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9 Critical policy sociology
Historiography, archaeology and
genealogy as methods of policy analysis

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Introduction
Cognizant of Stephen Ball's remonstrance that 'much of what passes for theoretically
informed research lacks any sense of critical distance or reflexivity about its own
production and procedures and its claims to knowledge about the social' (1997:
269), this paper seeks to outline three research methods with the potential to more
explicitly inform social policy analyses. They are represented here as policy
historiography, policy archaeology and policy genealogy. This is preceded by an
account of the distinguishing features of policy sociology, particularly its socio­
logical antecedents and its deference to historical methods, and the research
questions that such alliances generate. A case is made for the importance of a
critical policy sociology set apart from other policy work and favourably disposed
to the critique of oppressive social practices. Following Dale's (1989) distinction,
these matters constitute the topic of the paper's discussions whereas research
into issues of Australian higher education entry policy (Gale 1999b) provide its
resource. Although not heavily theorized here, a subtext to this biography of critical
policy sociologists and ways of engaging in and representing their analyses, is the
notion of 'temporary policy settlements' (see Gale 1999a).

Policy sociology and methodology: some reflections
It would seem that one of the more critical features of policy analysis in recent
times has been its reflexivity and self-appraisal; that is, its willingness to ponder
matters related to its own research activity. In 1990, for example, Ball noted that
'the field of policy analysis is dominated by commentary and critique rather
than by research' (1990: 9). Yet, becoming 'too abstract' was itself a reaction by
policy analysts to much atheoretical and apparently objective accounts of policy,
particularly that emanating from the empiricism of 'policy science' but also from
managerialist and technocratic perspectives of the policy process (Ozga 1990).
Given this to-ing and fro-ing between theory and data, it is hardly surprising that
methodological issues should more recently occupy the writings of critical policy researchers, particularly since, compared with earlier qualitative inquiry, their research has appeared 'unsophisticated' and 'somewhat naive' (Maguire and Ball 1994: 281).

This paper, then, forms a response to recent self-criticism (see, for example, Ball 1994b, 1997; Halpin and Troyna 1994; Maguire and Ball 1994) by critical policy analysts that 'little attention has been given to research methodology' (Taylor 1997: 23) and particularly that 'most [policy] analysts leave the interpretational relationships between data and analysis heavily implicit' (Ball 1994b: 107).

In an edited collection by David Halpin and Barry Troyna, written to address these shortcomings, Ball (1994b) identifies Gewirtz and Ozga's confession concerning the 'heavily implicit' methodological assumptions in their writings, drawing attention to the importance of explicating policy research issues. The relevant passage discloses that 'constraints on space and the fact that the work is still in progress (not to mention the difficulty of the task) inhibit us from offering here an exposition of the developing relationship between the informing theoretical perspective, its associated propositions, and the empirical data' (Gewirtz and Ozga 1990: 41).

In responding to such criticism, this paper constitutes a deliberate attempt to create space away from the constraints of a work-in-progress to specifically address these issues of policy methodology.

**Policy sociology critique**

In particular, the paper seeks to contribute to the field known variously as 'critical policy analysis' (Prunty 1985; Henry 1993; Marshall 1997; Taylor 1997), 'critical policy scholarship' (Grace 1998) and 'policy sociology' (Payne et al. 1981; Ozga 1987; McPherson and Raab 1988; Ball 1990; Bowe et al. 1992; Maguire and Ball 1994). Definitions of the latter are often attributed to Jenny Ozga (1987: 144) who characterizes policy sociology as 'rooted in the social science tradition, historically informed and drawing on qualitative and illuminative techniques'; as I read them, characteristics with parallels to Van Manen's (1990: 27–9) (analytic) distinctions between research methodology, method and techniques.

For some (Raab 1994; Troyna 1994a,b) Ozga's definition lacks a degree of integrity, particularly in relation to the explicit claim in this approach to be an exercise in sociology. Troyna's (1994a: 71) critique, for example, is that policy sociology appears to differ little 'from other social and political science analyses of policy' that 'takes policy analysis to be a multi-disciplinary field that cuts across existing specializations to employ whatever theoretical or methodological approach is most relevant to the issue or problem under investigation' (Codd 1988: 235). Troyna (1994a: 72) regards interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary work as 'no bad thing', although he is concerned that emphasising the sociological character of policy sociology could inhibit such 'trespassing' (Apple 1996), while Henry (1993) is critical of the 'theoretical eclecticism' evident in this form of research, embodied in Ball's (1993, 1994a) 'toolbox' approach to policy analysis. As Troyna and Henry see it, the main problem is the absence of 'a particular
strategic edge' (Troyna 1994a: 82) to policy sociology, not just its lack of a 'clearly distinctive approach' (Raab 1994: 23). For these critical researchers, rectifying such absence necessarily requires a closer and more explicit relationship between policy sociology and critical social science which would potentially heighten policy analysts' interests in feminist and antiracist issues (Troyna 1994a) and matters of social justice and equity more generally (Henry 1993).

This concern with being critical, and particularly with developing a critical disposition for 'overt political struggle against oppressive social structures' (Harvey 1990: 20), seems a more cogent argument than questioning policy sociology's disciplinary credentials. As Apple (1996: 125, emphasis in original) notes in his recent review, 'what actually counts as the sociology of education is a construction... [Its boundaries] are often the results of complex “policing” actions by those who have the power to enforce them and to declare what is or is not the subject of “legitimate” sociological inquiry'. Indeed, concern about whether policy sociology is or is not sociological in orientation and whether it can be multi-disciplinary and legitimately sociological seems reminiscent of Mills' observation regarding history: 'the weary debate over whether or not historical study is or should be considered a social science is neither important nor interesting' (1959: 143). Moreover, Mills' (1959: 22-4) *Sociological Imagination* provides some history to relations between sociology and other social science disciplines, which appears consistent with a more recent 'picture of the state of sociology of education that is broad and that cuts across disciplinary boundaries' (Apple 1996: 125).

**Critical** policy sociology - like critical policy analysis and critical policy scholarship - is perhaps a better description of what is intended here. Put simply, sociology is interested in the workings of the social world and, in particular, in the relations between 'personal troubles' and 'public issues' (Mills 1959: 8). Clearly, these are not interests foreign to policy analysts and their analyses; indeed, how personal troubles are dealt with as public issues and how public issues are expressed in personal troubles, contribute to defining the work of policy studies. Further, critical sociology imagines a particular relationship between the specific and the general of social life in a way that has social researchers thinking simultaneously about these things (Apple 1996). For Apple (1996: 141):

> it is exactly this issue of simultaneity, of thinking neo and post together, of actively enabling the tensions within and among them to help form our research, that will solidify previous understandings, avoid the loss of collective memory of the gains that have been made, and generate new insights and new actions.

Again, critical policy sociologists have been willing to embrace such simultaneity, even though at times their work has been represented otherwise. (See Gale 1994a for an account of opposing caricatures of critical policy analysis.) Roger Dale, for example, while clearly advocating the retention of broad analyses of
social formations in policy work, does not simply argue the merits of grand narratives. As he puts it:

Severing implementation from formulation of policy involves not only a distortion but a serious misunderstanding of the role of the State in education policy. It is a misunderstanding connected to the view that the State involvement in education implies ownership, control and operation of education systems, with a functional division of labour between formulation and implementation of policy.

(Dale 1992: 393)

In short, the critical in policy sociology is worth pursuing, far more than dubious debates over what is sociological about its orientation, and provides the potential to redress concerns over its theoretical eclecticism and its politics without delimiting contributions from the social sciences more broadly.

**Illuminative research technique**

Policy analysts, and other social researchers, often jump from these theoretical and political matters to those of data collection (and analysis); for those who are policy sociologists, the methodological leap is to 'qualitative and illuminative techniques' (Ozga 1987). Here I want to continue this progression, although only momentarily; first, because space prevents a fuller account and also because I want to move more quickly to Ozga’s second characterization of policy sociology, particularly given that research techniques within this approach have already received somewhat more attention (see, for example, Ball 1994b; Maguire and Ball 1994; Ozga and Gewirtz 1994; Wallace et al. 1994). Briefly, then, ethnographic and ‘life history’ methods, such as participant and non-participant observations but more commonly semi-structured interviews, tend to generate the primary sources of data in this research genre, producing textual representations of policy discourses – themselves the subject of interpretation (Rizvi and Kemmis 1987: 12–19) – for interpreting policy and/or its processes of production. As Raab (1994: 23–4) explains:

In each case...knowledge of the former [process and product] is to be gained empirically and not on the basis of inference from the latter [motive and action] or by deduction from grand theory. Hence the importance of going beyond the pronouncements of ‘policy makers’ and actually talking to them, for meanings and ‘assumptive worlds’ are essential parts of the policy process and require to be understood if action itself is to be understood.

Written documentary evidence often provides a supplement to such data production. But not as evident in policy sociology, at least to date, is the collection and analysis of more quantitative statistical data. Again, space does not allow for a fuller account of these matters but what is intended here is what Brown et al. (1997)
refer to as ‘a new political arithmetic [of the social world] as a form of “social accountability”’ (p. 37, emphasis in original) and ‘as part of a committed policy scholarship’ (p. 38, emphasis added). That is, quantitative data can also prove illuminating, particularly when it is subjected to the methodological assumptions of critical social science. To dismiss such data as the stuff of positivism is to curtail ‘our ability to raise and answer critical questions about the large-scale effects’ (Apple 1996: 127) of policy.

**Historically informed method**

However, it is Ozga’s second characterization of policy sociology, as historically informed, that I want to foreground in this paper, although, as already demonstrated (critical) social science traditions and qualitative and (quantitative) illuminative techniques are not far from the paper’s interests and discussions. A regard for history is not unusual in sociology and is similarly emphasized in critical policy studies. Indeed, ‘all sociology worthy of the name is “historical sociology.” It is, in Paul Sweezy’s excellent phrase, an attempt to write “the present as history’’’ (Mills 1959: 146). Ball (1990: 1), for example, describes his early policy analysis ‘both as an exercise in contemporary history and as a contribution to what Ozga (1987) calls “policy sociology”’. Yet, deferring to an historical research method – what I understand by Ozga’s (1987) depiction of policy sociology as ‘historically informed’ – does not always bring clarity to policy research. History, as Petersen (1992) observes, is itself crowded with definitions. It is almost too simple, then, to ‘hold fast to the original Greek verb: Historeo (1) I find out by inquiry, (2) I narrate what I have found out. Inquiry and narration – that is my craft’ (Hancock 1954, in Petersen 1992: 2). To employ a common expression, such definition raises more questions than it answers, questions that I want to dwell on here in order to explore ways of doing critical policy sociology.

Given the uncertainties embedded in Hancock’s craft, one initial question for historically informed policy sociologists is what am I looking to find/produce? In their search for policy related data, too many analysts treat this simply as an empirical question. For them:

> the meaning of policy is taken for granted and theoretical and epistemological dry rot is built into the analytical structures they construct…much rests on the meaning or possible meanings that we give to policy; it affects ‘how’ we research and how we interpret what we find.

(Ball 1994a: 15)

More recent theoretical accounts of what to look for have tended to emphasize policy as text and discourse (see, for example, Ball 1994a; Taylor 1997; Gale 1999a). This in itself raises epistemological and ontological questions about the activity of research: that is, is data on policy ‘out there’ to be found or do researchers produce it? It would seem reasonable to assume, for example, that policy analysts
who define policy in terms of text, discourse and ideology will necessarily ‘find’
different things in their research from others who have regard for one or more of
Hogwood and Gunn’s (1984: 13–19) nine popular definitions. But reworking
policy in this way, on the basis that ‘the established conceptual tools [of policy
analysis] seem blunt and irrelevant’ (Ball 1990: 8), is more than simply a theo­
retical exercise: for ‘the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house’
(Lorde 1984: 112). What to look for, then, is also related to a researcher’s political
disposition. As argued above, critical policy sociology is informed ‘by the con­
viction that “things,” especially policy discourse, must be pulled apart’ (Troya
1994a: 71) to determine whose interests they serve. Troya (1994a: 72–3) iden­
tifies two questions central to these critical determinations: ‘what is really going
on?’ – the presumption here is that there is something to be uncovered – and ‘how
come?’ Hence, research questions that ask what influences the production of
(Australian higher education entry) policy – the research from which illustrations
below are derived – necessarily arrive at empirical answers informed by theoret­
ical and political considerations of what policy is and who benefits from it.

Second, where and how will I find/produce it? In many ways this is a difficult
question to separate from the first. What the policy analyst is looking for, what is
regarded as ‘the policy’ and/or as ‘policy making’, necessarily frames where and
how data about policy will be found/produced. In the quotation above, for exam­
ple, Raab (1994) emphasizes the search in policy sociology for meanings and
assumptions, and suggests that one of the best places to find/produce these is
in/through the words and reasonings of communities or networks of policy actors.
Hence, asking about these in interview, although not necessarily the only research
technique available, becomes a logical form of data collection/production. More
broadly, Maguire and Ball (1994: 278–81), in their overview of recent research
in policy sociology, provide a contextual account of how ‘where to look’ is related
to ‘what to look for’. In their review, they identify three broad orientations: ‘elite
studies’ (otherwise known as ‘situated studies of policy formation’), ‘trajectory
studies’ and ‘implementation studies’. Clearly, such orientations reveal more
than the (productive) locations of data. For example, disclosed in these char­
acterizations of policy research is a surprising unacknowledged dichotomy
between policy formulation and policy implementation; surprising, given Ball’s
earlier work (Bowe et al. 1992) on theorizing contexts of policy making. (See
Gale 1999a for a critique of the separations between these policy contexts.)
Again, illustrated here is that ways of conceiving of policy – as divided into
formulations and implementations or as part of the one endeavour – produce
different forms of data.

Third, how is what is found/produced (to be) represented? It is tempting to
think about representing or ‘publishing’ data after the work of finding/producing
it has been completed. However, the realities of (policy) analysis are very differ­
ent from the divisions of doing (reading) and writing research implied in such
thinking. That is, at the heart of issues of representation is an a priori question
that asks, what lenses do I use to look (read) with? In this respect, policy analysts
can appear very similar to policy makers who seek to construct policy problems
in ways that match the answers they already have available (Beilharz 1987; Gale 1994b). I do not mean to ‘slip back’ into positivism here – as researchers, we must be careful not to simply fill predetermined theoretical buckets with policy data – but I do want to signal that analysts do not enter policy fields with ‘blank slates’. As argued above, ‘critical theories offer lenses for looking’ (Marshall 1997: 11).

There are several ‘lenses’ that could fit this criterion and many of them potentially overlap, increasing their various hues. In particular (critical) ethnographies (see Hammersley 1994) and (critical) case studies (see Deem and Brehony 1994) – the latter described by some as quasi-historical research (Bartlett 1987) – seem to dominate policy sociology. Without discounting these, in the sections that follow I outline three alternative and overlapping historical lenses with which to ‘read’ and ‘write’ policy research: specifically, policy historiography, policy archaeology and policy genealogy. In effect, all are policy historiographies or different ways of storying policy, although ‘in the tradition of what may be called critical erudition’ (Petersen 1992: 3, emphasis in original) they come under the influence of a similar ‘radical revisionist’ (Kincheloe 1991) historiography.

I should confess here, if it is not already evident, to some fluidity in how I use the term historiography: as both a general term that encompasses a range of historical discourses and as a more specific term that refers to one particular collection of these. My defence for such ambiguity, short of also confessing to not knowing what else to name them, is that the social sciences have the same regard for terms such as methodology: meaning, the range of ideas and activities (methods, techniques, procedures and so on) that come under the broad banner of social research and, more specifically, ‘the theory behind the method’ (Van Manen 1990: 27). My confessions also extend to not being fully attentive to Foucault’s renditions of archaeology and genealogy, even though these have influenced the methods of policy analysis I imagine here. But then Foucault himself provides such licence:

If one or two of these ‘gadgets’ of approach or method that I’ve tried to employ … can be of service to you, then I shall be delighted. If you find the need to transform my tools or use others then show me what they are, because it may be of benefit to me.

(Foucault 1980: 65)

Without claiming absolute distinctions between their interests, the following sections couple policy historiography with the substantive issues of policy at particular hegemonic moments, policy archaeology with conditions that regulate policy formations and policy genealogy with social actors’ engagement with policy. In claiming that these have things to say about the representation of policy sociology, I am not concerned so much with their schematic structures, how their narratives are ordered and arranged, but with the subject of these narratives, what is included in these ‘stories’ about policy (and what is not).
Policy historiography

Historical accounts of education come in all shapes and sizes (see Connell 1987) but they commonly share an interest ‘to trace the processes of educational change and to expose the possible relationships between the socio-educational present and the socio-educational past’ (Kincheloe 1991: 234); although, histories of the present and their comparison with the past sometimes remain implicit.2 Mill (1959: 22) similarly describes tendencies in sociology:

It is at once historical and systematic – historical, because it deals with and uses the materials of the past; systematic, because it does so in order to discern ‘the stages’ of the course of history and the regularities of social life.

Drawing on this heritage, policy historiography asks three broad questions: (1) what were the ‘public issues’ and ‘private troubles’ within a particular policy domain during some previous period and how were they addressed?; (2) what are they now?; and (3) what is the nature of the change from the first to the second? Critical policy historiography adds to these a further two: (4) what are the complexities in these coherent accounts of policy?; and (5) what do these reveal about who is advantaged and who is disadvantaged by these arrangements?

It is perhaps best to illustrate these research questions by referring to a specific example of policy historiography: an analysis of Australian higher education entry policy, March 1987 to March 1996 (Gale 1999b). In this critical historiography of policy, data analysed were predominantly documentary and included primary sources (such as government policy texts, departmental records and reports, commissioned research, media releases, and minutes of meetings) and secondary sources (such as relevant academic literature and newspaper articles). In analysing such policy records I was interested to do several things, including to detail:

- ‘a systematic account of selected past events; initially through their analytical separation from present events and from those that do not contribute to an understanding of “entry” but also through their subsequent “division” into distinctive historical epochs’ (Gale 1999b: 70); and
- ‘a critical examination of the data that is concerned not just with an episode in the history of ideas but also, and more crucially, with critical sociological questions about who benefits from particular university entrance arrangements’ (Gale 1999b: 70).

With regard to the first of these intentions, I was concerned not to represent these historical periods and their policies as necessarily self-evident and consensual, and the transition from one to another as a consequence of ‘progress’. This in mind and informed by the work of Hall (1984), Offe (1984) and others, I conceived of temporary policy settlements: ‘a moving discursive frame’ (Ball 1994a: 23) that at a particular historical and geographical moment defines the specifics of policy production. I also understood these hegemonic settlements to contain crises or
other settlements ‘in waiting’ and, hence, I characterized them as asymmetrical, temporary and contextual (see Gale 1999a).

Theorizing policy in this way, I represented university entry policy in the first three-quarters of the twentieth century as dominated by a ‘qualified-entry’ settlement, followed by a period (beginning in the 1970s and extending into the 1990s) of more explicit policy crisis, and then, subsequently, by a ‘diversified-entry’ arrangement. Specifically, the qualified entry period foregrounded issues of merit and school-to-university pathways, which were settled to the extent that most, if not all, students who submitted for university entrance examination and were successful, gained entry; albeit with some adjustment around the edges in the latter years, given faculty prerequisites and quotas. The evolving period of (explicit) crisis was primarily expressed as ‘unmet demand’: dramatically more students undertaking and successfully completing senior secondary schooling, and, hence, qualifying for university entrance, than universities could/would accommodate. During this period, there was also greater recognition given to the under-representation in university student populations of particular social groups. ‘Resolution’ of these issues and the resettling of Australian higher education entry policy came in the form of a ‘diversified-entry’ policy settlement that focused on increased, targeted, open and displaced access arrangements. In brief, these measures widened existing pathways to university and, in addition, created new ones. Moreover, pathways leading out of senior secondary schooling were established to destinations other than university. The school-to-university route, it appeared, now had some viable alternatives. 3

But my intention was also to highlight whose interests these arrangements served. Drawing on Turner’s (1971) two ideal–typical normative patterns of upward mobility, I suggested that in settling the crisis of qualified-entry around a new diversified-entry arrangement, the organizing logic of entry policy had shifted, at least in its rhetoric, from ‘elite sponsorship’ (selection by association) to ‘fair contest’ (selection via competition). Yet, what became evident was that even though more students were gaining access to Australian universities (as undergraduates) under diversified-entry arrangements (from 99,820 entrants in 1983 to 152,113 in 1993), including increases in the representation of Australia’s indigenous populations (from 0.5% in 1987 to 1.0% in 1993), university entry was not as fair as it might have seemed. For example, the proportion of university students from low socio-economic backgrounds did not increase under this new policy regime and some institutions even recorded a decrease. Moreover, targeted groups in general tended to congregate in lower status courses and institutions; for example, in 1991 two-thirds of indigenous students were enrolled in arts and education and in five predominantly regional institutions. Neither did the pathway between school and university seem as wide for all students: ‘in 1989 more than 70% of those graduating from independent secondary schools entered higher education. The rate for government schools was a little less than 40%’ (Williams et al. 1993: 99).

If these figures raised questions about the fairness of the competition – that there are ‘powerful mechanisms of privilege and exclusion [ensuring that universal
access] does not function in a universal way' (Connell 1994: 145) – so did the introduction of open access arrangements, in the form of Open Learning Australia (OLA), question the demise of elite sponsorship. Not only were OLA students predominantly urban, able-bodied, employed in middle-class occupations, with senior secondary qualifications and some prior studies at a tertiary level (Atkinson et al. 1995), the ‘openness’ of the system was being actively utilized by elite schools and universities to ensure the progression of particular kinds of students from school to university. That is, through OLA mechanisms or ‘high achiever’ programmes organized by (mostly traditional) universities, university subjects were offered in (mostly private) schools to assist (mostly elite) students in gaining advanced standing following their entry into university courses.

In short, my critical historiography sought to analyse the role of Australian higher education entry policy in ‘the perpetuation of hegemonizing influences within those historically specific moments and those particular cultural configurations’ (Kincheloe 1991: 237) that I called ‘qualified entry’ and ‘diversified entry’. I concluded that, like racism, privileging the dominant in university entry arrangements ‘is virus-like, constantly mutating into new forms in the changed social structures and cultural configurations of different historical moments’ (Kincheloe 1991: 238).

Policy archaeology

A second level of analysis of Australian higher education entry policy was engaged and represented through the lens of policy archaeology. James Scheurich (1994) has written an instructive account on this historical method and its relevance to policy analysis, much of which has appeal to critical policy sociologists. In his explanation, policy archaeology spans four broad arenas that could be expressed in terms of the following research questions: (1) what are the conditions that make the emergence of a particular policy agenda possible?; (2) what are the rules or regularities that determine what is (and is not) a policy problem?; (3) how do these rules and regularities shape policy choices?; and (4) how is policy analysis similarly regulated? Without engaging in a full discussion of these arenas, there is, I think, some overlap with my own account: parts, although not all, of (1) and (2) seem possible within policy historiography; the reflection and self-critique by policy analysts, discussed above, are echoed in (4); while (3) speaks of what I discuss below as policy genealogy.

Here I want to focus on those parts of Scheurich’s (1994) characterization that seem implied in a policy archaeology that ‘tries to establish the rules of [policy] formation’ (Foucault 1972: 207). I suspect that I take this to mean a little less than Scheurich – that is, I restrict policy archaeology to the analysis of constitutive rules and position ‘the conditions of their realization’ (Foucault 1972: 207) as the interest of policy genealogy – and perhaps I mean a little more than Scheurich, including the licensing of policy makers and their relations as part of the process of policy formation. In this account, critical policy archaeology asks: (1) why are some items on the policy agenda (and not others)?; (2) why are some policy
actors involved in the production of policy (and not others)? and (3) what are
the conditions that regulate the patterns of interaction of those involved?
Representing Australian higher education entry policy in this way, I drew on
the documentary records listed above but also on 27 semi-structured, in-depth
interviews with policy actors located at various levels of the Australian state:
politicians and political advisors (PPA), bureaucrats and policy advisors (BPA),
independent authorities (IA) and academics and university administrators (AUA).4

The research produced a number of strategies in the legitimation of policy
agendas: the prescription, incorporation, leverage, currency, mediation, and dis­
location associated with dominant policy discourse and their utilization in the
determination of higher education entry policy. Embedded in this analysis was
also a sense of ‘chronology’ of agendas and events, important for understanding
the strategies employed to advance some agendas over others. A similar excavation
delivered a number of licensing strategies: the authorities, changes, conditions,
spaces and places legitimated by the state5 in the production of higher education
entry policy. While these strategies were largely presented as discrete, the
research was also cognizant of interaction among them. For example, the strategy
of licensing some actors and groups of actors, so that ‘only certain voices are heard
at any point in time’ (Ball 1994a: 16), was not just concerned with controlling who
will ‘speak’ policy but also with what agendas are heard. Similarly, determining
the ‘who’ of policy production (as object) necessarily influenced aspects of
their interaction.

Again, some illustration is valuable here to better explain this policy archaeology
work. For example, excavations of the processes involved in the production of
diversified-entry policy identified the agenda-setting strategy of incorporation,
employed by policy actors to make competing agendas subservient. The strategy
operated on two levels; by raising a specific discourse to a more general level and
by appealing to some discourse pervading broader contexts. The following inter­
view extract provides an example of the latter in which a policy actor, a federal
bureaucrat, relates the discourse that, at the time, repositioned education as the
handmaiden of the economy:

this human capital stuff is fairly hard to untangle but what I think was being
said was that the OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and
Development] countries – the major western industrial democracies – were
going to become more sophisticated producers of goods and services and that
that would need to be driven by a more highly educated workforce than had
been the case hitherto, where we nourished some fairly traditional profes­
sions and left it largely at that.

(BPA2)

A further and related way of framing these matters of university entry involved
the exclusion of some discourses and their speakers from policy agendas. This
strategy of dislocation sought to represent some discourses as irrelevant. In this
vein, notice how the politician in the following extract portrays the efforts of the Queensland National Party as ‘too little, too late’:

Ahern [the National Party Premier of Queensland from 1988 to 1989] -- who did have a genuine interest in education -- when he became Premier he made a last despairing effort, but it was too late. In the budget immediately prior to the ‘89 election, which meant it came out in September, he made a big play for education but, of course, it was too late. They’d had 32 years prior to that and they hadn’t done it [commit State funds to secure additional university places]. He was genuine. I don’t think he was doing it just for political gain. He was a guy who had a university education himself and had an interest, but it was too late.

(PPA1)

Other strategies included authoritative claims by policy actors to jurisdiction in policy production matters. In a context where Australian universities are entities created by State legislation, there were interesting interactions with federal government bureaucrats who made various claims to their overarching importance. Their claim was often grounded in a:

rail gauge logic. If you want trains to run from one State to another, they are more efficient if they’re on a standard gauge. Well, if you want people to be able to move as skilled labour across the country, it’s more efficient if the educational infrastructure is common.

(BPA1)

A final example illustrates how formal and informal contexts of policy production were also strategically used to achieve certain ends and how they could be restricted to specific policy actors. It also provides an example of the relations between policy actors who are differently licensed to participate in the policy production process. As one federal bureaucrat commented with regard to one agenda setting event:

The agreement was [reached as a result of] political pressure from [the Queensland Premier]. Now, I wasn’t party to that discussion personally. I only know the way in which it was vented, but there was just a lot of heat put on to do with the need to provide for certain marginal seats in Queensland. This is not atypical government activity, nor is it necessarily wrong.

(BPA1)

I should explain, before I move on, some apparent differences that arise in these illustrations between how policy archaeology in this account deals with policy actors and how Scheurich and Foucault deal with them. Scheurich (1994: 314), for example, recognizes his ‘debt to critical theory’ and its influence in his
rendition of policy archaeology, although without giving 'centre stage to the conscious actions of social agents' as in other critical work. Perhaps here he interacts too closely with Foucault (see Scheurich 1994: 297), for archaeology in Foucault's hands is purposely devoid of conscious subjects. In the policy archaeology outlined above, however, I have not been interested in a subjective analysis of policy actors but in their objectification. That is, what is important to uncover is not so much who speaks but what is spoken, what positions it is spoken from, and how this is mediated by the speaking positions of others; an architecture of policy positions. Moreover, this is not dissimilar to the interests of critical theorists who have long been sceptical of 'great man' theories of policy production. In this sense, an interest in policy actors is not an interest in authorship but in vocality. To avoid an archaeology of policy actors is to see only that policy problems are constructions without fully understanding the conditions of their construction.

Policy genealogy

A third lens with which to analyse policy could be termed policy genealogy, which has at heart an interest in the particulars of temporary policy settlements — the 'modalities of power' (Davidson 1986: 224) — an appropriate foil to policy archaeology's interest in policy settlement parameters. Indeed, it is genealogy that enables insight into policy 'realizations' that are defined by (archaeological) rules of their formation (Foucault 1972: 207). This should not be taken to mean the discovery of simple continuities between past and present, and parameters and particulars, for 'genealogy seeks out discontinuities where others found continuous development' (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1986). Policy genealogy, then, is not convinced by analyses of policy production explained by 'bounded rationality' (Simon 1960) or 'incrementalism' achieved through 'partisan mutual adjustment' (Lindblom 1959). Certainly, it asks (1) how policies change over time, but it also seeks to determine (2) how the rationality and consensus of policy production might be problematized and (3) how temporary alliances are formed and reformed around conflicting interests in the policy production process. Intentionally, 'what emerges out of this is something one might call a genealogy, or rather a multiplicity of genealogical researches, a painstaking rediscovery of struggles together with the rude memory of their conflicts' (Foucault 1994: 22).

The explorations below of diversified-entry policy in Australian higher education are more sporadic in their representations than those above and are offered in the form of descriptive and analytical vignettes, informed by interviews with policy actors described above. There is not the same impetus in policy genealogy to present a sequential account that weaves itself through an analysis of strategies of negotiation. In part, this is because the broad narratives of higher education entry have already been advanced through its historiography and archaeology, but it also reflects genealogy's different emphases. That is, the delineation here of negotiation strategies is focused on a particular dimension of the Australian higher education entry settlement and on the encapsulation of these strategies in 'local' specific knowledges.
The research disclosed six strategies in the negotiation of settlement particulars developed from the data: strategies of trading; bargaining; arguing; stalling; manoeuvring and lobbying. While their separations imply a certain discreeteness, they are more cogently understood as interrelated. For instance, a certain amount of stalling can be exercised in the process of bargaining, lobbying can involve a degree of trading and argument, while a strategic manoeuvre might involve several strategies of negotiation. Each of these strategies is illustrated in turn.

Trading: negotiating the exchange of interests

[one policy maker] would come to the Reference Committee and she would listen to them and then she would say, ‘No, I don’t like that, I won’t do that’... [but] she’s a very good operator, because at the same time, when she is strong and makes her position, she’ll tend to give a bit of ground somewhere else. So, she doesn’t alienate people, or there’s a minimum of that.

(BPA1)

Bargaining: negotiating the moderation of interests

we went out publicly and got the school leaver targets back because the [Federal] Government was getting hit over the head with the huge retention increases to Year 12 -- social pressure from parents and kids -- and the universities themselves had argued with the Government that they needed to expand the sector in order to accommodate the Year 12 increases. So we thought at least on that we could hold them, so we included these school leaver targets. Then they came back to [us to] say by using them we were denying mature age access.

(AUA6)

Arguing: negotiating the persuasion of interests

We had a lot of big fights about important things... I tried very hard to talk them into one form of scaling -- I tried really hard -- and if you read Maxwell’s argument (the first appendix) you can see why I couldn’t and anyone who wants to get rid of one form of scaling, has to answer Maxwell’s argument. And that’s why it’s there as the first appendix [in the policy document].

Stalling: delaying the negotiation of interests

one of the sources of greatest frustration for me and for this Board all through the early 80s was the fact that we could never ever get any dialogue with the Federal government. It was a stone wall... I went to Canberra on a number of occasions and interviewed numbers of different people. ... They’d always be interviewed off the record, particularly if they were senior public servants. Never on the record. ... We believed that Queensland was
being given a raw deal in terms of allocation of places and funds and all the rest of it.

(IA7)

Manoeuvring: negotiating the circumvention of interests

one group who'll be pushing it is the Commonwealth, again because it'll get them off this policy hook about shifting load. If they can say, 'Well, anyone can apply anywhere and go anywhere easily and there are no formal barriers to that', then that gets them a bit off that policy hook that they really need to put political pressure on Victoria to get rid of places. So they'll be supporting it. But the other bunch that are supporting it -- this is what makes me really cross -- is the bloody Directors of Admission Centres because they can become a national empire, you know.

(BPA4)

Lobbying: negotiating the coalition of interests

imbibe all this macro stuff about the economic environment and we construct rationales that are influential in those terms. Now, a lot of it's unresearched and untested, but there's no doubt that we argue for certain things in terms of what we describe as perceived economic advantage. And then you also try to create a coalition of interests with what you know to be the Minister's personal interests...[S]ome ministers are better than others at principles and policy broadly and some are much more framed by personal experiences and understandings.

(BPA4)

Conclusions

Reflecting on the use of these methods of doing critical policy sociology, there seem a number of observations worth making. First, if we were to organize these methods in a triangular relationship -- and I am as yet unsure about the wisdom of doing so -- interests in 'policy' seem to gravitate towards policy historiography whereas interests in 'policy production' (understood broadly as both formulation and implementation, see Gale 1994a) tend towards policy genealogy. Moreover, interests in both policy and policy production seem accommodated within policy archaeology. Similarly, in the utilization of data -- and I should stress that this is a specific observation of my own research into the production of Australian higher education entry policy -- doing policy historiography seemed to rely more on documentary and statistical data whereas policy genealogy required the data produced through semi-structured interview. Again, policy archaeology drew fairly evenly on both of these data.

A second set of observations concern what, how, and why questions of policy (Kenway 1990; Taylor et al. 1997; Gale 1999a) and, although not absolute,
their relations between the respective interests of policy historiography, policy genealogy and policy archaeology. Similarly, and within the context of my research discussed above, policy historiography seems disposed to providing an overall account of temporary policy settlements whereas policy archaeology enables a detailing of the parameters of these settlements and policy genealogy its particulars. But I should caution that I do not mean to signal completion, having found the perfect combination of policy methods to unravel all policy matters. They are merely what I found useful and plausible in my questioning of and theorizing influences in the production of higher education entry policy in Australia. I could imagine other methods; policy narratology, for example, with its interests in text, story, and fabula (see Bal 1997), could be another worth pursuing to discern how narratives (both policy and policy analysis) are ordered and arranged. These, of course, are early thoughts and will need further exploration as will the policy methods outlined above.

Notes

1 Such comparisons cast doubt over the value of ‘analysis of’ and ‘analysis for’ (Gordon et al. 1977; Kenway 1990: 5–6) distinctions in policy work or Hammersley’s (1994) more general three ideal–typical models of the research–practice relationship in policy analysis.

2 In archaeology and genealogy the emphases are somewhat different. Both foreground a history of the present or a contemporary history, although in archaeology a history of the past appears absent whereas in genealogy there is recognition of continuities and discontinuities between past and present.

3 I suspect there is now a new crisis in higher education entry that reads something like: ‘Australia cannot afford to maintain universities at current (academic, numeric and financial) levels. Besides which, a university education is more of a personal benefit than a public one and, therefore, individuals should contribute (in part and/or in full) to its cost.’ Settling this crisis seems to revolve around principles inspired by the market that, to some degree, have displaced or at least backgrounded issues of merit and have reworked matters of social justice.

4 When referencing the comments of interviewees, the acronyms PPA, BPA, IA and AUA are used throughout to protect individuals’ anonymity while also giving the reader a sense of the ‘vocalities’ of interviewees with respect to entry policy in Australian higher education.

5 Throughout this paper, a distinction is made between: ‘State’ (first letter capitalized), which refers to one territory in a federation of territories that constitute a nation, as in ‘the State of Queensland’; and ‘state’ (without capitalization), which refers to a nation’s collective political governance, as in ‘the Australian state’.

References

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