PART IV

ENACTING DELIBERATION

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Deliberative Policy Analysis

Hendrik Wagenaar

It has been almost two decades since Maarten Hajer and Hendrik Wagenaar published *Deliberative Policy Analysis* (hereafter DPA). The book's publication was considered a major development in the post-positivist policy movement. The book's subtitle—*Understanding Governance in the Network Society*—indicated DPA's programmatic approach. It argued that the changing nature of the political-administrative system made post hoc, research-based information less effective as input into processes of political decision-making. The editors, in their introduction to the book, depicted these changes in terms of a 'network society'. In today's terms, the vocabulary would be one of complexity (Wagenaar 2007; Gerrits 2012), turbulence (Ansell and Trondal 2018), or uncertainty (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993). This led the editors to ask: 'What kind of policy analysis might be relevant to understanding governance in the emerging network society?' and to posit a lack of fit between dominant, positivist, technocratic forms of policy analysis and the predicament of political and administrative decision-making (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003, 13). The editors have argued that for policy analysis in the network society to be effective and democratically legitimate, it should be interpretive, practice-oriented, and deliberative. That is, instead of the traditional after-the-fact academic policy study, the editors of DPA proposed that policy analysis should be forward-looking and situated; it should involve stakeholders in problem setting and solution design; and it should capitalize on their practical, experiential knowledge. DPA aimed—once again—to make good on Lasswell's historic call for a policy science of democracy (Lasswell 1971; Dryzek 1989).

Since the book's publication, the development and uptake of DPA has been both inspiring and frustrating. Many readers found the book's diagnosis of the limits of technocratic policy analysis convincing. They also regarded the book's central message persuasive, namely that an interpretive and participative form of policy analysis is better equipped to address the challenges that the dynamic, interconnected nature of contemporary society poses to policymakers. However, as Li observes (2019), the absence of a clearly recognizable methodological approach, a set of operational and replicable procedures that potential practitioners can make their own, has hampered the diffusion of DPA. People who are, in principle, sympathetic towards DPA have a hard time figuring out how to actually *do* it.

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In this chapter, I offer three methodological approaches to DPA. I have articulated them by inductively drawing on the recent literature on applications of DPA in various settings and countries (Li and Wagenaar 2019; Bartels et al. 2020b). I speak of 'methodological approach' and not 'methods' because of the open-ended nature of DPA. In keeping with the complex, indeterminate character of the policy world that DPA attempts to harness (Axelrod and Cohen 2000), I argue that the very purpose of DPA is to maintain a flexible, relational, open-ended approach to policy analysis.[1] In addition, one of the key insights of DPA is that it is more than just an epistemic innovation. By striving for institutional transformation, it collapses the boundaries between policymaking and policy analysis, claiming that the two are continuous. This does not accord with rigid methods. DPA does not operate like an algorithm but more like a heuristic, tailored to specific situations. The term 'heuristic' denotes a strategy of discovery (Abbott 2004, 81), or, in different terms, a strategy of abduction (Tavory and Timmermans 2014).

Abduction is a kind of reasoning that 'produces plausible provisional results—insights, guesses and concepts that link things together in new ways . . . Abductive reasoning produces insights and ideas that are plausible but provisional' (Kimbell 2015, 35). Abduction results in conceptual understandings and practical solutions. It is a central element of contemporary 'design-in-practice', which is not rationalist and comprehensive but emergent (Kimbell 2012). It is interactive and collaborative, using a variety of insights, experiences, and material artefacts to link the desirable, the feasible, and the viable (Kimbell 2012, 294). Design-in-practice has articulated a forward-looking 'epistemology of creative work' using a repertoire of resources (from relational reconfiguration to organizational change), to generate new insights, solutions, and practices, as well as organizational structures and institutional arrangements, in situations of indeterminacy and uncertainty (Kimbell 2012, 295; see also Goodin 1996, 29). Emergent, interactive, practice-based design is a central feature of DPA methodology.[2]

It is thus possible to formulate three distinct methodological approaches to DPA: (1) Designed Deliberative Forums; (2) the Enhancement of the Deliberative Capacity of a Policy System; and (3) Institutional Design-in-Practice. These three approaches do not exhaust the full range of DPA-like methods. I suggest, however, that other, related methods such as co-production (West et al. 2019) and action research (Bartels and Wittmayer 2018; Bartels et al. 2020a) show family resemblances to

[1] There is an important literature on relational ontology in various disciplines that is relevant to DPA but that, for reasons of space, can only be mentioned here. Relational ontology 'assumes that what primarily exists is relation, not entities like things and individual human beings' (Sidorkin 2002, 91). Relational ontology has its roots in the pragmatism of Mary Parker Follett and John Dewey, and the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. It has been further developed and applied in anthropology (Sidorkin 2002), sociology (Emirbeyer 1997), and recently in Public Administration and policy studies (Stout and Love 2018). Through its relational roots, DPA has a strong family resemblance with Action Research (Bartels and Wittmayer 2018; Bartels et al. 2020).

[2] After all, *Deliberative Policy Analysis* was published in Cambridge University Press's *Theories of Institutional Design Series*.

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these three approaches. In fact, they all share transformative ambitions through an interventionist, '(actionable) methodology of co-producing inquiry and social intervention with all relevant stakeholders' (Li and Wagenaar 2019, 432). This range of methods shows that DPA is a versatile approach to policy analysis that covers different scales and modes of the policymaking process and is useful to policymakers, stakeholders, social activists, and researchers alike.[3]

Designed Deliberative Platforms

The most frequently used methodological approach to DPA is Designed Deliberative Platforms (DDPs). DDPs come under various labels such as collaborative governance (Ansell and Gash 2008), collaborative planning (Innes and Booher 2010), interactive governance (Edelenbos and van Meerkerk 2016), or policy labs (Kimbell 2015). All these approaches have in common that the policy process has broadened to include deliberation with stakeholders and citizens in the problem formulation and design stage of the policy process.[4]

Designed Deliberative Platforms show several recurrent elements. *First, they are problem-oriented*. They are organized around a concrete policy issue. Bowman, in a paper on the pragmatist roots of DPA, argues that an orientation towards resolving concrete problems that originate in doubt, 'promoted by a problematic situation' in the pragmatist vocabulary, is a necessary condition for all inquiry (2019, 560). And Ansell, in his pragmatist-informed treatise on democratic governance, considers a 'problem-driven perspective' to be a prerequisite of 'evolutionary learning'. '[P]roblems disrupt existing assumptions and call for fresh recovery,' he says. 'They pin disputes about knowledge, principles, and values down to particulars . . . and they focus our attention on action and consequences' (2011, 11).

Second, deliberation is a strategy of policy inquiry. The cases testify to what pragmatists call 'the communal basis of inquiry' (Ansell 2011, 12). Deliberation aims at discovering shared goals and values, recognizing interdependence, and articulating shared problem definitions. These cognitive goals (reflection, reframing, and evolutionary learning) are arrived at through establishing new relationships—one of the major strategies of harnessing complexity. For example, Forester and colleagues speak of 'establishing new pathways' for forging relationships and agreeing on problem definitions and discovering new, creative solutions (Forester et al. 2019, 468). They talk of 'relational re-braiding' and describe it as follows:

[3] In their book '*The Pandemic Within: Policy making for a Better World*' (2021), Wagenaar and Prainsack introduce utopian re-imagination as a fourth, systematic, practice-oriented method of deliberative policy analysis. It exceeds the limits of this chapter to explain this method in detail. I refer to the book for further details.

[4] Li's Laboratory of Deliberative Policy Analysis in Beijing—in which citizens and experts engage in guided deliberation about contested issues in a kind of citizen jury-type arrangement, the results of which are subsequently presented to the authorities—is a good example of this approach (Li 2015).

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> Here we have a quality of creating not just a view of the past, but a lived present in which participants who have not been in the same room together slowly 'met' each other, slowly came to develop a new trust in one another, slowly came to see each other not just vaguely 'in new ways', but with new qualities of respect, appreciation, recognition, acknowledgment, curiosity, empathy, and mutual regard. These are the deliberative accomplishments, the relational accomplishments.
>
> (Forester et al. 2019, 469)

In complexity terms, changing the relations in a group or policy system amounts to facilitating nonuniform interaction patterns (Axelrod and Cohen 2000, 63). Outcomes of the system arise from the complex interactions of its material, human, and symbolic agents. Effectuating change in both the proximity of interactions (who interacts with whom) and activation patterns (the sequencing of interactions) can have profound effects on the problem-solving capacity of the system. The change mechanisms are multiple. Increasing diversity opens the system up to new values, knowledge, perspectives, skills, and ideas. Diversifying interaction patterns also triggers different co-evolutionary patterns that, in the long run, may change the system (Axelrod and Cohen 2000, 68–69). Changing interaction patterns through deliberation is a practice. This is never easy in conflictual situations, but accomplishing this task results in recognition of mutual dependence, joint ownership of the problem, while new professional and personal relationships set in motion reflective processes that facilitate mutual learning (Axelrod and Cohen 2000, 38; Ansell 2011, 177–178). The relational dimension of deliberative inquiry results in a deeper form of lived, embodied learning—learning that sticks.

Third, DDPs emphasize the continuity of inquiry and action, where practices drive the process of joint inquiry. Deliberation in the service of practice is coterminous with policy design as a 'distributed social accomplishment in which artifacts and other humans play an important role' (Kimbell 2011, 300). Practice is an answer to uncertainty. As Cook and Wagenaar state:

> [W]e live in a world where problem formulations are often unclear and contested, where it is unclear what the materialities of the situation will 'afford', where the implications of alternative actions are uncertain, and where the utility of various kinds of knowledge is not immediately apparent.
>
> (Cook and Wagenaar 2012, 17)

Therefore, from a practice perspective, the initial task of the actors involved in a transdisciplinary research project is not to apply knowledge but to devise a productive form of practice within which the problem can be addressed. Acting or 'doing' is central here, from interpersonal dialogue to physical tinkering and interaction with the environment, to 'get the measure of the situation' and figure out 'how to go on' in light of affordances and constraints, purposes and expectations (West et al. 2019). A good

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example is administrative discretion. Because formal rules are inherently limited in the extent to which they are able to shape behaviour, to make administration work at all requires practical engagement with the situation at hand and the professionals and clients that populate it. Out of this practical engagement, understanding, moral judgment, and decision-making emerge (Wagenaar 2020). A practice approach to policy analysis fuses analysis, experience, and interaction.

Fourth, visual tools are used to explicate both functional and dysfunctional policy processes. Visual tools such as timelines or diagrams, although deceptively simple, serve performative and relational functions in design-in-practice (Kimbell 2011, 237). They are crucial for getting perspective on a conflict when participants are immersed in their own jealously guarded sense of rightness. They suggest avenues for a resolution of the conflict, in this way breaking the impasse. The key to this is that the visual aids are constructed jointly. For example, the central element of the reconstruction clinic described in Forester et al. (2019) is the collective construction of a timeline. Starting from a situation of impasse and entrenched positions held in place by strong emotions and 'self-evident' value positions, the timeline is a visual reconstruction of the chronology of the conflict based on events that are critical according to the participants, 'with quotes from each party in a different color' (Forester et al. 2019, 461). With the help of two neutral commentators, so-called 'reflectants', the participants began to develop a 'collective insight that the situation that they were in was something they were in together and that they [had] created *together*'. The timeline and the reflectants' commentary helped the participants to become 'unstuck'. It helped them both to see their different interests and *modi operandi* as well as their mutual dependency. Interviews with participants also showed that the construction of the timeline was a subtle form of empowerment. It allowed the weaker parties in the process, such as citizens, to be heard and to have an input in the process. The final step was to ask participants to jointly construct a future timeline. The outcome, according to the organizers, was that the conflicting parties began to see the situation as a 'collective mess that needed collective action in order to move forward. Individuals became part of a system and attributions to others morphed into shared responsibility' (Forester et al. 2019, 462).

Fifth, DPA invites participants to embrace complexity. The open, deliberative format of DPA encourages receptiveness to surprise and improvisation. For example, Foster et al. (2019) are explicit in their approach to complexity. Their 'systematic co-inquiry' is designed as a methodical approach that begins with acknowledging uncertainty and 'focuses on processes of social learning and the emergence of opportunities, rather than on pre-defined timelines, blueprints and outputs common to projects and programs' (Foster et al. 2019, 522). The authors used visual diagrams to depict both the messiness of the current situation and the more organized complexity of the UK Water Management System. Similarly, a 'Future-Proofing' rainforest conservation initiative in Colombia grew out of 'dissatisfaction around existing technical approaches to climate adaptation'.

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> Strategies for tackling climate change were rooted in the linear assumptions of the traditional model—that more science would reduce uncertainty, and that less uncertainty would lead to decisive action in rethinking conservation governance to accommodate climate change.
>
> (West et al. 2019, 545)

However, these institutional routines were shattered when 'existing conservation interventions were no longer adequate, and the world was indeed "talking back" in increasingly strident tones'. The team began to grapple with a situation of 'ecological instability that many felt was certain to increase' (West et al. 2019, 546). The ecologists involved in the conservation project settled on a pragmatist-inspired strategy of evolutionary learning that consisted of a series of interlinked elements. A key element was a shift from conservation thinking to one of anticipating and accommodating change. As both the direction and extent of change in a complex system are, by definition, unpredictable, this required a shift in both the object as well as the strategy of conservation management. The researchers sought the substitution of things (species, ecosystems) to values 'that are contestable and more overtly political' as 'guides for management' (van Kerkhoff et al. 2019, 702).

But this strategy could only be successful in a system of co-production in which all partners were able to assess the state of existing knowledge and evolving knowledge needs relevant to each partner's specific situation. That meant accepting uncertainty, a willingness to value the hands-on experiential knowledge of field rangers as guides for systemic action, and not hiding behind the lack of scientific evidence as a reason for inaction (van Kerkhoff, personal communication). Through a series of workshops, the group came up with a 'product' that they describe as 'a "process"—a multi-stage suite of activities that engages participants in a series of deliberations around conservation, culminating in a dialogue event to connect the pieces'. The authors describe this process as the establishment of a 'practice': 'As a practice it is ongoing, deliberative and potentially transformative, framed by learning and dialogue rather than the application of technical solutions' (West et al. 2019, 548).

These quotations demonstrate both the acknowledgement of the complexity and uncertainty that policymakers were facing and the open-ended, jointly produced, improvisatory character of the deliberative strategy. Embracing complexity, in conjunction with the tactics discussed above, helps to transform ingrained institutional practices, facilitate evolutionary learning, and build institutional capacity. In this way, all DPA examples discussed so far are aimed at harnessing complexity (Axelrod and Cohen 2000) rather than reducing it.

Enhancing the Deliberative Capacity of a Policy System

The second methodological approach to DPA is *enhancing the deliberative capacity of a policy system*. Designed Deliberative Platforms are an important and relatively

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easy to implement methodology for working through conflict-ridden policy issues with the affected actors. By diversifying the lines of communication and opening deliberations to hitherto neglected local knowledge, DDPs release creativity and harness complexity (Axelrod and Cohen 2000). However, as some authors have argued, the place of deliberation in policy analysis is not always immediately obvious (Bächtiger et al. 2010, 40; Papadopoulos 2012, 126). As a result, DDPs face several risks that might ultimately limit their reach and effectiveness.

First, it is not always clear what deliberation is *for* when introduced into the policymaking process. While the intended programmatic effects of DDPs are well articulated by their proponents (knowledge enhancement, intersubjective meaning, shared problem-solving, awareness of mutual dependence), these forums serve different de facto functions in institutionalized policy systems, such as conflict resolution, cooptation of political opponents, mustering political support, delaying unpopular decisions, overcoming veto-points, or deflecting public attention from unpopular programmes. Although such strategic political considerations are not necessarily negative, they are often at odds with whatever direct benefits DDPs might have. This risk is aggravated by the epistemological vulnerability of DPA in the current institutional environment. In an institutional setting that is in the sway of instrumental reason and command-and-control models of governing and policymaking, interpretive methods and a focus on practices have less standing than knowledge that is purportedly based on formal scientific methods (Taylor 1995, 7).

Second, these problems are part of a more general obstacle for DPA. Most policymaking institutions are not particularly receptive to deliberation when left to their own devices. It is probably for this reason (to avoid the difficult work of persuading political decision makers to accept the outcomes of deliberative platforms) that the examples discussed so far all represent carefully designed forums that (mostly) operate outside the regular chains of command and channels of political communication. More often than not, deliberative innovations in governance exist alongside hierarchical imposition or the continued privatization of public services, seriously constraining whatever positive effects they may have. This then raises the issue of how these atypical platforms of communication produce actionable, transformative knowledge that can be integrated into the everyday policy process. Differently put, it is 'important to look at how forums play out in larger systems of governance, for it is the deliberative virtues of the latter that is ultimately the main concern' (Dryzek 2016, 231).

The earlier mentioned Future-Proofing initiative in Colombia is an example of enhancing the deliberative capacity of a comprehensive policy system as a methodical approach to DPA. The Future-Proofing Conservation project explored new ways of managing protected rainforest areas that were challenged by large-scale, rapid, destructive ecological change (van Kerkhoff et al. 2019). What makes the case interesting is that its design transcended the usual small-group deliberative initiative and focused on climate governance as a *systemic* issue. The team consisted of government officials, activists, academics, NGOs, and consultants who were dispersed over four

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continents. In this sense the group was more akin to a deliberative system than a deliberative forum (Mansbridge et al. 2012). For example, while the focus of the project was on improving the uptake of knowledge in conservation policies, the actors realized that climate adaptation is not only a scientific but also, above all, a governance issue. In fact, knowledge (of all kinds) and governance were seen as integrated elements of a general strategy of evolutionary learning (van Kerkhoff et al. 2019; Ansell 2011). Evolutionary learning is a form of institutional capacity building that embraces three principles: (1) a problem-driven perspective; (2) facilitating processes of practical judgement—or, in the words of the organizers, 'supporting processes of reflexivity at both individual and institutional levels, thereby recognizing different possibilities for change and transformation, as well as constraints—recognizing the "policy mud"'; and (3) creating 'spaces for deliberation that include consideration of personal and social values, historical processes of change, and aspirations for positive futures' (West et al. 2019, 546). Throughout the process, the researchers kept their eyes on park conservation as a systemic issue. They were interested to learn, with partners, about the context of park conservation. 'Participants appreciated that the process enables them to think deeply about the "bigger picture" of conservation, and to relate that to their more immediate management context' (van Kerkhoff et al. 2019, 10).

The Future-Proofing initiative points the way to a feasible, design-driven, hands-on approach to enhancing the deliberative capacity of policy systems as a whole.

> [B]y developing this larger transition to new governance, through a series of smaller, interconnected transitions that linked values, rules and knowledge, the participants could work through a series of steps that enable new ways of thinking about the role of protected areas in conservation and consequently new ways to manage them.
>
> (van Kerkhoff et al. 2019, 13)

Institutional Design-in-Practice

Finally, the third methodological approach to DPA is Institutional Design-in-Practice. DPA claims to have an answer to complexity. It mobilizes intense small-group deliberation to bring conflicting parties together, unfreeze policy impasses, and set in motion design-in-practice. In the process, it forges new forms of collaboration that unleash creative problem-solving. It has proven itself capable of liberating the wisdom of practice in, and enhance the deliberative capacity of, local and national policy systems to initiate evolutionary learning. But complexity introduces two qualities that have yet to be addressed so far: interconnectedness and higher-order effects.

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First, through a myriad of continuously evolving relationships, the elements in a complex system are densely interconnected. Positive and negative feedback creates the unexpected feedback loops and confounding emergent outcomes that are characteristic of complex systems. Interconnectedness poses real problems to policymakers. We intervene knowing that our action will have consequences that reverberate through systems in unpredictable, often nonlinear, ways, expressing themselves as the absence of any desired effect or alternatively as negative or perverse unintended consequences (Sterman 2000; Wagenaar and Prainsack 2021, chapter 1). We also know that our models of the world that we use as leverage for our interventions are limited at best. Yet, if we ever hope to design policies that are effective, that minimize negative unintended consequences, and that are sufficiently robust to withstand changing circumstances, then our interventions need to be commensurate with the multiple interactions and dependencies between elements of the system. That means that the policymaker not only understands the compound nature of the problem at hand, but also designs a differentiated, integrated policy whose elements support and reinforce each other in attaining their goal.

Second, the emergent outcomes of complex systems are a feature of the *interactions* between entities. The higher-order phenomena that emerge through these interactions have properties that cannot be reduced to those of lower-order phenomena. They cannot be reconstructed from the latter by simple extrapolation. The reason is that at each level of aggregation, properties appear that are specific to that level and that require their own concepts, explanations, and generalizations (Anderson 1972, 393; Wagenaar 2007, 25). This has momentous implications for an interventionist, transformative form of policy inquiry. Interconnectedness and higher-order effects in policy systems go beyond interpersonal relations in that they involve aggregate phenomena, such as organizations, institutions, buildings, laws, regulation, policy instruments, as well as natural systems, in short, the stuff of public administration. To harness this kind of administrative and natural interconnectedness requires an ability to intervene intelligently in these higher-order entities. 'Intervening intelligently' is the language of design, in the case of DPA, the design of institutions of public administration and public policy.

Understanding and accommodating interconnectedness requires a different level of analysis. Not on the elusive level of comprehensive systems, but rather a focus on institutional design where the leverage points are precisely the organizations, institutions, policy instruments, and professional roles that comprise policy systems. One of the goals of the Future-Proofing project, for example, was not only to bring indigenous actors into the deliberative monitoring system, but also to strengthen relationships between local/regional and national levels of management (van Kerkhoff et al. 2019). In addition, the researchers developed a Protected Area Benefits Assessment Tool that invited area managers to link landscape features with the benefits and costs of interventions in light of expected climate change (van Kerkhoff et al. 2019). To gain traction, laws and programmes have to be operationalized, by being translated into

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a series of policy instruments, such as dedicated organizations, budgets, information tools, and monitoring and enforcement arrangements. Put otherwise, DPA needs a method of institutional design. I will illustrate this with an example.

In their article on the public housing system in Vienna, Austria, Wagenaar and Wenninger describe how that system not only successfully houses 60 per cent of the Viennese population, in the process creating a liveable, mixed-use city, but has done so for a century now (Wagenaar and Wenninger 2020). Viennese public housing rests on five integrated strategies: (1) active social protection in which the availability of high-quality, affordable housing and strict tenant protection laws are a key feature (2) a proactive land purchase and zoning policy; (3) a multi-pronged finance policy that consists of affordable rents, capped construction, and land purchase costs; (4) long amortization periods; and (5) reliable, long-standing partners (predominantly housing corporations) who agree to a cap on profits (3.5 per cent of invested capital) and an obligation to reinvest capital in the construction of public housing (Ludwig 2017).

The authors trace the origins of the system to the remarkable surge of integrated institution building by the Social-Democratic administration of Vienna in the years following the First World War, the famous 'Red Vienna' (*Das Rote Wien*) era (Weishmann 2002). They describe how this administration, faced with a series of overwhelming social and political challenges that, in today's language, surely deserve the designation 'sustainability crises' (Bartels et al. 2020a, 392),[5] forged a remarkably comprehensive, ambitious, and robust municipal administration system. The Social-Democratic city administration was driven by a combination of idealism and exigency. It had an integrated vision of the social, cultural, and political emancipation of the working class. In designing and realizing its agenda, it built upon the tradition and achievements in energy provision, public transport, and tenant protection of previous administrations. In effect, what the officials of Red Vienna were engaged in was 'design-in-practice' (Kimbell 2012, 2015).

Design-in-practice combines many of the themes and strategies of transformative intervention discussed so far:

> [Designers] are seen as using an iterative process that moves from generating insights about end users, to idea generation and testing, to implementation. Their visual artifacts and prototypes help multidisciplinary teams work together. They ask 'what if?' questions to imagine future scenarios rather than accepting the way things are done now.
>
> (Kimbell 2011, 287)

Mediating between policy, evidence, and delivery (Kimbell 2015, 9), design-in-practice represents a participatory, practice-based approach to systematic institutional change (Kimbell 2012, 142). It presumes that we step back from a static

[5] Bartels et al. define sustainability crises as 'large-scale, dynamic, multi-dimensional systems problems that require immanent and systemic resolution to prevent irreversible catastrophe' (2020a,393).

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conception of institutions as a fixed set of rules, norms, and understandings, often but not exclusively embodied in organizations. If, instead, we employ a transactional perspective of institutions as 'dynamic, ongoing interactions between concepts, experience and situations' (Ansell 2011, 36), we begin to see how institutions can be designed for interconnectedness. Institutions are not context-independent entities but instead are embedded in and reflect the experiences of particular communities. Such culturally embedded institutions 'accrete in response to a variety of local situations and are evaluated by the test of time' (Ansell 2011, 37). They are chosen, but not designed in the sense of rational design, and although the choice is never comprehensive or synoptic, it is guided by a normative vision. Neither wholly sedimented into our social and political environment, nor alterable at will, institutions are part of a world of meaning and purpose. In this pragmatist vein, Ansell designates them as 'a skein of practices, values and loyalties that are essential to the very meaning of the institutions' (Ansell 2011, 37).

Conclusion

Without excluding other methods, Deliberative Policy Analysis begins to converge on an identifiable and replicable methodological approach: Designed Deliberative Platforms, the enhancement of the deliberative capacity of policy systems, and institutional design-in-practice.[6] Design-in-practice is the mother lode of all three methods (Kimbell 2012). Design-in-practice does not conceive of designers, or policy analysts in our parlance, as the main agent in design, but instead opens the process up to officials, citizens, and other stakeholders who, through their practices, are an intrinsic part of the problem at hand (Kimbell 2012, 135). It understands designers/analysts as 'practitioners being in the world and their relation to other social actors including artifacts and other social practices and institutions' (Kimbell 2011, 298). This relational, decentred view of design and analysis corresponds with both the theory and practice of DPA as a methodology that fits the dynamic complexity, essential indeterminacy, and dense interconnectedness of policy systems, and that accords with the continuity between policy analysis and policy practice.

These methods represent an important step forward in the development of DPA. That said, some important unresolved issues remain. For example, DPA claims that it provides a strategy for dealing with complexity, but its theory of complexity, and its implications for policymaking, policy inquiry, and democratic governance, reflects the underdeveloped state of the art in this field. Second, DPA describes itself as a normative-empirical programme, but its ethics are underspecified. Part of these ethics are internal to the programme. These are the well-known normative principles of deliberation as a special kind of communication (reason-giving, attentive listening, mutual respect, and non-coercion) as well as the ethics of interpretation.

[6] And utopian re-imagination. See footnote 3.

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Fay describes the latter as striving for enhanced communication and professing respect for the life world of the subjects of inquiry (Fay 1975)—to which I add that this injunction should extend to *all* subjects of inquiry, including natural objects and future generations. However, DPA also embodies a situated ethics. These are the values that emerge in the situation at hand and reflect the challenges that actors face, their needs and desires, and the affordances and constraints that frame their choice architecture. At present, DPA does not offer a coherent understanding of, and approach to, integrating contextualized values into policy inquiry.

Finally, an endemic risk of policy analysis is that its results are not adopted or acknowledged by officials in the policy subsystem (see also Li and He 2016, 241). This is because the output of analysis suffers the effects of cognitive dissonance, does not accord with the political mandate of these officials, is considered by policy practitioners to be irrelevant to their needs or lacking in authority, or because the input from the larger policy subsystem is more urgent than the results of analysis. In other words, critical, interpretive analysis is not 'transformative by default' (Bartels et al. 2020a, 397). If it aspires to be more than just an epistemic innovation, DPA needs to position itself more clearly as a critical-interventionist approach to democratic enhancement. DPA as design-in-practice seeks to enhance the effectiveness of policy analysis by prioritizing the establishment of new interactions within the policy subsystem, and by involving citizens, politicians, and administrators as co-designers. DPA has successfully invited a rethinking of the role(s) of the policy analyst, as less, or perhaps more precisely not just, a producer of quantitative or interpretive, scientific knowledge, a consultant in policy design (Howlett 2011) or a provider of policy arguments (Majone 1992), but more a knowledge broker, change agent, and designer and facilitator of deliberative inquiry, evolutionary learning, and democratic process (Ansell 2011; Bourgon 2011; Bartels and Wittmayer 2018, 9). Yet, DPA has still to demonstrate more convincingly the practical feasibility of these roles in the institutionalized landscape of public policymaking.

Further Reading

Bartels, Koen P. R., Hendrik Wagenaar, and Ya Li. 2020. 'Introduction: Towards Deliberative Policy Analysis 2.0'. *Policy Studies 41* (4): 295–307.

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