CHAPTER 20

POLITICS, BUREAUCRATIC DYNAMICS, AND PUBLIC POLICY

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The eminent philosopher of science Karl Popper once wrote, "If our civilization is to survive, we must break with the habit of deference to great men" (1966, vii). The same can be said of disciplinary needs to break from deference to dominant ideas, epistemologies, and methodologies that stymie progress in appreciating the dynamic nature of administrative phenomena. In this essay, we contend that the same applies if we are to acquire a more robust practical and theoretical understanding of the dynamics of the policy, politics, and administration (PPA) nexus as they have evolved over the past half century.

The premises of our argument are threefold. First, scholarship in public administration related to the PPA nexus has significantly improved our understanding of its dynamics, but scholars have not sufficiently incorporated recent developments in cognate fields, including political science, cognitive psychology, and evolutionary biology. Second, even were this to happen, the evolution of governance in the United States toward networks requires researchers to expand the locus (where PPA takes place) and focus (what to examine) of their research if understanding and theory building are to proceed profitably. Third, the methodological approaches and epistemologies that now dominate the study of PPA dynamics have reached the limits of their explanatory power because they have minimized the interactive and reciprocal effects of time (history), timing (context), and time sensitivity (contingency) in their research designs and because they have focused too heavily in theory building and administrative reform on advancing a "rationality project" (Stone 2001) in the field.

We begin by reviewing our understanding of PPA dynamics from a sample of major research findings in public administration, policy sciences, political science, and public management. Illustrated is how an increasing gap developed between ordinary citizens and policymaking. Next, we review and critically assess three major theoretical approaches falling under the general rubric of the new institutionalism—rational choice, sociological, and historical institutionalism—and their potential for taking the study of the PPA nexus to the next level of explanatory and predictive power. The chapter concludes by examining the implications of these theoretical developments for future research on the dynamic relationship between policy and administration—as well as other topics—in the study of American bureaucracy.

THE PPA NEXUS: CONVENTIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON AN ENDURING PROBLEMATIC

Our understanding of PPA dynamics has changed over the past quarter century in important and positive ways. It is useful to organize this multidisciplinary and far-ranging literature in terms of (1)

the conflating of the politics-administration dichotomy into the policy-administration dichotomy; (2) the blurring of this dichotomy by scholars; and (3) the return to a policy-administration dichotomy by some administrative reformers associated with the new public management (NPM).

Separating Policy and Administration?

Among the most famous issue-framing words written in American public administration are those of Woodrow Wilson urging the United States as a late-nineteenth-century democratic republic to adapt administrative principles derived from historically authoritarian European nations: "If I see a murderous fellow sharpening a knife cleverly, I can borrow his way of sharpening the knife without borrowing his probable intention to commit murder with it" (1887, 200). While not the originator of the politics-administration dichotomy, his rationale for it was simple: Politics took place among elected officials in legislatures, and administrators applying objective principles of administration should merely carry them out in an effective, efficient, and economical manner. They would do so as neutrally competent agents applying the principles of administration and scientific management to society's problems.

It was not long, however, before the *politics*-administration dichotomy was conflated into a *policy*-administration dichotomy (Rosenbloom 2008). For the dominant majority in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Progressive reform movement (1877–1920) in America, the focus became one of establishing societal order through planning that was informed by techno-scientific rationality and fostered by creating public agencies staffed by public interest–oriented experts making policy (Kolko 1963). The sources of disorder and irrationality for these reformers were corrupt political machines fueled by rising numbers of immigrants, as well as legislative dominance of policymaking.

During the Progressive Era, small businesses, corporate interests (the Rockefeller and Carnegie families), and rising middle-class professionals took a leading role in shaping the emerging administrative state, as well as in shifting scholarly focus from legal to management concerns about its operations. In the process, what typically were seen as Progressive anticorruption administrative reform efforts that reduced the power of business often increased their power in policymaking. Independent regulatory commissions such as the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Chemistry Bureau (charged with implementing the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906) were actually lobbied for by industry associations (Kolko 1963). Kolko chronicles, for example, how "any measure of importance in the Progressive era was not merely endorsed by key representatives of businesses involved; rather, such bills were first proposed by them" (283).

Amid all this, the avatar of policy and administrative progress was the burgeoning profession of engineers that tripled in the United States between 1880 and 1930 (from approximately 7,000 to 226,000). So giddy were engineers about their ability to plan societies on engineering principles that economist Thorstein Veblen spoke of a "directorate" of engineers that would lead a revolution for a "more competent management of the country's industrial system" to replace an older political order that "has most significantly fallen short" (Barry 1997, 266). Opined the leader of one important engineering association: "The golden rule will be put into practice by the slide rule of the engineer" and coordinated by executive branch experts (Barry 1997, 265). At the local and state government levels, efforts to depoliticize the PPA nexus came packaged during the first two decades of the twentieth century in, among other things, the city manager movement. Then, as the Depression persisted, the attraction of centralized planning by administrative experts became even more alluring to Progressives, with the models being Mussolini's Italy and both Lenin's and Stalin's Soviet Union (Shlaes 2007). This fascination is reflected in 365 articles and eighty-one

books on this topic published between 1920 and 1931, with the U.S. press intensely following Mussolini's model throughout the 1930s (Shlaes 2007, 116).

Some worried about the ascendancy of experts in policymaking and the information asymmetry they presumably held over political officials, as well as the marginalization of citizens who lacked the expertise to participate. Settlement women such as Jane Addams and African American activists such as Mary McLeod Bethune, for instance, lamented citizens' impact on democracy, fearing that they—and especially low-income and minority citizens—would become estranged from government (McCluskey and Smith 1999; Stivers 2000). Still others, such as Herbert Hoover, joined in the associationalist movement in worrying about the policy innovation–stifling nature of centralized bureaucracies (Durant 2009).

Associationalists offered a so-called third way between the nation's historical reliance on laissez-faire individualism, citizen estrangement from government, and the rising allure of European-style centralized planning. They saw the role of federal agencies as "stimulat[ing] the private sector to *organize and govern itself*" in the public interest (George Nash as quoted in Clements 2000, 128). "Decentralization, voluntarism, and localism" was the mantra of these activists in the Harding and Coolidge administrations (Clements 2000, 96). Moreover, associationalists counted on pressure from a public opinion tutored by national conferences highlighting the findings of federal agency research as key to progress, in contrast to conventional Progressives, who saw it as "meddlesome."

Putting Them Back Together Again in the Administrative State

While some heterodoxy—including the associationalists'—existed prior to and during the "golden age" of public administration in the 1930s (see Lynn 2006), the mid- to late 1940s witnessed the evisceration among academics and politicians of the policy-administration dichotomy. In enacting the Administrative Procedure Act of 1946, Congress acknowledged that agencies were policy makers exercising discretion that members of Congress had delegated to them (Rosenbloom 2000). To many, their New Deal and war-related experiences demonstrated that separating policy from administration was descriptively, normatively, and instrumentally wrong (Gaus 1947; Long 1949; Waldo 1984).

What *could* be separated, some argued, were facts from values in agency decision making (Simon 1947). But could the PPA nexus really be parsed in this fashion? Public administration, political science, and policy scholars soon concluded that it could not and began to focus on the study of bureaucratic politics as the driver of agency policymaking. This commenced in the 1950s (Truman 1951) and continued in the 1960s with a conceptualization of the PPA nexus at all levels of government as one driven, variously, by cozy triangles, whirlpools, or iron triangles (Lowi 1969; Redford 1969). While Truman saw pluralism at work in policymaking in New Haven in the 1950s, for instance, other elite theorists saw business elites dominating the policy process in legislative and bureaucratic settings across the United States (also see Stone 2001 for the same conclusion in recent decades). At the federal level, scholars saw policy bubbling up from closed, cozy relationships among interest groups, agencies, and congressional oversight committees. Interest groups attempted to influence the inevitable discretion that agencies were exercising, agencies were amenable to capture because they needed interest group electoral support and information, and legislative oversight committees needed interest group contributions and information to counter agency information asymmetries.

Partly in response to these arguments, the 1950s and early 1960s also saw the emergence of the policy studies movement. In Lasswell's (1951) vision, policy science was to address present

gaps in the study of PPA dynamics, including the absence of a problem-focused, multidisciplinary, and methodologically sophisticated (emphasizing welfare economics and cost-benefit analysis) discipline privileging democratic values. Ironically, however, policy analysis joined public administration's founders in marginalizing laypersons in the PPA nexus. Favored again was a faith in specialized technocratic expertise to reflect the democratic values Lasswell sought in policy processes, not citizen participation in agency deliberative processes. Meanwhile, in public administration, administrative reform efforts turned repeatedly during the 1960s and 1970s to favoring "responsive competence" to executives and away from "neutral competence" in the PPA nexus. Whether the planning, programming, and budgeting system of the Lyndon Johnson era, management by objectives during the Richard Nixon presidency, or zero-based budgeting during the Jimmy Carter years, each of these rational-comprehensive decision-making efforts disappointed proponents and advantaged experts over laypersons.

Concerns about agency capture still prompted political science and public administration scholars such as Lowi, Redford, Frederickson, and Ostrom to call for more politically oriented reforms to revive democratic constitutional values in agency policymaking. Lowi (1969) argued for the limitation of congressional delegation to agencies absent clear standards set by Congress (juridical democracy); Redford (1969), for understanding the moral dimensions of agency decision making (democratic morality); Frederickson (1971), for abandoning technocratic rationales and for giving primacy to social equity in agency policymaking; and Ostrom (1973), for abandoning public administration's embrace of centralized government as ill suited to the U.S. Constitution's focus on decentralized policymaking.

Ostrom's public choice perspective was grounded in the now-familiar imperialistic incursions of economics into public administration, political science, and public policy (Buchanan and Tullock 1962). In their own way, public choice theorists called for "bringing citizens back in" to the PPA nexus but as individual consumers (rather than as citizens) devoid of any sense of common purpose or public interest. They portrayed PPA dynamics as dominated by agency bureaucrats who were monopoly providers of services because of the information asymmetries they enjoyed over elected officials.

This focus on direct or implicit incorporation of citizens as consumers into the PPA nexus carried over into economists' prescriptions for local government administration. Here, policymaking and service delivery were adduced more efficient and responsive if citizens could "shop around" a competitive metropolitan marketplace populated by duplicative and overlapping service providers, whether operationalized as the citizenry as a whole (Tiebout 1956) or as subsets of citizens who have the most to gain from knowledge of particular policies or services. From these, others (including governments) would take their policy cues (Teske et al. 1993).

Yet beginning in the late 1970s and continuing over the next two decades, empirical support began waning for the iron triangle as a driver of both policy-administration dynamics and public choice. Heclo (1977) described the iron triangle as "disastrously incomplete." More accurate, he claimed, were "issue networks" of actors on various sides of policy issues who were motivated less by material stakes and more by normative or purposive concerns. Issue networks were also conceptualized as less structured, characterized by fluid participation of actors, and having access based on expertise in any given policy domain.

Thus, consistent with earlier public administration and policy perspectives, Heclo saw "technopols" dominating the PPA nexus. He was joined subsequently in the 1980s and 1990s by policy analysts who stressed the power of ideas, ideology, and knowledge in organizing enduring networks of interacting interest groups, agency bureaucrats, and the media. Proponents of such "advocacy coalitions" (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993) were joined by intergovernmental relations scholars

who saw the PPA nexus metaphorically as a "picket fence": vertical functional subsystems of actors organized around programs and driving policymaking in a professional/bureaucratic-dominated complex (Beer 1978).

To this were added so-called first and second generations of policy implementation scholarship (Goggin et al. 1990) that claimed to fill a gap in public administration research by linking administration to policies and policies to outcomes (Mazmanian and Sabatier 1989; Pressman and Wildavsky 1973). These researchers identified a more complex PPA nexus than even Heclo discerned. Units of analysis combined vertical (intergovernmental) "macroimplementation" structures with horizontal (intragovernmental and cross-sectoral) "microimplementation" structures. Critiquing notions of federal control, researchers wrote about policy implementation as mutual adaptation and "learning what to prefer" among federal, state, and local actors (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973).

Still, as in the professional/bureaucratic complex, laypersons remained marginalized from policy decisions unless they joined groups or filed court suits. Bargaining took place, but it occurred largely among structured associations of governments (e.g., the National Conference of Mayors and the National Governors Association), professional experts in agencies, and interest groups with stakes in agency decisions. Moreover, the more prescriptive implementation literature of the first two generations labeled citizen participation positively (ensure access to supportive actors), negatively (too much complexity of joint action foiled implementation), and contingently (it all depends on the situation and support for policy aims). Only in more recent times have implementation scholars in the postmodernist tradition placed layperson participation as the primary goal of implementation (deLeon and deLeon 2002).

Ironically, the tendency for agencies to marginalize citizen participation in policymaking was partly a function of the aforementioned federal Administrative Procedure Act and its progeny at the state level ("little APAs"). The administrative rulemaking process afforded greater access and influence to well-organized interests with technocratic, business, and legal skills. In the process, court suits became the only redress for citizens excluded from agency deliberations. Dubbed the "procedural republic" (Sandel 1984), this situation only further fostered fragmentation and judicialization of rulemaking and adjudicatory processes, a dynamic that again disadvantaged unorganized interests even more in agency policymaking.

These trends were exacerbated further by the exponential rise of professional advocacy groups in Washington that began in the 1960s and continued throughout the twentieth century. The more crowded the policy space, noted Heclo (1977), the greater the number of interest groups. This occurs as policies overlap, disagreements among original coalitions develop, and subsequent policies create winners and losers. Amid this growth, a decided tilt ensued toward professionally led rather than mass-mobilization interest groups involved in issue networks and advocacy coalitions (Skocpol 2007). Partly to cope with this growth, efforts began in the federal government to centralize policymaking in the White House and agency rulemaking in the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Office of Management and Budget. This, too, increased the opacity of policymaking and rulemaking to average citizens, a development paralleled by increasing cynicism about government as agency rulemaking became ever more "conflictual, contingent, and reversible" (Klyza and Sousa 2008). At the same time, the so-called rights revolution (Teles 2007) also began to depoliticize issues during the last quarter of the twentieth century, turning them over to courts and agencies to interpret and apply. Once something is proclaimed a "right" (e.g., children's rights), legislative discussions on it are possible only on the margins and then only in courts.

Many court suits had direct effects on federal agencies, as well as state and local governments,

especially in the policy arenas of schools, prisons, and mental institutions (O'Leary 1993). This new PPA nexus of courts and agencies wrought profound budget and operational consequences for agencies at all levels of government. Within agencies, researchers found that (at least in the short term) attorneys gained in relative power over program bureaucrats, court suits advantaged litigated programs over others in the budget process, and court suits could occasion risk-averse behavior by program managers (O'Leary 1993). But they also could gain legitimacy, input, and enhanced power for disadvantaged citizens (at least classes of citizens) and programs within the otherwise opaque PPA nexus (Melnick 2005).

The Quest to Recreate the Policy-Administration Dichotomy in an Era of Networked Governance

By the mid-1980s and 1990s, the realpolitik of fiscal stress, downward pressures on the size of governments due to market globalization, and political advantage also meant that presidents and members of Congress faced perverse incentives to enact or expand policies without increasing the visible size of the federal government's workforce. Regnant since has been the allure to policy makers of a "neoadministrative state" (Durant 2000) that, despite claims for shrinking government, has actually increased its size to approximately 16 million employees if one counts the public, private, and nonprofit actors performing formerly federal functions (Light 1999). With this development have come new PPA dynamics that public managers and researchers are still trying to fathom.

As it has evolved thus far, this neoadministrative state of networked governance consists of pushing some federal responsibilities and the authority to make policy on behalf of national societies upward to international agencies (e.g., the World Trade Organization), downward to state and local government agencies, and outward to private and nonprofit organizations. By 2002, more than 5 million contractor positions supplemented 1.7 million federal civil servants and 1.5 million military personnel (Light 2006). At that time, contract employees comprised 62 percent of combined contracting, civil service, and military positions. Furthermore, an increasing tendency existed to contract core government functions to nongovernmental actors, including the design of policy and the monitoring of contract performance, even in inherently governmental functions such as national security (Durant, Girth, and Johnston 2009).

The PPA nexus thus now takes place within and across parts of agencies (e.g., various program offices), across sectors, and in ever more crowded and overlapping policy spaces. Nor are the efforts of the Obama administration to rebuild agency capacity and to "contract-back-in" (Chen 2009) likely to stymie these trends appreciably. Much of Congress's economic stimulus package (the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act), for example, involved pass-through funding to states and localities and private sector subsidies, albeit with line items budgeted for some capacity rebuilding in the federal government. Relatedly, Treasury secretary Timothy Geithner's plan to address the banking crisis relied on public-private partnerships to buy up toxic bank assets. Finally, it takes time for contracts to expire, delays in federal hiring are notorious, and agencies have grown dependent on contractors for technical skills.

Unchanged and compelling for the PPA nexus, however, is Waldo's (1984) advice to embed efficiency within a broader context of values. Nevertheless, a narrow one-size-fits-all market-oriented prescription for administrative reform animated management reform agendas prior to the Obama administration. This NPM philosophy sought a return to the policy-administration dichotomy. As embraced by minimal state proponents, the NPM accorded no special role for public service or the public interest in policymaking, aside from what market forces dictated.

Importantly, others not attuned to NPM prescriptions also pointed to emerging "wicked" policy

problems (Rittel and Webber 1973) in the pre-Obama era as requiring networking and partnering as key components of governance. Wicked problems are those (e.g., drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and terrorism) with no accepted definition. Moreover, one problem is interrelated with others, cross-sectoral (public-private-nonprofit) collaboration is essential for success, and solutions are precarious and controversial. Wicked problems also are multi-attribute in nature; solutions to them require the balancing of a variety of values rather than the predominance of any one value.

While some have called these networks a "hollow state" (Milward and Provan 2000), public agencies remain the only partners operating with the sovereign authority of the state. Prior research also suggests that agencies working with networked programs often remain principal sources of funding. Consequently, agencies still have strong bargaining and legal levers with other partners in networks (Agranoff and McGuire 2003). A boundaryless agency's policy success also seems to require appointees who know how to build a strong sense of common purpose among network members with diverse goals. Research also suggests that agencies view budgets, personnel actions, and decision rules as tools for coaxing cooperation from others, for deregulating operations, and for leveraging resources with other organizations to advance policy purposes. As with the tendency of issue networks and advocacy coalitions to marginalize the disorganized and laypersons, however, evidence is mixed that a dark side of networks is also emerging. In this networked state, some find that experts operating within these networks will hold asymmetric information, power, and access (Frederickson 1999).

SOME OTHER ROADS LESS TAKEN: THE PPA NEXUS AND THE NEW INSTITUTIONALISM

The preceding review of a sample of findings from conventional quantitative and qualitative studies of the PPA nexus has illustrated the richness of major findings to date. Absent in the public administration and policy literature, however, is a high level of theoretical development. In this section, we go beyond these literatures to assess three neoinstitutionalist approaches to the study of American bureaucracy that have not gained as much traction among public administration or policy scholars but that can enrich our understanding of the PPA nexus and offer the promise of greater theoretical advancement. The three approaches are rational choice institutionalism, sociological institutionalism, and historical institutionalism.

Rational Choice Institutionalism

Despite devastating critiques of their efforts on both empirical and normative grounds (Meier and O'Toole 2006), American political scientists have applied rational choice institutionalism (RCI) perspectives borrowed from economics as a theoretical framework for studying the PPA nexus. The "calculus approach" of RCI assumes that individuals are purposive utility maximizers. That is, individuals know exactly what they want (they have ordered preferences) and choose, through a series of probabilistic calculations, the course of action that will secure it for them. RCI then emphasizes how institutions (rules, regulations, and norms) structure strategic interaction among self-interested individuals in policymaking. Institutions thus provide strategic actors with the "rules of the game" (e.g., penalties for defection from an agreement, number of rounds in the game) that shape behavior, which then leads to policymaking (and vice versa). Consequently, while sharing the top-down perspective of classical theorists, RCI envisions a different PPA nexus from early public administration's emphasis on subordinates as either neutrally competent or cogs in a wheel uncritically taking orders from superiors. In their place are created strategic actors who are influenced by and who influence institutional constraints on their behavior.

RCI scholars have also advanced our understanding of the relationship linking politics, policy, and administrative structures. This relationship has long been known as less about effective policymaking and more about politics, position, and power (Seidman 1998). But RCI scholars have taken this insight to new theoretical levels by invoking principal-agent theory, transaction-cost analysis, and theories of agency discretion and legislative delegation. Especially relevant from this robust body of research is that winning legislative coalitions use structures, procedures, and processes to increase the political and administrative transaction costs for opponents seeking to change policy or organizational behavior in the future. Put more technically, winning coalitions fear that "coalitional drift," "bureaucratic drift," or unsympathetic presidents using the tools of the administrative presidency (Durant 1992; Nathan 1983) will try to change their original intent. Consequently, they impose administrative structures, processes, and procedures on agencies that they hope will make significant policy changes difficult.

They also do so by making the agency an independent commission, by manipulating the agency's leadership structure (e.g., longer terms for agency leaders to insulate them from political takeover), or by vesting the agency with a high level of budgetary autonomy (e.g., multiyear budget authorizations rather than annual authorizations) (Wood and Bohte 2004). Also effective in delimiting policy change is setting agency policymaking on autopilot (e.g., granting little discretion to agencies and reducing congressional monitoring costs), increasing transaction costs for those seeking to intervene judicially (e.g., limiting standing to sue and the timing of lawsuits), and stacking the deck (e.g., ensuring that members of the winning coalition have access to agency decision making by creating advisory councils). Importantly, even as enacting coalitions seek to insulate pet agencies or programs, they also must make compromises with opposing coalitions that want "room to enhance their future power, access, and influence in program operations and decision making" to tilt decisions their way (Durant 2006, 472).

Also consistent with RCI assumptions and the rationality project more broadly, presidents (as well as governors and mayors) have tried to gain "responsive competence" in the PPA nexus from agencies by using performance measures (e.g., the Program Assessment Rating Tool during the George W. Bush administration). Legislatures have adopted similar approaches (e.g., the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993). Prior research suggests that efforts at centralized performance measurement can advance presidential and legislative agendas effectively (Moynihan 2008), but it also illustrates how elected officials can politicize performance measures, thus calling into question their inherently technocratic qualities (Lewis 2008). They also impose opportunity costs on agencies in terms of data collection, even though scant evidence exists that information asked for is useful to agency managers (Radin 2006). Nor do agency or program-centric performance measurement systems adequately accommodate the PPA dynamics in networks. Performance measures may even produce goal suboptimization if not done correctly (Durant 1999).

RCI's top-down, principal-agent assumptions also fly in the face of recent research by public administrationists. These scholars find that street-level bureaucrats adopt "citizen-agent" policymaking roles as they categorize clients as needy and worthy to work with, as opposed to "state-agent" roles where they treat clients by the book (i.e., through top-down rule promulgation) (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000). In the process, they set policies (Lipsky 1980). Nor do RCI's hierarchical assumptions and single-agency focus comport well with today's nonhierarchical networked governance (and, hence, policymaking) models.

Sociological Institutionalism

Neither does the RCI model adequately explain or predict PPA dynamics when another major variant of neoinstitutionalism is considered: sociological institutionalism (SI). This "cultural"

approach draws on Simon's (1947) original insight that individuals are boundedly rational satisficers, as opposed to unfailing utility maximizers, when it comes to their decision-making behavior in organizations. Individuals have preferences and would like to satisfy them, but because they are fallible human beings and not calculating automatons, they are not always able to choose the policy that would objectively be "best" in a given situation (Simon 1985, 294). Instead, they "turn to established routines and familiar patterns of behavior to attain their purposes" (Hall and Taylor 1996, 939). As a result, SI sees institutions as having a profound effect on all individual behavior in agencies, including policymaking: "Institutions provide moral or cognitive templates for interpretation and action. The individual is seen as an entity deeply embedded in a world of institutions, composed of symbols, scripts and routines. These provide the filters for interpretation, of both the situation and oneself, out of which a course of action is constructed" (Hall and Taylor 1996, 939).

Yet another insight into the PPA nexus is the relationship offered by sociological institutionalists between structures and legitimacy—an important yet underappreciated ingredient to successful agency policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. DiMaggio and Powell (1983), for example, suggest that organizations within a given field (e.g., welfare offices or universities) tend to adopt certain institutional arrangements and policies because of pressure from the government or from other organizations upon which they are dependent, as a response to uncertainty, or to comport with professional norms. In general, according to this line of reasoning, organizations in a given field come to resemble one another in policies, programs, and structures through a process of "institutional isomorphism." Organizations become copycats. A "logic of appropriateness" rather than a logic of consequences (means-ends concerns) drives agency structures and, hence, policymaking within and between organizations. This makes the logic of appropriateness definitely applicable to the study of an emergent networked state (March and Olsen 1989) and offers a theoretical grounding for behaviors witnessed in cases of either successful or unsuccessful implementation.

The logic of appropriateness applied to the study of PPA dynamics, in turn, both accommodates and finds its own theoretical grounding in cognitive, evolutionary biology, and neuroscientific theories. For instance, prior research consistently finds careerists responsive to the administrative presidency, at least in terms of their collective outputs (e.g., issuing fewer mine-safety violations) (Golden 2000; Wood and Waterman 1994). Likewise, one important comparative case analysis of policy reorientation by Reagan appointees in four agencies suggests that loyalty (i.e., following presidential agendas) was the default option of careerists in most instances (i.e., their appropriate role in a constitutional system) (Golden 2000). Research also suggests that appeals to careerists' calling to public service (e.g., a desire to serve others) can be an effective motivational approach that presidential appointees too often overlook (e.g., Perry and Hondeghem 2008).

Challenged, too, by cognitive theory, evolutionary psychology, sociobiology, and neuroscience are many of the rationality assumptions underlying RCI, welfare economics, and public choice approaches to understanding decision making in the PPA nexus. They also offer theoretical grounding for the importance of policy image framing, deceit, and peer pressure in explaining and predicting behavior in that nexus. LeDoux (2002), for instance, finds that our brains are hardwired for emotions to affect, and frequently to override, conscious rational processes. Others such as McDermott (2004) find that "emotional rationality" not only affects but drives and improves decision making.

Still others find that people in deliberation situations have different kinds of "utilities" to maximize, including a reputational utility that can override their rationally calculated preference (Kuran 1995). For evolutionary reasons, people tend to be hypersensitive to others' impressions of them. Relatedly, while the aforementioned "bounded rationality" of decision makers in the PPA

nexus has long been recognized by public administrationists and policy scientists as prompting shortcuts or heuristics, evolutionary psychologists trace the source of this behavior to evolutionary pressures for survival. Decision makers resort to heuristics as a legacy from our species' hunter-gatherer ancestors, who had to make quick assessments of situations and people in order to protect themselves from others (Cosmides and Tooby 1992).

Evolutionary psychologists also offer theoretical grounding for understanding stovepiping and turf protection as prominent features of the PPA nexus, while simultaneously attesting to the self-interested nature of cooperative behavior. Stovepiping and turf protection are evolutionarily "selected" behaviors attributable to the value our hunter-gatherer ancestors placed on identifying with their group in the face of food, shelter, and other shortages. Yet they also predisposed our ancestors to engage in cooperative behavior with others in their tribe in order to encourage sharing when resources were scarce. The idea of "wary collaborators" (Alford and Hibbing 2004) has also been applied as a theoretical basis for explaining, among other things, persons fearing free riders off of their labors. These theories—and their link to the logic of appropriateness—illustrate how important institutional embeddedness is to understanding contemporary behavior. They also combine with other elements of SI more generally to show the poverty of the rationality approach as a sole basis for understanding the dynamics of the PPA nexus, as well as the contribution of rules, norms, ideas, ideology, and emotion to those dynamics and for future theory building.

Historical Institutionalism

Historical institutionalists often borrow RCI and SI assumptions about individual behavior, about how institutions affect behavior (including how institutions are defined), and about processes of institutional origin and change. But historical institutionalism (HI) is unique in its own right. As two of its leading proponents summarize (Pierson and Skocpol 2007), HI departs from standard social science conventions by taking the "long view" (283) in the study of political and administrative phenomena that "separates the study of 'the present' from the study of 'the past.'" Pierson and Skocpol write, "A long view allows us to identify and appreciate features of the political environment that shift only slowly. Never dramatic enough at any particular moment to call attention to themselves, these slow-moving shifts may nonetheless . . . represent important changes that cry out for explanation, or they may constitute important sources of other shifts that are [too] easily attributed instead to more proximate but superficial events" (283).

HI scholars thus especially question the logic of standard cross-sectional quantitative research, in particular standard regression analyses, although their critique also applies to poorly crafted qualitative research. Pierson (2004) argues that cross-sectional and short-term statistical analyses dominate journals, but they are useful solely for explaining or predicting one type of PPA dynamic: the "tornado" effect (short-term cause and short-term effect). Yet PPA dynamics are often better explained by "cumulative" effects (e.g., Sunbelt in-migration and Republican political dominance of the South), by triggering once certain thresholds are reached in the interaction of variables (e.g., white flight from schools or global warming), or by "causal chains" of factors (e.g., suburbanization leading to jobs moving to the suburbs and away from central cities, thus resulting in reduced tax revenues at any point in time) that cross-sectional analyses miss (also see Raadschelders 2010 for similar arguments).

To measure any one variable at any given time may miss these kinds of long-term secular effects because they have not yet materialized. Relatedly, proximate variables may have immediate measurable effects, but they may not be the real explanation for the PPA dynamics of interest. Carpenter's (2001) historical analysis, for example, decimated the congressional dominance theory

of policymaking by showing how it was actually "bureaucratic dominance" of Congress at work. Thus, the "independent" variables in any cross-sectional analysis may simply be the most visible and proximate manifestations of prior events and trends (e.g., demographic or representational shifts in Congress). And while conceding that longitudinal analyses and game theory approaches to understanding phenomena are possible, insufficient numbers of data points or gaps typically weaken longitudinal statistical analyses.

HI scholars thus eschew the pursuit of general laws of social behavior. They argue instead that a "very small number of *causal mechanisms and processes* recur throughout the whole range of collective [behavior]—with different initial conditions, combinations, and sequences producing systematic variation from time to time and setting to setting" (Tilly 2003, xi; emphasis added). Differentiating their approach from purely descriptive historical research that focuses on the uniqueness of PPA dynamics, HI scholars thus strive for theoretical parsimony by identifying common causal mechanisms. As Pierson (2004) observes, it is not just what happens to affect given social outcomes but also when it happens. Those events coming earlier in time shape, amplify, and constrain the path that subsequent reforms take; they also are infinitely more difficult to dislodge later because of the constellation of political forces that coalesce around them. Thus, especially useful for adding value to our practical and theoretical understanding of PPA dynamics is HI's focus on such causal mechanisms as path dependency; feedback; sequencing, ordering, and crucial junctures of events; the constitutive effects of policy and administration over time; the intercurrence of authority regimes; and venue shifting.

Perhaps the most basic of these causal mechanisms are "feedback" (or "amplification") and "constitutive" effects that produce path dependency. The former are instances where policies mobilize interest groups or modify bureaucratic capacities in ways that alter the future trajectories of these and other policies. Recognizing these feedbacks, historical institutionalists do not view the causal relationships between politics and policy, politics and administration, or policy and administration as one-way streets. Rather, policy influences politics and administration influences both. In effect, they have constitutive features. Public policy can influence, or feed back into, politics by giving latent interest groups incentives to coalesce around newly created benefits and to lobby for their continuation and expansion (Pierson 1993). Thus, while conventional analyses of proximate variables assume that interest groups spark politics, policy, and administration, a longer view sees that policies and administration actually create interest groups, advantaging some and disadvantaging others over time. As two leading HI scholars put it, "Institutions and interests don't align at a given point in time, they push and pull each other through time" (Orren and Skowronek 2004, 94).

Once a benefit exists, so do beneficiaries—beneficiaries who will be loath to surrender the "spoils" generated by policy and whose advantage is perpetuated by administrative structures that ensure their access and influence in the future (Pierson 1993, 599). Consider, for instance, New York City's rent control laws, which were instituted in 1943. Originally intended to be a temporary check on inflation, these rent controls are still around today. They are still around because those who benefit have an incentive to advocate for their continuance, as well as institutionalized agency access to do so. Skocpol's (1992) work documents a similar phenomenon with respect to Civil War pensions. She shows that once veterans began receiving these pensions, they were spurred on to "demand ever improved benefits" from agencies to which they had access (59).

That policies create interest groups is hardly a revelation to public administrationists studying the PPA nexus, as our review of the literature in the previous section documents. What is different, however, is how the longitudinal perspective taken reveals that policies also have constitutive effects in permanently marginalizing groups not included originally as beneficiaries in subsequent

rounds of negotiations. HI scholars also advance theory by noting that changes in context can alter constitutive effects, bringing in previously marginalized or disadvantaged groups. These include major shocks to the political system (e.g., the end of the Cold War); a re-valencing of actors involved in the issues (e.g., nuclear power going from positive to negative valence in the 1960s); issue redefinition; morphing of policies into other types over time (e.g., from benign distributive into conflictual redistributive policies); and boundary effects (i.e., where events in one area of politics affect related areas) (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). Absent these effects, however, one can offer theoretical grounding for incremental policy change.

Administrative capacities are important not only because they restrict or expand future policy formation and implementation options in the PPA nexus but also because "bureaucrats themselves are politically relevant" (Pierson 1994, 36). As we have chronicled in the previous section of this chapter, it is common knowledge that bureaucrats possess discretion and that this discretion inevitably affects the manner in which policies are implemented. The political relevance of bureaucrats for historical institutionalists, however, goes beyond this standard picture. As Pierson notes, "Administrators are sometimes energetic policy entrepreneurs, devoting careers to the construction of political coalitions that can further their policy ambitions" (36). Moreover, because bureaucrats possess information and expertise that politicians do not, they "can credibly claim to know what the government can and cannot do, what will work and what will not" (36). In short, bureaucrats can alter the policy options available to politicians.

Yet another concept with resonance for understanding PPA dynamics is what HI scholarship calls "intercurrence" of authority regimes. This happens because one administrative regime or "order of authority" (Thelen 1999) is not replaced by another set of authority relationships when policy or administrative reforms occur. Produced are "multiple, asymmetric" orderings of authority that are not "created or recreated all at once, in accordance with a single ordering principle" (Orren and Skowronek 2004, 182). This leads to conflict and bargaining among representatives of earlier and later regimes over how much authority will shift as a result of policy change or reform, with the amplifying effects of sequencing, path dependency, and constitutive properties advantaging the interests benefiting from earlier policies (Orren and Skowronek 2004). As Klyza and Sousa (2008) illustrate, for example, natural resource management statutes implemented by today's agencies frequently find their efforts in conflict because pro-development statutes (e.g., the Mining Act) from earlier eras that are assigned to them are layered among resource conservation statutes (e.g., the Endangered Species Act) in their own departments or in other agencies (e.g., the Environmental Protection Agency).

HI scholars also note how the interaction effects of different institutions (also known as "institutional coupling") can drive change through venue shifting and the creation of parallel institutions that are intended to alter PPA dynamics (Jones and Baumgartner 2005). For instance, congressional political stalemate since the early 1980s has not produced policy stalemate. Produced instead has been significant venue changing, with legislative battles shifted (as noted earlier) to agency rulemaking (e.g., centralizing rule clearance in the Office of Management and Budget), the use of unilateral tools of the presidency (e.g., executive orders and presidential signing statements), and the courts. The unilateral tools of the administrative presidency allegedly give presidents what economists call "first-mover" advantages; presidents can move quickly and below the radar without congressional approval to advance their agendas by issuing executive orders, presidential proclamations, presidential bill signing statements, executive agreements (rather than treaties), and national security directives (but see Durant and Resh 2009).

Also made more attractive to legislators because of political paralysis in the PPA nexus are the use of indirect policy tools (e.g., tax expenditures, subsidies, and loan guarantees) and the creation

of parallel institutions (Clemens 2006; Teles 2007). The latter become especially attractive when policy spaces are crowded, when existing regimes prove impervious to reform, or when opponents try to circumvent or head off more stringent regulatory authority structures. Yet HI scholars have identified "interpretive effects" of such policies—effects that undermine support for pure governmental as opposed to nongovernmental or quasigovernmental solutions to public problems. As such, they offer theoretical grounding for the persistent move toward agency downsizing, contracting out, and network governance (Durant 2009).

As Mettler (2005) documents, the tools used by government to advance public purposes can affect levels of civic engagement and perceptions of government. When citizens see direct links (or "traceability") between government action and the betterment of their lives (as did recipients of the GI Bill), they tend to value government more highly. In contrast, indirect and market-based tools of government, such as tax subsidies and third-party government, obfuscate those links, making it appear that government is "receding" from citizens' lives. In the process, citizens' support for government solutions to societal problems wanes, as does their concern for supporting broad (rather than targeted) capacity building in public agencies—a keystone of effective agency involvement in the PPA nexus.

CONCLUSION

Our aim in this essay has been to illustrate the strengths, gaps, and major alternatives for advancing a practical and theoretical understanding of the PPA nexus. Our point in highlighting the potential contributions of RCI, SI, and HI—and their accompanying insights from cognitive science, evolutionary psychology, and neuroscience—to the study of PPA dynamics is not to denigrate conventional approaches or to disparage their impressive findings. Nor has it been to advocate that RCI, SI, and HI replace traditional analyses. Rather, we argue that public administrationists should use them to supplement their traditional approaches, recognizing that each, in turn, has strengths and weaknesses. Traditional methods and analytical frameworks have reached as far as they can go alone in explanatory and predictive power, given their mismatch with the empirical realities of traditional and emerging governance models (and, hence, PPA dynamics) in America. It is difficult for us to imagine how understanding and theory building on the PPA nexus can profitably advance without taking these developments in cognate subfields and disciplines into consideration in future research.

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