Committee. The point? The department was still and remained in control of its own destiny! I should not be so naïve! Even the 'thank you' letter from the Hon. Ben Hanuschak (June 26, 1973) commending my involvement as a CORE member since 1969 said that the CORE

recommendations "...clearly necessitate a careful study on the part of [the] department before any decisions on implementation can be made."

Parallel policy (curriculum) development. What was heartening is that when I personally responded to R.F.B. Cramer's (Assistant Deputy Minister) encouragement to enter Her Majesty's Service in late 1975, I was asked to work as a project leader in a Unit called Special Programs and Projects. This unit was a parallel group to the then Program Development Branch whose director was the same person who served as Chair of the CORE committee. And why is this significant? As I was to learn during my first year (1976), our Special Programs and Projects unit was to be the catalyst for many of the CORE committee's recommendations that the NDP government seemed to not trust the 'establishment' branch –Program Development –with implementing. Topics such as Women's Studies; Consumer Education; Outdoor Education; Youth and the Law; Canadian Studies; Classroom Arts; Labour Studies; were all topics that the NDP had on their 'government agenda'. Such issues did not seem to be a part of the 'establishment' oriented Program Development Branch. Again, hindsight affords the luxury of seeing all these items in the context of the closing days of the NDP's second term of office. When the Progressive Conservative Party won the 1977 general election on October 11, that same weekend (before he was sworn in as premier) Premier-elect Sterling Lyon called Deputy Minister of Education Dr. Lionel Orlikow to the provincial legislative building and fired him. The DM.- true to his Lyon baiting of the time – appeared dressed resplendent for the occasion in a track suit (Lionel had continued to coach a high school track team in the early morning hours throughout his tenure as a senior official at the department). And what happened to the Special Programs and Projects unit?

Making the department 'right'. Mr. Lyon wasted no time. The province had just endured a social-democratic government for some 8 years – long enough for the civil service to have been infiltrated by what the ideologically driven Lyon forces dubbed as 'socialist hordes'. By January 9, 1978, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that all provincial department budgets were frozen and that a Task Force had been named to reorganize government. The Task Force released its report in two volumes called the *Report on Government Organization and Economy* (April 1978). The little unit that I had worked so hard in – Special Programs and Projects – warranted one line in the two-

volume report of some 277 pages. Page 75 of Volume II said it all! "The Special Programs and Project Branch should be terminated". While that hurt, to be fair, some of us were absorbed in the 'untouched' Program Development Branch (PDB). Director Mr. S.A.I. Bullock (the one and the same former Chair of the CORE committee) as continuing head of the PDB, managed to re-deploy and reassign curriculum consultants many of whom worked in the department up until the late 1990s. Politics does indeed operate within an organization as august as the civil service. The irony is that during the reign of the perceived old 'establishment' political parties such 'goings on' never happen. It is only when the 'others' take over, that is, the NDP, that politics is perceived to run amuck within Her Majesty's Service.

As an astute Faculty of Education professor remarked to me many years ago, during Progressive Conservative governments often more radical change can be implemented because various 'publics' perceive such regimes as 'safe' and 'traditional' therefore anything that is done during their term is 'ok'. Try the same thing during an NDP government and all 'whatever' takes place! This perception may be changing in Manitoba politics as Manitoba's political bi-polarity (PC or NDP) now has a history in the province's political/cultural/economic past that was not there prior to the two terms of the Rt. Hon. Edward Schreyer.

Perceptions of 'comfort level'. It is also important to reiterate that what Manzer (1994) detailed as the origin of political ideas, educational policy and policy analysis in Canada, all played a significant factor in the formulation of public policy in the case cited above. Manzer's work reminds me of the observation made by A.B. McKillop in his book *A Disciplined Intelligence- Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era* (1979). Dr. McKillop's stated purpose in his book may be applied to many of our 'intellectual' musings. The two oppositional positions are important to reiterate. His goal was to examine in the Canadian context, the tension inherent in the relationship between man's desire to use his intellect—his organizational and *critical capacity*—to further his knowledge and to enhance his understanding and, on the other, his concurrent wish to maintain *certainty of conviction.* That sense of being 'comfortable' then—certainty of conviction—may emerge when things and ideas of long-standing and permanence rise to the surface. The foregoing notion is somewhat akin to the observation made by the

Faculty of Education observer-colleague. When a group as wide-ranging in interest and concern meets over a period of time, it develops what Steven Rosell talked about in his study *Renewing Governance* (1999).

Roger Dale's (1989) work and study of how the state interpreted the social, political and economic environment in the UK, further exemplifies what had also happened in Manitoba during the public discourse under the aegis of the CORE committee deliberations. Further, Stephen Ball (1990) is absolutely 'right on' – no pun intended – policy definitely matters. Moreover, as he says, "...it is crucial to recognize that the analysis of the noise and heat of reform and the making of national policy still begs questions about the implementation and realization of reform in schools and classrooms. The struggle over interpretation and accommodation go on."(Ball, 1990, p.214). I like what Joseph Kahne (1996) concluded: those hoping to promote alternatives also must work to create a policy climate receptive to the kind of changes they value (Kahne, 1996, p.149). Certainly during the many public hearings and meetings with teachers, CORE members made the case for a more open and facilitative educational environment in both schools and at the department. After 25 years at the department since the CORE committee long disappeared, I have seen many variations of this very theme. A brief recounting of a more recent and gargantuan attempt to effect educational policy development will speak to such an observation.

A View From the 'Inside'

During the CORE deliberations from 1969-1972, it is important to recall that I was a member of CORE as a representative of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, that is, not a provincial civil servant but rather a stakeholder role – a lobbyist in fact. For the period 1994-1999, during Premier Gary Filmon's Progressive Conservative government years, I was a 'permanent' civil servant – on the 'inside' as it were with respect to policy development. As it turned out, that fact did not account for very much. My involvement, along with many of my colleagues, was next to nil regarding the policy development process. Some colleagues even stated that during the period of 1993-1994, not much was happening at all in the Program Development Branch – at least not as far as policy development was concerned. How incorrect many of us were!

A policy conspiracy. There was extensive activity 'going on' but unfortunately unknown to many of the staff. What happened I think was a small but exclusive social network of policy participants committed themselves to the advancement of a policy quest that embodied their shared hopes. In the process they promoted one another to positions of influence on the basis of the mutual trust they developed through their regular interaction. In the literature on policy development it is called a "policy conspiracy" (Wallis, 1997). In short, it may also be described as a network of reform advocates who lie in wait for an opportunity to significantly advance a particular 'policy quest'. A policy conspiracy, argues Wallis, is legitimate and believed by conspirators to be in the public interest. It is likely to have the following characteristics:

1. *The advancement of a policy quest* – embodies values or cluster of values which the conspirators are striving to realize across a range of policy subsystems
2. *A social network* – relationships cut across a range of institutional affiliations
3. *Access based on trust* - members are committed to advancing one another pushing co-conspirators into key positions where they can influence the policy process; the trust increases based on the persistence with which they are expected to keep striving for the advancement of their common quest; 'willpower', 'hope', and 'passion', define the energy and determination of the co-conspirators. [This 'intensity' apparently can be difficult to maintain – Wallis even asks, how can an exclusive conspiratorial elite screen out of its membership those who do not share the passion?]
4. *A culture of passion developed through social interaction* – indicated by a person's level of emotional energy; this may draw people toward or repel them away from interactions in which it is generated by participants; the point being made here is that a culture of passion can function as a selection mechanism since people will only be drawn to interact with other participants in the conspiracy if they share their passion
5. *Theoretical parallels* – Sabatier's 'advocacy coalition framework' and Kingdon's 'policy entrepreneurship' description have similar characteristics. As Wallis says, conspirators limit their future freedom of action by committing themselves to advancing a quest not simply because this 'sacrifice' constitutes an investment yielding future benefits but more essentially because they want to demonstrate and express to one another how much this quest means to them through such commitments (Wallis, 1997, p.12)

The above is a very accurate description of the personnel who I think were involved with the reorganization of the Schools Program Division announced on April 14, 1994 and in the subsequent direction of the preparation of the many policy documents that the department released from 1994-1999. To their collective credit, not only was the amount of documentation enormous, but their cognizance of the window of reform

opportunity was not to be denied by anyone. I like the hypotheses Wallis cites as factors that can generally influence the opportunity newly elected reform-minded governments[90] have to implement their programs.

The 'Flow' of the Policy Stream

The *'crisis hypothesis'* holds that public perception of a crisis is needed to create the conditions under which it is politically possible to undertake extensive policy reforms.

The *'mandate hypothesis'* holds that the size of the government's winning majority may be interpreted as giving it the mandate to introduce the reforms it highlighted in the campaigned.

The *'honeymoon hypothesis'* holds that incoming governments enjoy a period during which the public will give them the benefit of the doubt and blame any sacrifices and difficulties on its predecessor.

The *'weak discredited opposition hypothesis'* holds that comprehensive reform is made easier by the presence of a fragmented and demoralized opposition that is identified with past policy failures.

Of the four hypotheses, only the 'honeymoon' notion can be eliminated for certainty. Again, to the credit of the primary 'political' protagonist —The Honourable Clayton Manness, Minister of Education and Training—I would posit that all three hypothesis were proclaimed and used at various junctures by the very skillful and adamant proponent of *New Directions* policy. In fact, with his support, the Progressive Conservative (PC) education reform agenda did develop a momentum of its own (the 'spillover' effect cited earlier). And yet, as Wallis points out, the window of opportunity for a significant and rapid advancement of the conspirator's policy quest may remain open for a limited time only. Then the question becomes one of determining if the policy process has been steered too far in the direction advocated (Wallis, 1997, p.19). This has certainly become a concern very recently as the current NDP government must decide whether or not to continue the development and distribution of policy and curriculum documents at the dizzying pace of the 1994 to 1999 period.

Institutional Reorganization – A Stressful Time

I have dwelt on the notion of conspiracy theory at some length here because the period from 1993 to the end of 1995 was a time of severe organizational stress at Manitoba Education and Training. People's task responsibility in some cases was so radically changed that I am more than convinced that it has taken four to five years to get comfortable again within the jobs many want to do well. Only now, some six years later, are some of the 'players' returning to positions where they feel they can contribute to the overall mission of the department. And what has this to do with the development and implementation of public policy in the field of education?

Control crushes critique. I would posit just about everything. Take the issue of 'control' as an example. Individual initiative, sharing points of view with teachers/administrators, inviting and sharing viewpoints that may be contrary to the department—all part of my *modus operandi* for some 25 years in the department—was not tolerated. By directive from management, all correspondence to superintendents, principals, school board chairpersons, and secretary-treasurers, had to be cleared and signed off before they left the department. The internal phrase was we must both "talk the talk" and "walk the talk" with respect to the 'corporate image' document cover design title- *New Directions* – policy with its vision for curricula, instruction, and accountability focused on "best practice". The concern was that apparently correspondence was being sent out setting 'policy' or making 'policy' statements that were in fact not departmental policy as approved by the Minister, Deputy Minister or Assistant Deputy Minister. Now lest this all sounds like 'sour grapes' from one who was obviously not a part of the conspirator group, I must repeat what Wallis concluded, namely, the ideal type of a policy conspiracy stands in sharp contrast to that of a participatory, consensual approach to policy-making. That I favour the later is perhaps all too obvious. One thing for sure, I certainly could have saved the department and Minister a great deal of absolutely unnecessary embarrassment and total stupidity if senior management had asked some of the 'old hands' about the following issues.

Unfortunate policy blunders. The first major policy document – *A Blueprint for Action* (July 1994) declared Canadian History at Grade 11 an option course (Canadian History had been compulsory since the 1950s). Finally, by December 1997, after much

media attention and action by lobbyists, that 1994 'decision' was reversed. I personally contacted members of the Manitoba Social Science Teachers' Association on my own time back in 1994 to alert them to the 'oversight'. It still took some three years to 'right' the curriculum to reinstate Canadian History at Grade 11. Another unfortunate incident proved to be not very 'timely' at all and could have been avoided.

"Ring out recess, Manness says" ran the front-page headline of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, March 18, 1995. An inside story on page A16 of the same edition covered a half page with the headline "All work and no play..." juxtaposed to a colour picture of a 12 year old sitting on his bicycle. The picture quoted him as not relishing the idea of 'working, working, working every day'. This was an incredible event indeed! In a letter (March, 1995) sent to all superintendents, principals of early and middle years schools, and chairs of school boards, Minister Clayton Manness announced—as an attempt to resolve an issue of there not being enough time in the day to get curricula taught at the grade five/six level— "...a regulation will be enacted to enable schools/divisions, at their discretion, to allow schools to eliminate recess at Grades 5-6." Further comment is not necessary except to say that often as not it is 'gaffs' like this that hurt the efforts to deal with much more substantive issues and matters of important policy. But then Minister Manness was not one to ever avoid controversy whether within his own political party with respect to leadership aspirations or regarding his own initial stint as Minister of Finance then as Minister of Education and Training (1993-1995).

There is no doubt in my mind who was setting the agenda for both departmental reorganization and education policy for Manitoba schools particularly during the years 1993-1995. As alluded to earlier, policy development and department reorganization happened before, during and after the provincial election of April 25, 1995. Premier Filmon's PC government had been granted an unprecedented third term on the strength of their election victory. While Mr. Manness did not run, his riding replacement garnered the same plurality Manness had achieved in 1990, wining by some 3300 votes. Vindication for the 'activist' policy minister Manness? Apparently so as the PC government went full speed ahead releasing a plethora of paper documents.

Policy, policy, policy everywhere. *A Foundation for Excellence* (a 70-page policy document) was released in August 1995. This item was designed to be a

supplement to two items released in July 1994 (34 pages) and January 1995 (71 pages). At the same time, the government further evidenced its apparent penchant for 'control ' with the release of documents that dealt with school leadership, parents as partners in schools, and how to prepare school-initiated courses and student-initiated projects. And, while all this activity was going on, so as to enable the 'field' to comprehend all the initiatives, Orientation Sessions across the province were organized for October-November 1995. Incidentally, as an important aside to all the departmental activity, the two major advocacy coalitions were also hard at work.

The Manitoba Association of School Trustees distributed a discussion guide called "Reviewing the Blueprint: WHICH DIRECTIONS? - A Guide for Study and Discussion for Parents and Community Members (February 1995). Not to be left out, the Manitoba Teachers' Society also issued a document with a similar intent called "Education Renewal: A Working Paper" (September 14, 1994). To say that the government's education policy *New Directions* had stirred the education policy pot is obviously an understatement. Public discourse was evident everywhere and education was the major item on the agenda.

Standards – A Central Mechanism for Controlling Local Institutions

That there was much 'agenda setting' and policy formulation is not in question. It is the decision-making, policy implementation and policy evaluation processes that were not up to 'standard'. The notion of not being up to 'standard' is somewhat ironic particularly since the Filmon government had gone to great lengths to apply 'accountability' in the education system. The approach was similar to that used by Margaret Thatcher initiated in the U.K., that is, through the introduction of the National Curriculum and the parallel policy of student assessment that included the listing of school by school student performance – the 'infamous' League Schedules.

Manitoba was to become an ' international player' as it adopted a similar approach to achieving a sense of accountability by introducing standards testing. While not the place to get into the debate about the politics of policy borrowing, it is fair to suggest that national and local political traditions are as important as international developments (Levin and Young, 1997). There is also a danger, argue Levin and Young, of overestimating the extent to which we are inevitably subject to international patterns or

trends (Levin and Young, 1998). Perhaps it is more a matter of simply noting that if a policy fails or yields ambiguous results, such a policy still provides a valuable lesson on which counterparts abroad may draw (Robertson and Waltman, 1992). Yet again, I like the following advice best of all with respect to restructuring and the roots of reform, one should look beneath the surface of proposals to restructure school systems and explore the assumptions and expectations held by those promoting change (Lawton, 1992). It is this aspect that bothered me most about the policy documents that emanated from the 'department' in 1994-95. By way of one small example, from *A Blueprint for Action* (July 1994), page 6, the documents says

> At present, there is no uniformly applied or universally accepted definition of basic or essential education in the Province of Manitoba. There are also no uniform expectations of student achievement. Expectations are high for students in some schools and low for students of the same ability in others. Some schools are successful at motivating students; others are not.

Copying reforms 'caution'. Perhaps I was too angry when I first read that statement six years ago. What it said to me was that what teachers and schools were doing in Manitoba was highly suspect – at least by the writers (conspirators) of the policy document. Where was the evidence? The reports? The data? Later on the same page, "other schools...continue to provide unsatisfactory learning experiences to students." Statements such as these certainly did not entice me to support the *New Directions*. Nor were such generalizations going to lead me to accept the wisdom of overseas educational erudition. I am with Dr. Levin with respect to the lessons of international education reform. Any 'policy borrowing', particularly from countries with very different organizational, political, social and educational traditions, in short, copying the reforms of other countries, while superficially attractive, is highly likely to prove ineffective (Levin, 1997).

Stop public listing of results. Manitoba has already dramatically altered its standards testing procedures at Grade 3. What remains for Grade 6, Senior 1 and Senior 4 will depend upon the resolve of those in a position to facilitate alternative strategies to centrally controlled assessment monitoring. No more listing of how schools perform please! Hopefully, as more debate is encouraged by the academic community (Linda McNeil's book *Contradictions of School Reform – Educational Costs of Standardized*

Testing was just released in 2000), more members of the educational community and the public that it serves will demand open debate on the 'pros and cons' of the heretofore proclaimed efficacy of standards. My belief is that those who have succumbed to its spurious claims of ameliorating the public school system will sooner than later extricate themselves from the 'standards' pit and work to eradicate the mediocrity that it has generated since its arrival from other places.

World class standards? Not to prolong the point, but a similar conclusion was made by Atkin and Black (1997) in their article on the policy perils of international comparisons conducted in 1996. One of their conclusions bears repeating here, namely, "...there is no magic bullet for improving an education system, so there is no clear path to be found by trying to imitate 'successful' neighbors." Further, they found that 'world-class standards ' do not exist, at least not in the sense of documents one can turn to that specify what students in all countries should learn (Atkin and Black, 1997, 28). Though not my place to get embroiled in the 'standards' debate, I heartily endorse what Meier (2000) offers in her 'reply' section of her recent booklet – *Will Standards Save Public Education?*

Centralization and standardization. The last thing we need, she says, is more of the centralization and standardization that has always dominated schools (and classrooms serving the poor). And now something that the Manitoba NDP government should consider carefully particularly if they lean on research from afar! Meier has seen no convincing evidence that centralization in North Carolina and Texas has produced significant gains (Meier, 2000, p.82). As for the dangers of local control, the benefits of greater autonomy and more local control outweigh its dangers when it come to schools she concludes. As so many others have said, if the teachers in our schools, and ultimately their communities, don't see our standards as theirs, then we 'aren't going anywhere. Does this then leave the state out of the picture entirely?

Not so at all! Meier urges the state to lead the way in promoting higher standards—offering richer and deeper resources, especially for staff development. After all, she posits, what makes some schools overcome the limitations of time is the power of the relationships that are developed inside them: among members of the faculty, between young people and adults, and finally among young people (Meier, 2000, 88). A similar

sentiment has been expressed in Canada by English Professor David Solway, John Abbot College, Montreal. Reform, if it is to be meaningful, *must proceed under a local description,* taking into account the claims and diversities of the domestic moment in respectful consultation with those *who do the work* (Solway, 1997, p.36).

Public Debate Encouraged

To be fair to both the CORE example and the more recent experience of *New Directions: Renewing Education* (NDRE) both encouraged much public debate. The primary difference was that CORE took longer and the results of its deliberations are still with the system some 27 years later. NDRE produced a plethora of policy documents and related curriculum and support documents that are 'out there' in the system after some 5 years. It would be grossly unfair to attempt to predict the longevity of the NDRE process.

My own estimation is that the public school system has been subjected to massive centralization and control. The evidence is replete throughout the policy documents published to date. The 'standards' tests have also created an environment that does not speak to any sense of local control at all – at least up until the end of 1999. As Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink suggest in their article "The three Dimensions of Reform", deep, sustainable, and scaled –up reform is not achieved by mandate, by shock-and-copy strategies, or by other quick fixes. Rather, school reform can become three-dimensional if there is a focus on deep learning, not just on superficial performance results. Further, use model schools to reculture, not just to restructure the system. Finally, treat the wider policy context as integral to school and district reform efforts (Hargreaves and Fink, 2000, p.33). Their notion brings me back to what I alluded in Chapter 2. Policy must be created in a context that takes into account world-wide, national, and in particular, local social, political and economic realities that are meaningful to the people most affected by such policy—the teachers, parents and students. Again, Solway (1997) provides a mind-set for the determination of policy for school reform:

> The main responsibility lies with the parent, but afterward it is
> only the teacher—not the administrator, the professional planner,
> the ministerial specialist or the pure theorist—who can supply
> the nourishment and exercise the student needs to grow and to excel.
> (Solway, 1997, p.38)

Public policy conceptualization, particularly where schools and education in general is the priority on the agenda, if it is to be proactive, must respect the involvement of the community for which the said policy is developed and implemented. Because individuals and groups of people both outside and inside 'the state' are involved, recognition on both parts of that simple observation would go some distance to erasing the perceptual phraseology that too often separates the two entities. For that reason, I would very much like to end on as positive note as possible regarding the future of the STATE and its attempts to facilitate the development and implementation of public policy. To that end, I would like to reference the conclusions of the Commonwealth Secretariat (Kaul, 1995).

The Public Service – Protector and Provider

Public service reforms, the report suggests, have been driven by economic pressures and by increasing expectations from consumers. That being said, though there is a global concern about the performance of the public service, there is no unique solution or approach. In keeping with what Levin argued, each country needs to identify its priorities according to local circumstances. As the secretariat says, countries have to develop local solutions to global challenges. And here is something that would please (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993) and (Kingdon, 1995), success depends as much on an incremental approach to implementing change—a step-by-step process, within the framework of a clear long-term vision—as it does to a single big push. In short, what it comes down to is that there must be:

- a recognition that people are at the heart of the public service and therefore managing human resources must be at the centre of public service reform programs—not technology or market forces
- a recognition that governments need to empower those who are working for change
- a recognition that the public service as a protector and provider of essential services, and as the symbol of an accountable government in action, must recover and retain its pride
- a recognition that the public service should be at the forefront of the process—guiding, initiating, innovating and managing (Kaul, 1995, p.68)

Twenty-five of my 33 years in the education work force has been as a 'servant' of the State. Throughout the time spent at one of the State's 'bastions'—Manitoba Education and Training—I have had an interesting and at many times 'exciting'

opportunity to participate and observe how the State functions. Now that I have a greater appreciation of the theory behind the conceptualization of State policy, I feel relatively comfortable in endorsing the Secretariat's findings. To be less so would I think negate somewhat my own contribution throughout the duration of my service to the public.

In conclusion, while I have never been a public policy development participant at the Director level or above, I am confident in saying that regardless of political 'stripe', and ever respectful of the many different value perspectives held by my colleagues over the past 25 years, the State—by virtue of the people that 'serve' it—develops and implements public policy in accordance with the ability of those who occupy the 'seats of power' at the Legislature. And that includes all those who have sworn to support the members of the Legislative Assembly as per their duties under the aegis of the Crown.

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[88] Faculties of Education (6); Community Colleges (2); Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (2); Manitoba Teachers' Society (10); Manitoba Association of School Trustees (1); Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce (1); Manitoba Federation of Labour (1); Manitoba Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation (1); High School Students (2); Manitoba Department of Education (9) – total 35 members

[89] This comment was the opening line of the editorial "A House Divided" that appeared on June 26, 1969. True to the paper's historical political position, the *Free Press* endorsed the Liberal Party in its editorial on June 24, 1969.

[90] Most of the preparatory work for the April 1994 department internal reorganization would have begun in late 1993. The first major education policy document – *A Blueprint for Action* - was released in July 1994. Both reorganization and major policy initiatives therefore began well into the fourth year of the government's mandate. A 'gutsy' move to be sure for the Filmon government would have to 'defend' the policy documents in any forthcoming election (1995).

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