The Role of Theories in Policy Studies and Policy Work: Selective Affinities between Representation and Performation?

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In this article, we intend to take a few steps to mending the disconnect between the academic study of policy processes and the many practices of professional and not-so-professional policy work. We argue, first, that the “toolkit” of academically warranted approaches to the policy process used in the representative mode may be ordered in a family tree with three major branches: policy as reasoned authoritative choice, policy as association in policy networks, and policy as problematization and joint meaning making. But, and this is our second argument, such approaches are not just representations to reflect and understand “reality”. They are also mental maps and discursive vehicles for shaping and sometimes changing policy practices. In other words, they also serve performative functions. The purpose of this article is to contribute to policy theorists’ and policy workers’ awareness of these often tacit and “underground” selective affinities between the representative and performative roles of policy process theorizing.

\textit{Keywords:} governing, policy, policymaking process, policy analysis, policy work, representation, performation

“Policy” in the Analysis and Accomplishment of Governing

In the second half of the twentieth century, “policy” came to assume a much more prominent position in the analysis of the process of governing, but it is not clear how much this has made the analysis sharper (rather than simply broader). In spite of six decades of “policy sciences,” scholars have not agreed on a shared definition of “policy.” This is not to say that they have no clue, of course. Rather than one definition, there is a cluster of different but related meanings or connotations to roughly indicate what “a policy” is. The concept sometimes refers to the (sustained, structured) activities of a collective actor such as a government or governmental body and sometimes to the results of these activities; in all cases a “policy” is designed. All these meanings somehow express the intention to normatively

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frame the activity of governing in a way that highlights a certain set of values. Some simple definitions fall back on conventional state theory which locates sovereign decision making and authority in the state apparatus; so “policy” becomes anything a government chooses to do or not to do (Dye 1985, 1).

This conceptual fuzziness has left us with a number of problems in the analytical use of the term policy. First, it is not clear precisely what the term means and how it relates to other concepts in the analysis of governing. It rests on a distinction in English between “policy” and “politics” which has no equivalent in most other languages (Dutch being the main exception), and while Dye could confidently assert that “public policy is whatever governments decide to do or not to do”, Lindblom saw “policymaking” as “the complex set of forces that together produces effects called “policies” ... an extremely complex analytical and political process to which there is no beginning and no end and the boundaries of which are most uncertain” (Lindblom 1968, 4; Lindblom and Woodhouse 1993). Some recent handbooks (Fischer, Miller, and Sidney 2007; Moran, Rein, and Goodin 2006) take “policy process” and “policymaking process” as self-evident concepts not in need of definition.

Second, this leads to a similar vagueness about the activity which produces policy—the “policy process” or “process of policymaking”. There is an (often tacit) assumption that the central element in the activity is a “decision”, and Parsons (1996, 82) broadly describes policymaking as “focusing on the relationship between the “pre-decisional” dimensions of policymaking and its decisional or post-decisional contexts.” Or the focus may be on the policy as problem-solving design, with the gaze tracked backward in time, seeing the policy process as a selection of events, (collective or individual) actors, and actions over time, defined by reference to a particular “policy”, that captures (or explains) the (time sequence and/or spatial distribution of) major events that, jointly, make up the “becoming”, “adoption”, and the “destiny” of that policy (Van de Graaf and Hoppe 1996, 95). This recognizes that policy is seen as both ex ante intention and ex post results (performance outputs and outcomes). But it also raises a question: if policymaking is the construction of an intermediate “product” like a “decision”, plan or announcement of collective action, why is it framed as a sustained or continuous flow, and not as a staged production process? Why do policy scholars leave it in the dark where exactly a policy process begins or ends, how to draw temporal and spatial or actorial boundaries around it; why do these questions remain highly contested in policy studies?

Third, there is the puzzling relationship between the different sorts of account of policy in governing—the abstract analytic accounts by academics and researchers, the accounts that participants give of their work, and the accounts derived from empirical observation of policy practice. Practitioners may say (for instance) that “the [stages] model is really about theory, not practice” (Howard 2005, 10); yet see it as important to present the outcome as a “decision” of the appropriate authority (another of the stages). Empirical accounts of policy practice often find it difficult to relate it to the stages of the abstract model but conclude that, the process is
“messy”—that is, the failure of practice to conform to the model is a weakness in the practice, not in the model.

Fourth, there is the question of the extent to which the term embodies normative approval. For example, historical etymology for the Netherlands (Van de Graaf and Hoppe 1989, 15–18) shows that “policy” emerged and gained popularity in political discourse because in everyday parlance it was endowed with all desirable qualities that set it apart from the negative connotations of “politics” and “politicking”. Hence, scholarly definitions of “policy” frequently intimate qualities like guidance and direction, leadership, coherence, conscious and conscientious deliberation, if not sagacity, wisdom; and order, transparency, strategic focus, and instrumentality in solving public problems.

Now, policy scholars have some good excuses to eschew all too precise definitions of key concepts like “policy” and “policymaking”. The world of policy and policymaking hardly lends itself to controlled experimentation and theory testing. Although some scholars would adhere to the Popperian standard that a “theory” should be precise enough to be proven wrong, the field of policy process “theories” falls inevitably short of this standard. The vastly differentiated field is beset by ever newly emerging key concepts, differently interpreted and differently connected in new “theories” or “frameworks of analysis”, and studied by very different research methods: from ethnography and history or process tracing of single cases, to standard large-N methods to discover correlations or causal mechanisms between “variables”, small-N comparative studies using fuzzy set logic, and many, many more.

We fully agree with Sabatier who in *Theories of the Policy Process* (1999; 2007) stresses the “staggering complexity of the policy process” and discusses “theories” essentially as *simplifications* to make sense of them.

This article is therefore addressed to some particular problems in the theorizing of governing. It examines the place of “policy” in the giving of accounts of governing, and the ways in which different perspectives characterize the nature of “policy”, and argues that these accounts are part of the reality that they describe—that is, they are performative as well as representational.

**Representation and Performation**

In Dvora Yanow’s study of an Israeli community corporation, *How Does a Policy Mean*, she notes that at the public annual meeting of the corporation, the executive director would ask, “What are our goals and objectives?” She asks why this should be necessary, given the extent to which this is addressed in other settings, but goes on to point out that the corporation was in fact expanding its activities, and asking this question gave scope for the goals to be defined in a way which encompassed the activities being undertaken, and in doing so, justified the corporation’s image as a modern, rational, goal-seeking organization. That is to say, the statement was not so much representing the goals as performing them (Yanow 1996, 199–202). In the representative idiom, scholars manage to project their inductively and/or deductively produced models onto the world, and warrant them as more or less “true”; that is, as fairly good
representations of a knowable reality, “out there”. In the performative idiom, scholars and their theories are not judged by degree of “truth”, but pragmatically by degree of effectiveness, performance, or worldly success.

In this article, we want to address the representational and performative roles of theories of the policy process in policy studies (see Figure 1). In Working for Policy, we addressed the same theme but with a different purpose in mind. There, we primarily showed the discrepancy between the experiential accounts of the policy process told by practitioners engrossed in their own policy work, and the researched and theorized accounts of that same process by academics (cf. Turnbull 2013). The question of how academics and practitioners speak to each other and with what impact on each others’ work was addressed only superficially (Colebatch, Hoppe, and Noordegraaf 2010, 193ff). Here we explore the same theme, but from the angle of policy practices influenced—sometimes leavened and sometimes biased—by policy studies or science.

“Policy” is a particular way of framing the activity of “governing”, seeing it as harnessing state authority to getting to more or less coordinated and deliberated collective, public action (Hoppe 2010, 2); a framing that purports to present both “policy” and the “policy process” as somehow logically coherent, authoritative, and appropriate. This framing happens, usually tacitly, in the reflection on and during practices of policy workers; but it also underlies the framing of policy in much academic work. In this article, we take as a starting point the policy scholars’ efforts to describe, articulate, codify, and explain, as accurately as possible, what is, supposedly, “really” going on in practice. This academic effort produces a fairly large number of formal accounts of the policy process, as propositions or warrantable assertions about such processes. As codified and abstract statements they “travel” easily, that is, they become widely socially distributed in the peer community of policy scholars and nonpeers with an interest in such theories. Thus, starting from “theory” (a rather immodest label, we will show) as representing practices of policy work (upward curved arrow in Figure 1) we move to performance in practices (downward curved arrow). In policy work practices, the formal accounts do influence the framing of practices, but now in nongeneral, narrativized form; and thus less or uncodified, very concrete, contextually specific and constrained by time and place, and limited in social distribution.

The question we ask is: are there selective affinities between academic policy process theories and narratives of policy practice—do policy process theories not merely perform substantive discourse on “observed truth” codified as warrantable assertions in systems of propositional knowledge (or “logos”, as Gottweis 2012; Turnbull 2014 would say), but also as practical effort to negotiate social relations (“ethos”) and feelings (“pathos”) in policy process practices?

The next section deals with academic accounts of policymaking in the representative idiom. We show that, by and large, there are three big “families” of theoretical accounts; each with lots of branches and twigs, and quite some parasitic connections between the three major branches. The third section looks at these academic accounts, reframing them into a performative idiom, as expressive of or prescriptive for policy work practices.
Policy Process Accounts in the Representative Idiom

Three “Families” of Policy Process Framings

It is common for accounts of the policy process to refer to its “complexity”; it is less common to explain the source of the complexity or to discuss how the analysis should be framed so as to deal with this complexity. Our analysis starts from the proposition that “policy” is a particular way of making sense of governing, distinct from other concepts in use such as “politics”, “professional judgment”, “strategy”, or “public management”. These concepts attribute particular values to the action, and different constructs relate to different values, and these may complement one another, or compete for attention, or simply run in parallel, or even undermine each other. Even within the concept of “policy”, there are multiple values, and we argue that the three key values are authority, association, and problematization. In this section, we will show how these values inform the sorts of accounts that analysts construct, and how both analysts and practitioners deal with the multiplicity of accounts in use.

One prominent account constructs policy as a process that leads to reasoned and authoritative choice about the goals and means of collective action. In this frame, the focus is on what Easton has called the “authoritative decision makers,” that is, leading politicians in government or parliament, top-management of big (multinational) corporations, leaders of inter- and transnational global organizations, and top-level civil servants. The account sees policy as invoking joint political and scientific authority or expertise in tackling collective action problems. It posits actors as representatives of “governments” who have clear preferences and develop goals which will achieve these preferences.
It generates an instrumental account of the policy process as the pursuit of clear, authoritatively chosen goals. It underlies the survey volumes on “the x (name of political leader) government and public policy”, which present governing as the framing and pursuit of the objectives of political leaders, who delegate instrumental problem solving to bureaucrats and scientists-as-advisers.

The second major account highlights the production of coordinated collective action as the result of inclusion or exclusion of policy actors, engaged in strategic associations that generate a continuous flow of negotiations and other types of transactions in order to influence the direction, resources, and results of collective action. Attention is drawn to different degrees and modes of structured interaction or ongoing interactive involvement in policy-related networks by “proximate policymakers”, mid-level and street-level bureaucrats, and all kinds of interest groups and other relevant players with at least some “standing at the policy table”. Policymaking practices tend to be stabilized through mutual familiarity, trust, and a commitment to managing. The focus is largely on policy activities as problem solving through organizational formation of habits or standard operating procedures, routinization, institutionalization, or standardization. But, distinct from both alternative accounts, the more agonistic aspects of policymaking also come into view as power struggles, hard bargaining, and other forms of public strife between networks of allies and antagonists.

A third account of policy and policymaking zooms in on analytical-cum-political processes of contested problematization and joint meaning-making around problematic situations, norms, and practices. Major concerns are critical deliberation, persuasion strategies, and the political struggle for enrolment of actors in competing policy-related networks. Different from the other two, there are no stable focal actors; policymaking is a “dance” of plurivocality and pluralism between all previously mentioned actors, plus ordinary but activist citizens, (transnational) nongovernmental organizations, civil society associations, faith-based organizations, think tanks, academics, specialized journalists and social media, and so on—all those who as collective or individual somehow substantively influence the mentalities, frames, discourses, narratives, and identities that inform policies from which governing practices and regimes emerge. The focus of this set of accounts is on policy as a continuing sociopolitical construction by people managing the problematic in an alternating and oscillating process of puzzling, powering, and shifting participation (Hoppe 2010).

In the next subsections, we will briefly elaborate on each of the three “branches” of this “family tree” of accounts of policy and policymaking.

Policy(making) as Authoritative Choice Shored up by Expertise

Since the Enlightenment and the French and American revolutions, most states appeal to doctrines of legitimacy, that is, state power recognized as legitimate and justified by both ruler and ruled. Usually this has taken the shape of rational legal authority, in which both democratically agreed laws and rational expertise certified by
science are the major sources to justify state conduct. The rationality part of this development can be traced to the cameralistics, the “Polizeywissenschaften” or “Staatswissenschaften”, to other modes of governmentality knowledge, to the history of the social sciences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe, and of the Progressives and public administration in the United States itself. This movement from mere “politicking” to expert-supported policymaking and government was continued in the United States in the 1950s through Lasswell’s (1956) grounding of the field or “discipline” of the policy sciences. Since it was Lasswell’s concern to find the policy sciences on the idea of inserting rationality into practices of government and administration, he departed from a broadly defined idea of how rational thinking and acting—that is, thought controls speech; speech controls action; action results feed back into thought—would become empirically traceable in a policy setting (good examples in Parsons 1996, 78–79). Since Lasswell, therefore, Policy Science 1.01 courses almost all begin with teaching students the notion of a policy cycle: a policy problem should, first, become an issue for public debate and acquire agenda status; then follows the stage of policy design or formulation, ending in adoption (or rejection); followed by implementation and, after some more time has elapsed, evaluation of results. If the policy is not terminated after evaluation, a next cycle starts—and so on, and so forth.

This stages approach to policy process analysis has acquired a paradoxical academic status. It has drawn a lot of criticism because of lack of empirical evidence and causal mechanisms driving the process from one stage to the next in the predicted, teleological, and rational sequence. All too often researchers were found guilty of imposing a reverse teleological interpretation on a merely contingent set of events. Yet, it has also informed, at least subliminally, most of the other approaches. One of the enduring legacies of the stages approach is the development of partial process theories along the policy preparation and formulation, and policy implementation “divide” (Hill and Hupe 2014). Another one is the development of evaluation studies as separate specialization (Furubo, Rist, and Speer 2013).

Policy design or formulation (sub)processes were basically specifying the thought styles or design logics or rules in use by policymakers. In doing so, they either refrained from positing any sequence, like Simon’s satisficing (Simon 1957) or Lindblom’s incrementalism (Lindblom 1968); or they developed rather sophisticated, contingent sequences, like in the empirical elaboration of mixed scanning (Etzioni 1968). In this sense, the stages heuristic was relativized from within, so to speak. Most recently, this relativization is even highly visible in theories about the practice of real-time policy evaluation (Furubo, Rist, and Speer 2013), sometimes jointly with stakeholders (Loeber 2010).

Finally, the stages account led to serious questions about the research strategies for studying policymaking. One of the major theoretical conundrums in all policy process research emerged in implementation studies: the problem of “too many variables” and “too few cases” (Goggin 1986). This problem had profound implications for the new kind of theorizing that followed the
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stages heuristic—causality-based versus narrativist explanation in nonteleological temporal modalities. It also affected empirical research in the field—single case studies, small-N comparative studies through mixed methods, or large-N quantitative research and standard causal analysis.

Another problem inherent in all stages accounts was that researchers needed “caesuras” to distinguish subprocesses from each other. This frequently meant focusing on artifacts indicative of “decisions” marking the transformation of one stage into another—especially different types of policy documents or texts, like party programs, hearings, statutes, terms-of-reference for policy advice, bills, decrees, and evaluation studies. This led to methodological questions about how precisely to study such intermediary policymaking “products”—for example, through argumentative analysis, goals—means analysis, discourse analysis, and so on—and how to assess their meaning in the larger policy landscape. These kinds of issues, originating in the discursive aspects of the stages heuristic, played a role in the transition to what is now known as “the argumentative turn in policy analysis and planning” (Fischer and Forester 1993).

In all this theorizing about “the authorities” and their expert-advisers, the “elephant in the room” was the fact of conflict. For some participants, the task could be seen as policymaking; for others, it was policy resistance. And resistance to one policy initiative may be in order to advance another. “The government” is less an actor than an arena, where struggles over claims are less likely to lead to conclusive determinations than to a temporary pause in a continuing campaign. How the experience of partisan contest could be reconciled with the image of authoritative choice was one important theme in the second “family” of approaches to the study of public policy.

Policy(making) as Association and Interactive Involvement

The second “family” of policy process approaches starts from the idea that policymaking is all about structured interaction and interactive involvement of associations of crucial policy actors. On the one hand, there are theories that focus on the logic of appropriateness embedded in roles and institutions that guide policymaking behavior to the reproduction of ordered practices; and bind policy actors together in ties of familiarity, trust, resources, organization, and commitment to management. In terms of powering (Allen 1998), such theories try to explain how people can act in concert by organizing and stabilizing power-with, and, with a view to achieve some collective purpose, power-to.

The development and significance of relationships between powerful associations of policy actors has been analyzed at different levels. At one level, it was shown how participants, linked functionally and strategically by a shared interest or resource interdependencies in problem processing on a particular policy domain, might also develop an increasingly shared sense of identity. Richardson and Jordan (1979) identified specialized “policy communities” in the United Kingdom. Some argued that such stable actor associations resembled “subgovernments” subject to the gaze of “attentive publics” (Atkinson and
Coleman 1992). More skeptical of seeing such associations as durable groupings, Heclo (1978), in an American context, thought that they were more like open and flexible “issue networks” where participants could opt in or out as they saw fit. On a second level, typical actor associations were theorized as characteristic for entire patterns of governing. Schmitter and Lehmbruch (1979), in a European context, labeled stable configurations of policy actors from government, business, and trade unions as “corporatism”; though in the United States it was more likely to be an interest in “urban regimes” (Dowding 2001). Others saw the emergence of a new paradigm for the “architecture of complexity” in the gradual erosion of “government” by authoritative direction and rise of “governance” by negotiation between self-organizing networks (Rhodes 1997).

A third level of theorizing the policy process as stabilizing association and practice through functional linkage is the application of institutional theories. Asking how institutions and rules matter for policymaking, these frameworks see interactions between policy actors as becoming stabilized through routines, habitual behavior, mutual recognition, labeling, and becoming “infused with value” (Selznick 1957, 17)—in other words, becoming institutionalized. Generally, institutional theories are said to explain long-term stability well, but not change. Three “new institutionalisms” are identified in the literature—historical (Streeck and Thelen 2005), economic (Ostrom 2009), and sociological (March and Olsen 1989)—each tending to generalize from favorite examples and paradigms of explanation within their own originating disciplines—respectively, the logic of historical paths, the economic logic of interest-based calculation, and the social logic of appropriate behavior—and recently “discursive institutionalism” was added to the list (Schmidt 2008).

All institutionalists except for those who strongly advocate macroviews of modernization, prefer nonteleological ways of thinking. They either use the inductive methods of historical narrative in an eventful temporality in which policymaking processes are considered contingent, open-ended, and noncontinuous by definition. Occasionally, particular events, with the benefit of hindsight, can be assigned the status of origins of significant or pervasive changes in policymaking structures like networks or entire styles of policymaking. Alternatively, positivistically inclined institutionalists search for law-like sequences or causal mechanisms in policymaking processes by resorting to comparative explanation, in an experimental temporality where a small number of supposedly independent and equivalent cases is used to discover or test hypotheses inspired by (middle-range) social science theories (Sewell 2005, 81–123).

On the other hand, there are theories that see collective policy action arising through a more Hobbesian or Schmittian view of “Realpolitik”, or a Mouffian view of inevitable agonistic competition and rivalry in politics (Mouffe 2000), that posit a logic of pure power domination or a Gramscian political strategy for hegemony (Gramsci 1971) as the big drivers behind public policy processes. Such theories argue that acting in concert requires power-over as instrumental to power-to and power-over.
with (Haugaard 2014). The temporal and/or social inclusion or exclusion from the puzzling and powering that together make up policymaking determines the success or failure of actors’ political bid for cognitive and organizational power. Not institutions as enabling or restraining parameters, but the intentions, frames, strategies, resources and modes of power acquisition and maintenance, or coercion, domination and hegemony, and cooperation and conflict are the key. Theories of hard bargaining in bureaucratic politics (Allison 1971), of political opportunity structures for social movements (Kriesi et al. 1995) and operational modes of cadre bureaucracies (e.g., Rothstein 2015) exemplify these agonistic policy process theories.

**Policy(making) as Managing the Problematic**

The third core value of policy that we identified was *problematization*, and much of the theorizing about policy, particularly in the last few decades, has focused on the concept of problem. It was not part of traditional theorizing about governing, which focused on order and how it was achieved and in what circumstances it could be considered legitimate to use coercion to achieve order. The development, between roughly the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century, of cameralistics, “Polizeywissenschaften” or “Staatswissenschaften”, other modes of governmentality knowledge, the history of the social sciences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe, and of the Progressives and public administration in the United States itself, culminated in Lasswell’s call for the mobilization of academic social science in the process of governing to create a “policy science” which was problem-focused, interdisciplinary, and explicitly normative, leading to the development in (mainly United States) universities (though it emerged from defense contracting and the RAND Corporation) of a technology of systematic choice grounded in microeconomics (Radin 2000; 2013). The function of policy analysis was to clarify the problem, predict the outcome of competing options, and evaluate the action taken; this was “speaking truth to power” (Wildavsky 1979).

Much of this “policy analysis” was done, though how much it was used in the policy process, and for what purpose, was questioned (Lindblom 1990), and it became clear that the nature of “the problem” was not self-evident, but emerged from intellectual clashes and political power play of different and partial perspectives. Majone (1989) argued that the work of the policy analyst was more like that of a courtroom lawyer, crafting a persuasive argument, than a laboratory scientist, and attention was directed to the processes of “problematisation”: how situations were seen as normal or deviant, when deviant situations were seen as “problems”, when “problems” demanded collective action, who should initiate such action, what actions were appropriate, how the utility of these actions could be assessed, and so on. The emerging “argumentative turn” in policy analysis strongly focused attention on this process (e.g., Fischer and Forester 1993; Hajer and Wagenaar 2003; Hoppe 2010; Yanow 1996).

In this perspective, the central question is: How and why do ideas, beliefs, images, ideologies, worldviews, paradigms, or other mental constructs impact on policy processes? Why do some
ideas become the policies, programs, and policy philosophies that dominate politics and political decision making, while others become sidelined, marginalized, or neglected? We can distinguish here between ideas-based accounts traceable to cognitive psychology and cognitive science, and approaches embedded in a social-constructivist, meaning-based ontology of social reality (e.g., Fligstein and McAdams 2012, 32ff).

In the former, ideas have primacy over and are tightly coupled to speech and action; and theorists and researchers stick to mainstream, often quantitative methods of researching the policy process. Sabatier’s “advocacy coalition framework” (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1988) sees the policy-oriented behavior of actors as dominated by their “worldview”, made up of “deep core beliefs” and “policy core beliefs”. Advocacy coalitions are formed between actors, both public and nonpublic, on the basis of congruency (not consensus) in their belief system and coordinated political strategizing. On the other hand, Kingdon’s “multiple streams” approach (1995) sees the mindset of the actors as being more related to their skill-set and occupational position (the two being closely related). He identifies some actors as focusing on the nature and source of the concern (the “problem stream”), others as focusing on what could be done about it (the “policy stream”), and a third cluster concerned with what (if anything) should be done about it (is this something with which government should be concerned?), and more particularly, what were opportune moments for government to intervene. Kingdon argued that the three streams operated largely independently of one another and that a critical question in policy analysis was to identify the ways in which links were made between them (see Zahariadis 2003).

Both of these approaches tend to focus attention on the stability of policy settings, resting as they do on the knowledge and values of the actors. But Jones and Baumgartner (2005) focus on change as well as stability, and on the relationship between them. They argue that policy subsystems dominated by stabilized policy images can be punctuated by bursts of nonincremental change through disproportionate decision making. So long-term patterns of periods of stability and incremental change with short outbursts of nonincremental change, returning to a new equilibrium, give their theory of political information processing and attention allocation its most well-known name: punctuated equilibrium theory. Its proponents claim to have integrated incremental and nonincremental patterns of policy change in an overarching new theory (Howlett and Migone 2011).

Accounts of the social construction of meaning take a broader perspective, starting with the social process of meaning-making and asking: How and why do sociopolitically constructed meanings impact the policy process? Politics is conceptualized as a struggle to control and impose shared meaning that governs collective action projects or, in Foucault’s words, become hegemonic governmentality (Dean 1999/2010). Edelman (1988) and Alexander (2010, 276ff) view politics as an elite-staged spectacle of performances where “background representations, scripts, actors, means of symbolic production, mise en scène, social and interpretive power, and audiences” either “felicitously”
fuse in truthful and real narratives believed by the public, or become rejected by them as fake and contrived. Following Yanow (1996), in policymaking the vital question becomes: “how do policies mean?” Policymaking is a never-ending series of communications and strategic action moves by which various policy actors in all kinds of forums of public deliberation and coupled arenas of policy subsystems construct intersubjective meanings that inform collective action; and the socially constructed outputs and outcomes of these collective actions feed back into policy speech and policy thought with a disciplining impact on the behavior of citizens. This social constructivism in policy process accounts gained particular popularity in policy design and agenda-setting contexts, although it is also to be found in implementation settings.

Ingram and Schneider’s (1995) theory of policy design argues that “target populations” are sociopolitically constructed—for example, as contenders, as advantaged, as dependents, or as deviants—in and through policies. Policymakers’ shifting perceptions and attitudes (or stereotypes) of target populations during policy design are the independent variable; the authoritative policy texts and subsequent implementation practices are intermediary variables; impacting on the quality of democracy as dependent variable—that is, citizen perceptions of the policy in question, the policy’s impact on their group identities, their orientations toward government, and their willingness and resources for political mobilization and participation. This state-of-democracy effect in turn becomes part of the subsequent political environment in which policymakers search for policies that reward their efforts (e.g., through re-election) or ward off risks (e.g., by inadvertently strengthening contenders). Although the role of policymaking in the social construction of groups is relative (to advertisements, popular culture, and social discrimination), it should be seen as an important political tool for social change in the distribution and redistribution of people’s life chances in society (Schneider, Ingram, and deLeon 2014). Recently, the approach has been generalized from its focus on policymakers’ stereotypes of target groups to a generic approach of “policy feedback theory” (Mettler and SoRelle 2014; but also Hoppe 2010).

This concludes our overview of the major known and popular policy process frameworks, presented as three “families of frameworks”, each one with a clear root metaphor—authority, association, and problematization—but all sprouting from the same trunk: policy process. Policy scholars in academia will keep quarreling over the representational qualities or degrees of verisimilitude (in Popper’s terminology) of these accounts. Or they will create narratives of learning, wherein teleological and authoritative accounts of choice are being replaced by contingent and open-ended accounts of association and problematization—or combinations of both (Schlager 1999; 2007). Or they may tell tales in which the complete set of accounts is viewed, eclectically and pragmatically, as a toolkit from which researchers choose and pick those concepts and frameworks, and multiple registers of temporality (Sewell 2005, 107–110) and research methodologies that make a case or multiple cases understandable and transparent, as the researchers sees fit (in this direction, Cairney and Heikkila...
This is not the path we want to follow in this article. Rather, we would like demonstrate the importance of the other function of academic accounts: as performative for and in practice.

The Three Basic Approaches in the Performative Mode

Studying the Performative Mode of Policy Sciences

In his well-known *How To Do Things With Words*, Austin (1962) coined the notion of the performativity of particular speech acts. These are utterances that say something and actually do what they express simultaneously. A wedding officer in an official wedding ceremony uttering the words: “Hereby I declare you husband and wife” to a designated couple, thereby simultaneously changes the legal-marital status of the man and the woman involved. From this linguistic category, Callon (2007, 311–357) derived the concept of “performation” to denote how economics as academic discipline is involved in (co-)”performing” the economy, for example, by creating new product markets in line with the idea of a perfect market, new ways to improve calculative agencies and calculated contracts as the quintessential economic transaction, or new ideas for econometric modeling to better predict the future value of a firm’s investments or a nation’s Gross Domestic Product, and so on.

How do the selective affinities between disciplinary knowledge and “real-world” practices come about? The performation of the discipline of economics in and on the world of markets and the economy is not a self-executing process, but relentless and continuous hard work. It involves discursive struggles, self-fulfilling prophecies, expression of roles as performances in institutional designs, and prescription. Holm (2007, 235), describing the introduction of Individual Transferable Quotas in Norwegian fisheries, observes:

“In order for market actors to calculate the probable outcomes of their choices buyer and seller must be produced as fairly separate and autonomous agencies. The object to be traded must be constructed as reasonably stable and thing-like. A minimum agreement as to the nature of property rights and how they can change hands must be negotiated. *These things do not lie in wait…but need to be constructed, often with tremendous amounts of hard work* (italics by rh&hc).

...The more institutionalized, naturalized, technological, and thing-like they become, the better they will work in *dis-embedding agents and objects from their social, cultural, and technological contexts* (italics by rh&hc), setting them free to realize—put into reality—the market model invented by the economist.”

Thus, theory impacts on practice by “dis-embedding” agents and objects from their life worlds and action contexts. Practitioners are nudged to disregard their habits and tacit knowledge, and heed, and adapt to their situation, precepts inspired by the abstract and more widely distributed formal insights from economics. Even stronger, if actors are unwilling to do so, they are either seduced into compliance by means of new incentive systems or simply replaced by other actors who are more willing to be enrolled in the new network and its rules of the game. A complementary, more neo-pragmatist route to performativity,
predicts convergence of theories and institutionalized, routinized practices through suppression of questions and autonomization of answers, and thereby shaping of—organizationally embedded—predispositions to act or habits. Both Turnbull (2013, 121) and Hoppe (2010, 4, 243–244) point to the question suppressing or problem-structuring qualities inherent in both theories and ordinary practices as the sources of performativity.

Whatever be the social mechanisms through which the selective affinities in (co-) performation come about, we could (and should) study the performation of policy studies/sciences—the downward arrow in Figure 1—as distinct “object” of research. For example, we could ask how public choice informed policy analysis (as in Weimer and Vining 1998) really works out in policy practice when applied to regulating the salmon fishery system in Canada, or auctioning radio spectrum licenses; and how this feeds back into the “theory and methods” courses and new research in academia. Or we could ask how the theory and methods of (regulatory) impact assessment are translated in bureaucratic standard operating procedures; and how this does or does not feed back into policymaking theory and methods of policy analysis (Dunlop, Maggetti, and Radaelli 2012; Hoppe 2009; Staroñová 2010, 2013). In this way, we would lay the foundation of sociology or anthropology of innovations in governance. This would systematically interrogate the relationship between disciplinary policy scientific knowledge and policymaking practices as innovation and stabilization “journeys” of policy ideas and derived policy instruments. Such innovation pathways of performation have been explored already for a number of policy instruments: carbon emission trading, disentangling railway infrastructure management and train transportation of passengers and goods in public/private participation schemes, and the idea of “transition management” (Voss 2007; 2014).

However, a first task, one that can be performed in this article, is an exploration of modes or types of policy work and their selective affinities with the three basic representational approaches to the policymaking process. In this analysis, for practical reasons, we focus on institutional requirements and organizational settings, but also on the person-level skills required if policy work is primarily framed according to one of the three basic approaches.

*Performation of Authoritative Choice*

One may hypothesize that the “stubborn” permanence of the stages account of policymaking is due to at least a number of important ideas infusing policymaking practice. First, the stages idea corresponds to a common-sense notion of rationality inherent in the notion of “policy” itself (as shown above). This idea fits the practice of citizens delegating decision-making powers in nested accountability forums to bureaucratic or scientific experts and elected politicians. Experts—either as skilled and experienced civil servants, or as well-trained and high-reputation scientists—are the “rational actors” who as decision support specialists, having mastered lots of scientific methods and techniques of policy analysis (Dunn 2011), help elected leaders make policy decisions. The rationality idea also serves
as some kind of meta-level in order to judge the outcomes and the quality of the decision-making process itself.

A second reason for the permanent influence of the stages frame is that it corresponds to normative democratic theory and its translation into the major events, or decision moments, of normal practices of separation of power under conditions of representative democracy and rule of law. For a democratic separation of powers and division of labor to function well, and for the nested system of democratic accountability to be transparent and work, there ought to be politically predefined and visible decisions on issues on the parliamentary and governmental agenda, when a policy-as-design is formally adopted as legally in force; and subsequent decision moments on how adopted designs are translated into administrative decrees, routines, contracts, or actions by other collective and private actors in achieving the results somehow promised and announced in the formal policy decision (Jann and Wegrich 2007; Van de Graaf and Hoppe 1996, 90–92).

Joined together as an ideal of rational-cum-democratic government, taught and advised by policy scholars, and continuously mimicked and applied, in earnest or “tongue in cheek”, by policy practitioners, we get the stages heuristic as a sacred enacted story told in justification of political and administrative power to citizens and journalists alike. In policy studies, we see a lot of research in the authoritative and instrument choice paradigm that supports the rational democracy sacred story of reforms in policy practice. We limit ourselves here to just two examples.

First, under the spur of the revival of evidence-based policymaking (e.g., Bogenschneider and Corbett 2010), policy scholars have rediscovered empirical research into how skillful “rational” civil servants in policymaking jobs actually are. Apart from the ability to think in terms of clear and distinct ideas, these “hard” skills require the conventional good writing skills, but these days information technology skills are also required. Since policy analysts work in “real-time” and time pressure is always present, to be able to work on-the-fly, crisply, quickly, and timely also is a required skill. Large-N surveys are used to establish to what extent and how sophisticated these civil servants are in applying the typical policy analytic textbook methods and techniques (good overview in Kohoutek 2013). The results of such research morph into reforms for improved human resource management, professional education, and ultimately, hopefully improved state competence and capacity. And here a third advantage of the stages heuristic kicks in: it has the benefit of being easily teachable as a kind of “prototype” or “reference design” (like in architecture) of how policy studies understand their own subject. Other approaches are taught essentially as (sometimes necessary) “deviations” from this prototype.

Second, and probably much more influential, there is a true outpouring of comparative studies that measure and standardize all (un)desirable qualities—like rule-of-law, corruption, crime rate, public health, sustainability, sustainable governance, and so on—of modern, (neo)liberal, democratic, capitalist, and innovative states. Using such measurements—all crude or more sophisticated translations of key concepts
in the social and political sciences in large indicator and “big” data sets—social science scholars in academia, think tanks, and advisory bodies use these data sets for comparative research to discover evidence-based causal pathways to better outcomes. For example, using the measurement of perceived corruption as pioneered by Transparency International and conventional, long-term measurement of growth in GDP by the IMF, WB or the OECD allow calculation of the statistical correlation between corruption and economic growth; interpreted causally, this delivers an estimate of how harmful corruption is to economic development.

Using such novel “scientific” insights, states compete on “best practices”, and transnational bodies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund or the OECD apportion not only praise and blame, but also allocate huge amounts of financial resources among the deserving nations. These practices of evidence-based comparative research and policy analysis cannot but lead to a lot of “govern like us” advice (Thomas 2015).

Obviously, the rational democracy and stages heuristic as sacred, front-stage and “on-the-table” story needs a profane, back-stage and “under-the-table” counter-narrative. Policy is less “public” than frequently assumed, and is not just the officially enunciated governmental plan it is often supposed to be; it is also, “what happens when neither the public nor elected policymakers have the ability to pay attention to what goes on in their name” (Cairney 2014). This is where other two policy process narratives come in.

Performance of Policy as Association

Radin (2000; 2013) observed two co-evolving trends in public policymaking in the United States: on the one hand, policy analysis as an academic profession had come of age and even reached mid-life; on the other hand, the now fully professionalized “policy analysts” more and more frequently experienced a “disconnect” between their training and skills required on the job, especially in nonfederal policy settings. Radin analyzes how policy analysis, originally created to counter bureau politics and politics as party-political and interest group conflict, was “gobbled up” by the structure and culture of American politics. And hence fragmented from one, clearly defined policy analytic unit in the top of federal government (agencies), to a “field of many voices, approaches, and interests.” The most likely reason for Radin’s observation was that professional-academic training, in terms of Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner 1983), was biased toward linguistic and logical-mathematical skills. For example, even Dunn (2011, 1–2), who uses one of the broadest concepts of “rationality” to be found in the policy scientific literature defines policy analysis as the trained skills to use multiple research methods to create, critically evaluate, and communicate policy relevant knowledge (italics by rh&hc). Yet, policy practice, in addition, requires highly developed noncognitive, interpersonal, visual, and intrapersonal (motivational, emotional, and self-reflexive) modes of practical intelligence for successfully completing practical policy tasks.

In fact, a long time ago founding fathers of the policy science field with lots of practical experience like Dror (1967), Halperin (1974), and Meltsner (1976; 1979;1990) had already drawn
attention to the non- and extra-rational dimensions, and the almost inevitable links between policy as analysis and policy as politics, communication, and face-to-face advice-giving in small groups. Drawing attention to the blurred demarcation between policy formulation/ adoption and implementation in policy process practices, Bardach (1977) pointed out that intimate knowledge of bureaucratic organizations and the “jungle” of implementation networks informed the practice of “fixers”. Policy workers that “fix” the continuous translation of policy-as-decision into policy-as-standard-operating-procedures must be able to intervene effectively, know about the what, when, how, and who of operational routines, and make sense of the multiple flows of information about implementation games in one or more organizations—skills that are surely not entirely analytical.

In 1983, Kingdon (1984), harping on the theme of co-evolving demarcations between agenda setting (the “problem stream”), policy formulation (the “solution stream”), and the policy adoption (the “political stream”), pointed out the importance of policy entrepreneurs with the developed political sensibilities or intuition to “sniff out” political windows of opportunity for coupling policy ideas and solutions. In a later addition, Zahariadis (2003) stresses that, far from analytic skills, policy entrepreneurs “have a nose” for simplification, manipulation, and political opportunism or sheer serendipity. In the same line, it has been pointed out that in practical policymaking, the role of “spin doctors” and public-relations specialists in crafting policy frames and images is frequently more important than those of policy analysts and their expertise in crafting policy argumentation.

Thus, Radin’s observation is not at all new, but somehow we did not openly include nonanalytic qualities and skills in the professional body of knowledge. Conceptually, Radin’s disconnect is quickly repaired. Focusing on skills, Mintrom (2003) listed the importance of people skills for policy analysts, like networking and communication skills, teamwork, courtesy and likeability, and minimal emotional intelligence. Howlett and Ramesh (2014) now distinguish between analytical, managerial, and political capacities, also at the level of individual policy analysts. All this actually raised the issue of whether policy activity could be adequately conceived as “advice” followed by “choice”. But, theoretically more important, Colebatch (2006) coined the concept of “policy work”. For him, “work” stood for any skilled, conscious, and directed activity requiring time commitment, located in a workplace, and usually remunerated. Linked to “policy”, Colebatch performed the pragmatic turn, previously characteristic for the social studies of science and technology (cf. Sismondo 2004; 2011): no longer philosophy-of-science and epistemology-inspired textbook knowledge of “proper” methods of policy analysis and ways of (policy relevant) knowledge certification like “evidence-based policy” would be center stage; but observation and study of the entire spectrum of “what those professionally engaged in policy actually do, in other words, how policy is done and how policy practices evolve” is to be the core in empirical research and professional training. “Policy analysis” is a far too lofty, rationalistic, over-intellectualized label for the many kinds
of hard and not-so-rational, down-to-earth “work” that makes policy. In other words, policy analytic professional training omitted important aspects of policy practice; precisely those aspects of association and interactive involvement that were highlighted in the second academic approach to policy process studies—that is, not just puzzling and cooperation for consensus formation, but patient institutionalization of (new) policy practices, and powering, competition, and political struggle for action in concert, frequently for continued domination or hegemony (Haugaard 2014). Briefly, the notion of “policy work” caught two birds with one stone: in performative studies of the policy process it brought back both the nonanalytic and the agonistic (de Alameida Fortis 2014; Mouffe 2000).

Empirically, these views were amply justified. Debunking the popular prejudice that only top-level civil servants and politicians in executive roles were actually making policy, Page and Jenkins (2005) were able to show that, actually, thousands of civil servant of middle ranks were deeply involved in policy design and the preparation of policy proposals for adoption in parliament. This confirmed insights from the Netherlands (e.g., Colebatch, Hoppe, and Noordegraaf 2010; Hoppe 1983; Hoppe, Van de Graaf, and Besseling 1995; Hupe 1992; Woeltjes 2010). Reconstructing the policy formulation of some 20 policy white papers in the Netherlands, Mayer and his fellow researchers identified six styles of policy design and analysis, only three of which (rational, client advice, and argumentative styles) bore clear resemblances to traditional views of policy analysis; the other three, process management, interactive, and participatory-democratic styles, were falling outside this purview (Mayer, Van Daalen, and Bots 2004). Echoing Radin’s observation that process expertise had become one of trained policy analysts’ most prominent practical assets, an entire “school” of public administration and policy analysis in the Netherlands turned to governance network theory (Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan 1997), placing process management and attendant skills as key in policymaking processes. Recently, Roe (2013) focused on the practical knowledge and skills in real time required of middle-management policy workers as “mess managers”, who act as indispensable “facilitators” or “mediators” between grand-design policy visionaries at the apex of organizations and day-to-day practices of “street-level” bureaucrats at the bottom, in order to safeguard the reliable functioning of the huge socio-technical infrastructures of electricity generation, water provision, sewage processing, and internet services. A similar story of relative neglect of certain skills in policy work can be told about the dimension of political strife and struggle, or the agonistic aspects of ordinary policymaking practices. This is in spite of the fact that Lindblom (1968) already stressed the dual nature of policymaking as “thinking out” and “fighting about” policy; and Wildavsky (1979) characterized policymaking as both cogitation and (competitive) interaction; and Heclo (1978) famously showed that policymaking entailed both intellectual puzzling and political powering between competing interests. These agonistic dimensions of policy work definitely give it the feel of being interactive, erratic, and relentlessly iterative, like many practitioners describe.
it. Contrary to policy entrepreneurs who, constructively, try to push issues on the governmental agenda, Cobb and Ross (1997) showed that there were also “policy saboteurs” who designed political strategies to deny or derail issues. Following up on Proctor and Schiebinger’s (2008) book about “agnotology”, that is, the cultural production and the deliberate mobilization and exploitation of political ignorance, Oreskes and Conway (2011) showed that there exists an entire policy analytic industry that exploits scientists’ honest reporting of uncertainties in research, on, for example, smoking and climate change, to block or hinder those in favor of policy change on these issues. It might be argued that what Riker (1986) calls the art of heresthetics and political manipulation, or treatises on coalition building and consensus formation, and the art of negotiation (Fisher and Ury 1981/1991; Raiffa 1982) and contemporary power politics (BuenoDe Mesquita and Smith 2013), all pay sufficient attention to powering in policymaking. Yet, there are very few systematic efforts to describe and analyze the strategies and required skills of policy workers in this continuous struggle to support and oppose, raise or suppress issues, and foster or block political participation in collective (in)action for public policy change. One of the sparse efforts we are aware of is in Mahoney and Thelen (2010, 28–31). They argue that, depending on the goals of actors (abrupt or gradual policy change), characteristics in political contexts (strong or weak veto possibilities), and the institutional target (low or high levels of discretion in rule interpretation/enforcement), particular actor types and power strategies emerge (subversives, insurrectionaries, parasitic symbionts, and opportunists).

All in all, much less than in the frame of policy analytic skills, efforts in the performance of policy as association and structured interaction is a relatively neglected field of research. It is perhaps more difficult to study the power clustering and agonistic aspects of policymaking processes, but there is a clear need for this type of research effort in the study of public policy.

Performation of Policy as Problematization

The performative link (downward arrow in Figure 1) between theories of managing the problematic and policy work may be designated as the practice of reflective practitionership (Schön 1983), or prudence, or political wisdom (Hoppe 1983; Loeber 2004): the art and craft of selecting from “theory” those elements which, adapted and transformed in the light of a decision situation or policy practice, deliver a pragmatic way forward out of a problematic situation. It may be negatively described as rejection of well-known, “purified,” or “essentialized” framings of policy work as (1) mere puzzling/analysis, following a logic of consequences or as (2) institutionalization/routinization, by applying the logic of appropriateness, or as (3) powering, using the logic of hegemony and domination (depicted as the horizontal upper line in Figure 2). Perhaps the best characterization of reflective practitionership in problematizing modes of policymaking is mediation between relevant stakeholders in such a way that problematic situations and events may gradually be turned into less or un-problematic routines and institutionalized practices (Depicted as the vertical middle line in Figure 2).
More than other policy workers, “problematizers” are deeply convinced that policy problems are always claims of one group of citizens on another group (Hoppe 2010, 66–67); and, hence, that “policy issues spark a public into being” (Marres 2005). The inevitable implication is that in public policymaking puzzling, powering and institutionalizing are strongly intertwined and hence, in terms of policy workers’ performance, equally important. Compared to other types of policy work, this demands an extraordinary amount of reflexive skills. It requires more than Schön’s “double vision” of ex post reflection-on-action of the accomplished policy scholar who, as spectator, spots the exemplar or generative metaphor from his professional repertoire in a past problem situation; and the ex durante reflection-in-action of the accomplished practitioner who, as actor, conducts a reflective conversation with the current new problematic by respecting its uncertainty, instability, and uniqueness (Schön 1983). It actually, on top, requires a kind of “triple vision” of simultaneous awareness of puzzling, powering, and (de)institutionalizing, in full acknowledgement of the relational sometimes conflictual and agonistic character of these three activities. This makes the policy worker part of the chorus, not necessarily its conductor, engaged in the communicative performance of politics as making sense together (Forester 1989, 119–133; Hoppe 1999).
In terms of skills, policy workers as problematizers need excellent ethical awareness and sensitivity; skills in productively dealing with or boundary work between multi- and interdisciplin ary dimensions of scientific contributions to policymaking (Hoppe 2014); and simultaneous possession of analytical acumen to judge the quality and/or the bias or distortion in policy arguments, and the rhetorical persuasiveness to bring crucial ethical, scientific, and instrumental messages across in a nonexpert like way to differently socialized and unequally educated audiences (Forester 1989). Leadership skills like emotion control, self-confidence, resilience, and patience are also desirable qualities in policymakers as problematizers and sense makers.

In terms of recognizable roles in actual policymaking, one could think of mediation specialists or consensus builders in public disputes (Forester 1989; 2013; Susskind 2006). What sets mediators apart from hard-bargaining negotiators (mentioned in the previous section) is that the former care deeply about the relationship, trust, and credibility with stakeholders or the broader public once disputes are settled. According to Landwehr (2014, 86–87) they not only guard rules of procedure and moderate the debate between stakeholder groups with vested interests, but summarize opinions and discussion results by highlighting areas of (dis)agreement and possible shared ground for solution. Other discernable roles for policy workers in problematizing practices deal with the initiation, management, and results of so-called deliberative mini-public policy exercises. Next to the already discussed role of a mediator, Landwehr (2014, 85–89) distinguishes between two more possible roles for policy workers. The "moderator" role is required in discussions where all listeners may also be speakers, and where the goal is establishing rational, justified premises for policymaking, and where passionate speaking or rhetoric is considered inappropriate. An even more demanding role is that of the "facilitator", which is to help a deliberative group reach its own goals of achieving collective action through inclusive but plurivocal coordinated policy designs. No doubt, given the variety of forms and goals of deliberative policy exercises, more policy worker roles could be distinguished and will be discovered through systematic research into deliberative democratic practices.

In science–policy advisory interaction, too, problematizing and sense-making policy work is to be found, for example, the role of honest broker as depicted by Pielke (2007). Under the almost “new normal” conditions where policy disputes pivot around value disagreements that cannot be resolved by reduction of scientific uncertainties, policy advisors—whether scientists or not—are particularly hard-pressed to make sense of the problematic situation. In these conditions they have a choice to become an “issue advocate”, who openly and publicly sides with a particular policy agenda or option proposed by one or a coalition of stakeholders. Together with the role of a “stealth advocate”—an issue advocate who cloaks himself in the role of a pure scientist—the “issue advocate” role fits the set of policy workers’ roles under the previously discussed label of taking sides in the political struggle and strife. But, moving over to the problematizing and sense-making set of roles, the policy worker may alternatively opt for the role
of an “honest broker”, who clarifies the scientifically warrantable “facts”, and, on that basis, elaborates on the existing range of policy options, sometimes identifying new options, and on the basis of strict goals–means and other forms of practical argumentation (Fischer 1980; 1995; Toulmin 1958) integrates stakeholder concerns with available scientific knowledge.

Policy work as analysis and bargaining easily fits the hegemonic political landscape of representative democracy, interest pluralism or neocorporatism, bureaucracy, and expert advice. Policy work as problematization and joint sense-making, however, institutionally draws on more participatory and deliberative modes of democracy. Even though the space for these modes of democracy seems to become larger, they sit uneasily in the prevailing political structures (Hoppe 2010). This means that there is another possible role for problematizing policy workers—the institutional entrepreneur (Garud, Hardy, and Maguire 2007; e.g., see cf. Sterrenberg 2010; Loeber 2010). When policy workers feel that most stakeholders are locked in permanent stalemates and no longer believe in the problem-solving capacities of existing organizational routines, governance networks, and decision-making procedures, they may start pondering the possibility of “creative institutional destruction”, or “bricolage” or tinkering with different elements of the political infrastructure to cobble together a new governance network, with (partially) new actors, and thus new convictions and beliefs, willing to try new policy instruments and solutions. Using terminology from punctuated equilibrium theory, “policy entrepreneurs” become “institutional entrepreneurs” when they seriously try to push a policy subsystem out of its incremental dynamics of gradual change into the “punctuation” which marks the transitional dynamics toward a very different type of equilibrium. Institutional entrepreneurs normally have their locus in the margins of or “above” well-institutionalized policy networks. Being familiar with more than one policy-framing and policy-political logic, they can think more innovatively and creatively than network “insiders”. Having access to financial and communicative resources unavailable to routine players, they can start influencing the discourse, composition, modes, and rules of participation by actors, and introduce new rules of the game (Sørensen and Torfing 2005, 202–205).

Conclusion

When, in the aftermath of World War II, Lasswell reinvented the policy sciences for the United States, he distinguished between knowledge of and knowledge in policy. In the United States, but in European countries less so, this apparently logical practical division of academic labor led to a sharp demarcation between the academic-disciplinary study of public policymaking processes and a pragmatic-professional project to create through the establishment of schools of policy analysis a community of “policy analysts”, and to insert them in the governmental structures of the United States (deLeon 1989). No doubt, this effort was successful. Policy “analysis” spread all over the institutions and levels of the different branches of US government; and much of the originally “expert” discourse on public policy entered everyday political, administrative, journalistic, and informed citizens’ talk. But Radin’s (2000; 2013) keen observation that nowadays many policy analysts feel a disconnect between their education and their daily professional
practice means that the Lasswellian distinction had negative side effects and has run its course. It is high time to reconnect. Therefore, in this article we have redubbed this distinction as the representative and performative modes of policy science; and, hopefully, we have shown that they exist sometimes as open and sometimes as hidden selective affinities. Hopefully, our exploratory breaking down the demarcation zone between knowledge of and knowledge in policy has brought to light linkages and convergences that indicate a more complex task field, a richer set of skills and broader set of analytic techniques than conventional accounts of policy analysis. Like in the sciences, these go beyond a linear connection from “pure” or “basic” to “applied” policy science (Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons 2001; Ziman 2000). Rather, the idea of reconnection is to catalyze a permanent policy-reflective culture of listening and dialogue between the reflective and the performative modes of engaging with public policy. In such a way, practical accounts of policy workers will inspire policy scholars to reflect better; and academic accounts of policy processes will be used as a pragmatic-eclectic “toolkit” for re-thinking and creating possible practical trajectories.

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