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Policy Entrepreneurs and the Academic Establishment: Truth and Values in Social Controversies[1]

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BACKGROUND

The years of 1994 and 1995 were extraordinary for Charles Murray in terms of the attention and influence his research enjoyed. First, his highly controversial book, *The Bell Curve*, co-authored with the late Richard Herrnstein (1994), sold over 500,000 copies and was reviewed in more than 1,500 articles in the public and academic press. Second, his theories on the effects of government support for the poor dominated discussions of welfare reform in Washington. Specifically, his assertion—most completely developed in *Losing Ground* (1984)—that social welfare programs caused rather than alleviated poverty became the received wisdom on much of Capitol Hill.

Although 1994 and 1995 were banner years for Charles Murray, most academics were less than thrilled with his success. The vast majority of reviews of *The Bell Curve* by academics, as well as by others, were overwhelmingly negative. Scholars argued that the research in the book was severely flawed and its assertions racist.[2]

Many academics were also quite disturbed by Murray's influence over welfare reform and the unwillingness of Congress to consider seriously the findings of mainstream research in their efforts to reform welfare. *Looking Before We Leap: Social Science and Welfare Reform* (Weaver and Dickens 1995), a key paper published by The Brookings Institution with contributions by a number of academic economists, stridently argued at

length that most of the policy reforms being considered were almost sure to fail given what social science had learned from previous research.

In our view (though many academics might not acknowledge it), these events of 1994 and 1995 not only represent a high point for Murray but a drubbing or thrashing of academic social science. Despite its vast outpouring of criticism, academic social science was unable to discredit Murray's research effectively or to limit his influence on Capitol Hill. Given the prominence of his critics, and the several decades of research by top scholars attacking his arguments, a comparison to David's victory over Goliath seems apt.

Murray's success points to a broader phenomenon—the rise of what Paul Krugman (1994) has termed the policy entrepreneur. These are usually individuals who, like Murray, are not academics. They are sponsors of particular intellectual positions or frames that define for some policy area what is wrong and how it could be corrected. In an entrepreneurial fashion, they promote and disseminate their favored policy solution.

As Murray's success evidences, policy entrepreneurs now challenge the influence of conventional academic social science in the policy process. Traditionally, academic social science has seen itself as *the* purveyor of knowledge. As the events of 1994 and 1995 demonstrate, there is outside competition for this role.

The obvious question is why isn't social science able to discredit Charles Murray, or policy entrepreneurs more generally, in the public arena? Numerous explanations could be given.[3] Here we consider four.

First, there is the appearance in the last few decades of a wide variety of extra-academic institutions that support social science research—think tanks, as well as social science-oriented publishers who are unconnected to a university. The importance of these institutions is that they allow the policy entrepreneurs, if they choose, to avoid the review procedures of the academy.

Second, policy entrepreneurs often succeed when social scientists do not have viable explanations. In *Peddling Prosperity*, Paul Krugman (1994) argues that we simply do not have an adequate explanation for why economic growth dropped precipitously in the 1970s in the United States. As a result, we have seen the rise of advocates of industrial policy on the left and supply side economics on the right peddling policy prescriptions under the pretense of having an explanation for the decline in economic growth. Policy makers and, more general, the public require answers. Policy entrepreneurs are only too happy to respond by providing their favorite solutions.

Third, the broader public may be unfamiliar with or fail to understand much academic research. Paul Krugman (1996) in his recent book, *Pop Internationalism*, contends that the reasons for the public's lack of understanding of good social science are that most social scientists are not committed to communicating the results of their research to the broader public, many academic scholars are poor writers, and much of the research is quite technical.

Fourth, in some cases social science simply may not have done the research needed to rebut the arguments of policy entrepreneurs. In a review of *The Bell Curve*, Doug Massey (1995) argued that the past failure of social scientists to do research on sensitive topics such as I.Q. and its effects on social and economic success allowed Herrnstein and Murray to make extraordinary claims without having to contend with contradictory evidence.

We explore each of these propositions in more detail below. We believe that although these are necessary components of an explanation of social science's failure to defeat policy entrepreneurs in specific instances, they are not sufficient. In order to adequately understand social science's ineffectiveness, it is necessary to examine traditional assumptions about how social science and public policy interrelate. Specifically, we question the widely held assumption that social science should be considered the authoritative source of knowledge for policy decision making. Furthermore, we challenge the traditional, highly rationalized model of the relation between social science and policy making, where social science's role is simply to take goals as given and examine efficient and effective methods for realizing them.

To further explore these ideas, we use the controversies surrounding two of Murray's books—*The Bell Curve*, written with Herrnstein, and *Losing Ground*. We also look back further to two precursors—the controversy associated with the Moynihan report published in 1965 and the I.Q. controversy which was precipitated by the publication of Arthur Jensen's 1969 article in the *Harvard Educational Review* and Richard Herrnstein's 1971 *Atlantic Monthly* article.

Our purposes are several. We investigate the adequacy of the four above explanations for why social science has been ineffective in counteracting the positions of policy entrepreneurs. In addition, we examine what these controversies reveal regarding traditional assumptions about the role of social science and policy. Our contention is that the current understanding of the relationship between social science and policy formation is misconstrued, both in terms of what the relationship is and what it ought to be. These controversies provide a window for explaining our position.

We start by considering the traditional concept of science as the community responsible for the production and control of the knowledge that underpins the policy process. We discuss how the development and presence of extra-academic institutions has allowed for the rise of a new class of scholars and policy entrepreneurs who operate outside this community and as a result are not bound by its rules. We then use this analysis

explain, at least partially, the academic reaction to *The Bell Curve*. We employ the results of this investigation to examine Massey's (1995) claim that social science has in the past suppressed research on sensitive issues.

We then turn to the claim that social science should be authoritative with respect to the public's definition of knowledge. The traditional view that it is problematic for social science to communicate its acquired knowledge. We review the history of the knowledge utilization movement and the reincarnation of its themes in the work of Paul Krugman (1994, 1996). The key assumption in this perspective is that social science should be authoritative.

Next we discuss the actual tentativeness of social scientific truth and we examine three different aspects. First, as Krugman has argued, there are questions that social science does not have answers to. Authoritative truth does not exist. Second, social science can change its mind. Social science's changing views on the effect of growing up in a single-parent household illustrate this. Third, when there are multiple causes or factors associated with a phenomenon, there is always the difficult problem of assessing the relative importance of each. If truth is multiple, which truth is most important?

If social science truth is not absolute, then other factors may, and should, influence policy decisions. We must confront the issue of values. Building on the work of James March (1972), we argue that the public may support a position as much because of its justness or moral implications as its factual validity. When social science truth is only tentative, there is potentially a tradeoff between our belief in a position's validity and its moral attractiveness. Given that truth is not absolute, this tradeoff is both necessary and appropriate.

To understand what makes a position morally attractive we turn to work by Mark Moore (1995). Although the general problem is beyond the scope of this paper, we argue that Moore's ideas on the "relational" basis of policies provide a useful way for understanding the public attractiveness of Murray's ideas about the negative impact of social welfare on poverty and dependency.

In order to assess the applicability of our ideas, we examine Clinton's ill-fated welfare reform efforts, focusing on David Ellwood's (1996) recent experience as one of the three key operatives. The essential problem was not a failure of social science.

SCIENCE AS COMMUNITY

Since the writing of Pierce at the end of nineteenth century (Pierce 1992), there has been a consensus in science that truth is reached by following the norms and rules of scientific method and that this process is to be judged by the community of academic inquirers. Knowledge,

then, is what the community agrees upon. It is an ideal which is pursued but never realized. When the community changes its mind, the definition of truth is altered. This conception of scientific knowledge is as valid today as when Pierce formulated it.

The scientific community does more than just define what knowledge is. It also defines what avenues of research are legitimate and worth pursuing. Certain topics are designated important and worthy of research support. Others are deemed irrelevant or intellectual dead ends.[4]

This conception of a scientific community is imbedded in the institutions and processes of the academy. Tenure and promotion are vehicles for ensuring that only what the community considers good and worthwhile research is rewarded. Peer-review journals are critical mechanisms for sifting out the good research from the bad. The funding decisions of the National Science Foundation and National Institutes for Health, the principal sources of research support for social sciences, are made by peer-review panels consisting of other academics, ensuring that only "worthy" research is supported.

Is *The Bell Curve* social science? Upon initially examining *The Bell Curve*, it would be difficult to conclude that it is anything else. It is long, full of tables, statistical analyses, footnotes, and a lengthy list of references. The text contains extensive discussions of different literatures pointing to the strengths and deficiencies in different work. In their discussion of I.Q., in particular, Herrnstein and Murray go to great lengths to discuss different thinking on mental ability and in Piercian fashion describe the consensus position.

Why then has the reception of *The Bell Curve* by academics been so extraordinarily negative? We believe there are three reasons. First, most academic reviewers believe it is bad social science, with some arguing that it represents a type of scientism in which the authors begin with a set of preconceived ideas and search for empirical evidence to support their arguments, ignoring evidence that does not. Among other things, reviewers have complained about *The Bell Curve*'s biased reporting of findings, the quality of data analysis, and non sequiturs in the authors' arguments. The vast majority of academics who reviewed *The Bell Curve* have declared that it represents bad research and have rejected its assertions about the dominant role of intelligence in determining social and economic success.

Second, and more important for our analysis, *The Bell Curve* is not a product of the scientific process described above. *The Bell Curve* did not undergo substantial prior peer review. Its principal results were not previously published by its authors in professional journals. The acknowledgements are written to give the impression that a number of top academics reviewed the results. From what we can tell, this was a sham. One of us (Winship) was asked by Herrnstein to review pieces of this

analysis—particularly the core of the book, Section II, which presents most of the new empirical analysis. The analysis was in its very early stages and Winship indicated that there were significant issues the authors needed to deal with. Few if any of Winship's more critical comments were taken seriously. Much to his surprise, Winship found out a few months later that the book had been finished and sent to press. Others had similar experiences (Neal 1995; Heckman 1995b). As Goldberger and Manski (1995) forcefully argue in their very negative review, most academics believe that a scholar should not go public with research findings until the results have stood the test of extensive academic peer review. In writing *The Bell Curve*, Herrnstein and Murray chose to circumvent this process.

Third, it is clear that many academics see Herrnstein and Murray's line of inquiry, with its focus on I.Q. and genetically based differences, as illegitimate. Academics have been as likely to argue that the book is racist as to argue that it represents bad science. The most ardent cases against Herrnstein and Murray have been those which identified *The Bell Curve* with a long line of eugenic-based arguments (Lane 1994; Reed 1994; Kamin 1995). The essence of the older eugenics argument is that in the interest of improving mankind, it is necessary to suppress the reproduction of the unfit. However, the dilemma is that the reproductive rate of capable and upper class individuals is much lower than that of lower income and less capable people. No country has been prepared to develop a radical strategy for dealing with this uniform pattern.[5]

We leave aside the question of whether *The Bell Curve* represents good or bad social science. Many others have already provided answers, and this question is not important to our argument. The question that is relevant is how research is done outside of the academy and the implications of such work for the established academy.[6]

The community of academic scholars does not now, and perhaps never will, constitute a hegemonic class. There are important think tanks on the left and the right that provide a locus for research outside of the academy. The liberal institutions—Brookings and the Urban Institute—came first. The last couple of decades have seen the emergence of a wide span of conservative centers of thought—the American Enterprise Institute, Heritage Foundation, Cato, and the Manhattan Institute (Blumenthal 1986). In addition, foundations both liberal—Ford, Rockefeller—and conservative—Bradley, Olin, Smith-Richardson—both directly and through these think tanks have become important supporters of research that does not have to undergo academic peer review.

The importance of these extra-academic institutions is that they allow policy entrepreneurs, if they so choose (and some do not), to circumvent the research standards set within the community of inquirers of the university.[7] They do so because they are linked to a different system of accountability for the products they produce. The research could be financed by a philanthropic foundation or from general funds of sponsoring think tanks. In all of these cases, accountability potentially follows different standards than those of the academic community.

These extra-academic institutions owe their allegiance to the mandate of the specific organizational settings in which they are located, even though their "primary purpose is to improve the process and content of public policies" (Weiss 1992, 14) by offering advice to government. There is a great variety of such organizations. Weiss (1992) studied fourteen of the best known policy analysis organizations outside of the university but inside government or non-profit think tanks. However, the study excluded consulting firms; for-profit research organizations like MacKenzie, which do both consulting and empirical research; advocacy organizations like the Children's Defense Fund; and international organizations like the World Bank, Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

There has been a growth of these extra-academic institutions in recent years, and they play an important, perhaps major, role in the way that the policy community makes use of social science knowledge. Understanding how social science is carried out in these new communities of scholars who depend for their financing on Requests for Proposals from government and non-profit organizations, and on the mandate and resources of the organizations in which they do their research, is crucial for getting at the interplay between social science and policy.

The subject is complicated because the traditional academic communities and these more entrepreneurial efforts are not simply two distinct domains separated by the quality of the research product, value neutrality and the use of peer-review procedures. There is a continuum and not a simple dichotomy. Institutions like Rand, Brookings and the Urban Institute conform closely to the standards of research followed, or at least held as an ideal, by the community of inquirers in academic settings. Academic scholars, particularly after they have tenure, may choose to publish outside of professional journals in order to avoid the control of the academy, though their salaries may suffer as a result. Some research is carried out by large mission oriented organizations inside or outside of government, and still other research is created to promote an explicit ideology on the left or on the right. Many of the products of research carried out in extra-academic settings lead to papers which are published in high ranking academic journals. Conversely, academics commonly publish paper in outlets other than professional journals that could not survive the scrutiny of peer review.

But there are differences. We believe extra-academic institutions share certain common features, in particular the tension between research encumbered with qualifications, technical descriptions, and theoretical rel-

evance, and operationally useful statements that have a clear and accessible policy message. To illustrate these points consider the following comments about research at the World Bank (James 1996):

> Academic research can often legitimately be inconclusive and does not always have to lead to policy recommendations. In contrast World Bank research always has to be relevant to the concerns of client countries. It is crucial to state the major policy message that comes out of the research in a way that can be understood and used by policy makers. Even after the research is completed policy choices have to be made that involve tradeoffs and these depend on both value judgments and the findings of research.

In general, research in extra-academic settings tends to emphasize 1) a clear policy position consistent with the organization's goals or mission, 2) a strong commitment to dissemination as reflected in a readiness to invest resources toward this end, and 3) the use of evidence for persuasion about the prior policy positions—in the example above, "limiting the role of public pensions." The three points are related and lead to a concern with the reception of the findings in the relevant policy community. Evidence alone is unlikely to lead to a policy position, since the same evidence can be interpreted from the perspective of different normative positions. We develop these themes later in the paper.

What becomes clear is how difficult the task is of demarcating the boundaries of the impressive variety of institutional settings which carry on a blurred mixture of value-neutral or advocacy-related studies of issues of public policy. But the single characteristic of these organizations that we want to call attention to is that, with some notable exceptions, they allow researchers, if they so choose, to avoid the control and review procedures of the academy.[8]

Paralleling these extra-academic research support structures has been the development of nonuniversity-based journals and publishing houses. In particular, there are now journals such as *The Public Interest* and publishing houses such as The Free Press, publisher of *The Bell Curve*, that publish the research of thinkers at conservative think tanks. Of course, the liberal institutions have their equivalent outlets such as The New Press, the journal *Social Policy*, or the more recent *American Prospect*. Non-academic presses such as The Free Press, Basic, and Norton often publish a mix of conservative and liberal authors. What is important about them is not their political orientation, but that they do not follow the same peer-review standards that exist in the academic community. As a result they provide a venue for those either inside or outside the university to publish work while avoiding the strictures of the academy.

This extra-academic structure has created the opportunity for policy entrepreneurs to "spend a great deal of time and effort disseminating their reports through a variety of channels to reach those in a position to put the results to work. A premium is on clear writing, brevity, good graphics, multiple messages . . . and personal contact and persuasion. If they are to influence policy, a necessary . . . first step is to see that their message is heard" (Weiss 1992, ix).

To understand Murray's (and Herrnstein's) success we need in part to recognize that the support for his research was primarily funded through conservative think tanks. The American Enterprise Institute provided primary support for *The Bell Curve*, The Manhattan Institute for *Losing Ground*. The Free Press not only published *The Bell Curve* but promoted it heavily. It is highly unlikely that any top university press would have been willing to publish it.

Academics condemned *The Bell Curve* essentially for discussing forbidden topics. *The Bell Curve* was not Herrnstein's first foray into the public debate about I.Q., genetics, and race. In 1971 he wrote an article for *The Atlantic Monthly* titled "I.Q." The article's major focus was not on racial differences in I.Q. and their possible genetic basis. However, as with *The Bell Curve*, this quickly became the flash point of reaction. Herrnstein became involved in a wide-ranging public controversy on race, genetics and I.Q. He was not only attacked in print but his public speeches and classes were frequently picketed.

Although no official score was kept, most observers would probably say that Herrnstein lost this battle badly. Perhaps the most cited refutation of Herrnstein is Stephen Jay Gould's 1981 book *The Mismeasurement of Man*. If one rereads Herrnstein's earlier article after reading *The Bell Curve*, the overlap in the arguments is startling. *The Bell Curve* clearly was Herrnstein's attempt to refight an earlier lost battle.

One of the consequences of the earlier I.Q. controversy is that many social scientists turned away from research on these topics. The boom in cognitive psychology drew away the vast majority of psychologists, leaving behind a die-hard group of true believers, psychometricians who by definition define their professional status as scholars of I.Q. With the exception of Christopher Jencks (1979), an academic who seems never to shy away from public controversy, sociologists avoided the topic. Economists did carry out a considerable amount of work on mental ability. Their interest, however, was primarily in adequately controlling for ability in order to obtain an unbiased estimate of the monetary returns to education. (See Ashenfelter and Rouse 1995 for a review of this literature.)

Several commentators on *The Bell Curve* have argued that the lack of research on the importance of I.Q. to social and economic success substantially contributed to the success of *The Bell Curve*. Doug Massey (1995, 747), a prominent sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania and

he leading authority on race and residential segregation, is clearest on his point:

> The discipline of sociology has a lot to answer for, and one of the things I lay at its feet is *The Bell Curve*. If sociologists had been more forthright in studying human intelligence over the past two decades, Herrnstein and Murray might never have written this book, or at least they would have produced a very different sort of work.

lassey (1995, 747) then discusses how, instead of confronting politically ensitive issues that arose in the 1960s and 1970s with rigorous research, ociologists not only avoided these topics, but sought to make them non-iscussible. He makes this argument with clarity and force:

> The situation would have been bad enough if that is all they did, but many also sought to ensure that *no one* [italics in the original] would investigate such thorny and divisive issues. In a variety of ways, the field actively discouraged the examination of social differences with respect to culture and intelligence. For those who were slow to catch on, object lessons were made of Oscar Lewis and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. . . .

What Massey is explicitly describing is the determination by a community of inquirers of what are and what are not worthy and legitimate questions or social science (for related arguments see Winship 1994; Genovese 1994). Herrnstein and Murray are quite clear in the Preface to *The Bell urve* that they have written a book that many individuals, academics and otherwise, will view as quite politically incorrect. Hundreds of reviewers lso took every opportunity to drive this point home.

Is Massey right that the suppression of research allowed *The Bell Curve* o be written? It is certainly impossible to counter the arguments of policy ntrepreneurs with research if the research has not been done. As we vill show below in our discussion of *Losing Ground*, however, the prob-em is even more complicated.

SCIENCE AS AUTHORITY

The traditional model of social science's role with respect to both pub-ic discourse and policy reform is that it should be authoritative (Lasswell 1971). This ideal assumes a highly rationalized production function. Knowledge is produced in the university, and the product of rational ruth is then packaged and distributed to the community of policy mak-rs. The process is analogous to the production of any product. Effective

use requires a process of dissemination. The use of knowledge is not automatic or self-realizing. An intervening process is required.

In the 1960s the question of knowledge utilization was of major concern in universities. This was a period of expansion for social science research, and there was much frustration among researchers, who felt that the products of their scientific inquiry were not being used in the policy community.

A special institution at the University of Michigan was created to explore this question. The institute was located in the Center for Social Survey Research and was known as CRUSK (The Center for Research on the Utilization of Scientific Knowledge). Ronald Havelock was an influential scholar who formulated the model of knowledge-dissemination-utilization (Havelock 1969). He argued that the missing link between knowledge and utilization was the dissemination process. What was needed were linkage agents who could translate the arcane language of social science into an understandable form for potential users. A substantial social science industry developed to address how knowledge utilization could be promoted. It became a field of study in its own right. Two journals were created that dealt with knowledge creation and diffusion. Several books were written on the linkage agents, and knowledge utilization became a subfield in several professional associations. (For a detailed analysis, see Weiss 1996.)

In a recent book on international trade, Paul Krugman (1996) raised these questions anew. For Krugman, the problem is how there can be effective communication between the community of inquirers and the community of practice—that is, those engaged in social action and in doing policy. Krugman identifies the problem as one where "real economics" provides a different view from what the community of practice considers "conventional wisdom."

Krugman identified three problems in the communication gap between "real economics" and "conventional wisdom." The first is that economics is an inherently difficult subject to master. The ideas of the discipline are subtle and complicated. However, even though the subject is complicated, economics is certainly not beyond the grasp of the community of practice and the general public.

The second problem is that most economists are primarily concerned with the community of inquiry and have very little interest in communicating with the general public: "A substantial share of the blame . . . surely falls on international economists themselves who have not tried very hard to communicate with a broader public" (Krugman 1996, 14). Essentially, economists write for other economists. The language is technical and beyond the grasp of the community of practice.

The third problem is that even when economists are interested in communicating, they are handicapped by a lack of skill in writing simply and

clearly. This is precisely the same diagnosis that developed in the knowledge assessment literature of the 1960s. There are those, however, who can write effectively. They are often found in and supported by extra-academic institutions. They are the policy entrepreneurs. While they may be more concerned with promoting a favorite policy prescription than with communicating economic truth and knowledge, they still communicate effectively. In the field of economics, there are supply-siders (who favor a limited role for government) on the political right and strategic traders (supporters of government intervention through industrial policy) on the political left. The position of these entrepreneurs helps create conventional wisdom and reinforce the substantial divide between the community of inquiry and the community of practice.

Policy entrepreneurs are defined not by where they are located but by their function as linkage agents. They include journalists, researchers in think tanks, and even professors in universities. Unfortunately, they do not necessarily have a deep understanding of the scientific knowledge they are trying to transmit. Policy entrepreneurs also fail because they do not provide an adequate linkage role, a result of their interest in peddling solutions. Cohen and March called this the "garbage can theory" of policy making—a commitment not to solving a problem but to promoting a solution. The garbage can reverses the logic of problem solving into the logic of answers in search of questions (Cohen and March 1974, 82).

Essential to Krugman's position is his belief that academic economists understand the truth about how international trade works. The theory of international trade has developed over a long period of time, having its roots in Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage. According to Krugman, academic economists have the correct understanding of international trade, and "the obsession with competitiveness" by others is deeply misguided. For Krugman, policy entrepreneurs are peddlers of false theories.

We are not in a position to judge the reasonableness of Krugman's claims about the certainty of economics' understanding of trade. However, generalizing such claims of certainty to social science as a whole seems unreasonable. First, science is by design a process of contested truth. Near-universal agreement on theory and facts is far from the norm. Respectful disagreement and refutation are at the heart of the scientific process. Thus, at a fundamental level there is a deep contradiction between social science's attempts to make authoritative claims about truth to the external world and its internal processes of contested assertions. Second, as we will now discuss, in most areas social science knowledge is simply not well enough developed for claims that it is the purveyor of truth to be credible.

THE TENTATIVENESS OF TRUTH

In *Peddling Prosperity*, Paul Krugman (1994) gives an explanation for the success of policy entrepreneurs that is quite different from—and in some respects contradicts—that provided in *Pop Internationalism*. He argues that on occasion social science does not have adequate, much less authoritative, answers to policy questions. In *Peddling Prosperity*, the question he considers is: Why did economic growth drop so precipitously in the 1970s? His answer is that we simply do not know. In the political arena "don't know" answers are unacceptable. Policy requires action. Uncertain, directionless answers are of no use in the political forum. When there is a knowledge vacuum, policy entrepreneurs are ready to offer simple answers that are accessible to the intuition.

There is an analogous situation in terms of social science's understanding of changes in black marital rates. Between 1970 and 1990, black marriage rates fell precipitously (Cherlin 1992; Ellwood and Crane 1990). This, plus declining fertility of married blacks, is the major explanation for why the portion of African-American children born out of wedlock rose from less than 30 percent in the 1960s to nearly 70 percent today. But why have marriage rates fallen?

On the left, William Julius Wilson (1987) has argued that a sharp drop in the number of young eligible black males accounts for the decline. Models that have estimated the effect of changes in employment suggest that it can explain, at best, only about twenty percent of the trend (Mare and Winship 1991; Ellwood and Crane 1990). Although being employed has a large effect on the likelihood of a young man marrying, the observed drop in the number of employed males is not nearly large enough to explain the considerable decline in marriage rates. Furthermore, marriage rates have fallen nearly as fast for employed black men as they have for black men generally (Jencks 1992).

On the right, Murray has claimed that the rise in welfare support explains the decline in marriage rates. There are several problems with Murray's argument. Foremost is that welfare payments fell by over 40 percent during the 1970s and 1980s. Murray's (1993) own academically published research indicates that for blacks there is no relationship between welfare payments and the rise in out of wedlock births. We discuss Murray's hypothesis at greater length in the subsection on values.

A third possible explanation, offered by Orlando Patterson (1995), involves changing gender relations in the African-American community. His argument is that role expectations of African-American men and women have sharply diverged in recent decades, making it difficult if not impossible for potential partners to agree on what constitutes a marriage. Evi-

dence to test this line of argument is difficult to come by. At present, perhaps the best answer is simply that we don't know.

Agnosticism with respect to a particular question represents the extreme form of the tentativeness of truth. Social science is also known to hold a position firmly and later change its mind, as illustrated by the Moynihan report (Moynihan 1965) and its surrounding controversy. Written when Moynihan was Assistant Secretary of Labor, the report argued that in the early 1960s the relation between unemployment and out-of-wedlock black births had broken down. Despite the rising economic prosperity of the 1960s, the number of black children being born out of wedlock soared. Moynihan went on to argue for a link between the growing number of black female-headed families and increased social pathology in the inner city.

Initially, the reception to the Moynihan report was quite positive. President Lyndon Johnson gave a well-received policy speech at Howard University based on its findings. This, however, was also the time of rising black national consciousness. Black leaders came to see the report as demeaning. The psychiatrist William Ryan (1965) wrote an article for *The Nation* castigating the report for "blaming the victim." Ryan (1971) then published a book with this title. Suddenly the Moynihan report was being attacked from all quarters as inherently racist.

The controversy around the Moynihan report scared many researchers away (Wilson 1987, 1996). Some work was published. Scholars like Carol Stack (1974) in *All Our Kin* defended the black female-headed family as part of a matriarchal structure that was simply misunderstood by racist and patriarchal white American. The black family was a resilient institution that had responded admirably to the racism and oppression of white America. This line of argument, along with the rise of feminism, created a new consensus: that female-headed families, and African-American ones in particular, coupled with their extended kin network structures, were just as effective at raising children as the traditional nuclear family of white suburban America.

Today, the consensus in social science and in society in general has reversed. Sara McLanahan (Garfinkel and McLanahan 1986; McLanahan and Sandefeur 1994) has persuasively argued that growing up in a single-parent family is enormously detrimental. In an important *Wall Street Journal* op-ed piece entitled "The Coming White Underclass," Charles Murray (1995) has argued that increasing numbers of white female-headed households will lead to the same type of social pathology among whites as observed in the black community.[9] It is interesting that research comparing the outcomes of pairs of cousins—one born to a teenage mother and the other born to an adult mother—provides contradictory evidence about the negative impact of single parenting on the well-being of the child and the parent (Geronimus, Korenman, and Hillemeier, 1994). This work is almost completely ignored in public and in much social science discussion.

Truth can be tentative in a third and more subtle way. Specifically, if multiple factors contribute to some phenomenon, as is quite common in the social sciences, then there is the question of which factor or factors are most important. Mark Moore (1984) has elaborated on this. Consider the question he raises for illustrative purposes of what public policy should be pursued to reduce auto accidents. Start with the alternative theories about the causes of accidents: (1) Accidents are caused by bad drivers, some of whom were drunk while driving. The policy is to change the behavior of the driver. A social movement was spawned with this aim—Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). (2) The fault is in the way the car was built. The policy calls for safety features in the auto. Another social movement created by Ralph Nader pursued this task. (3) Still another cause could be roads, potholes, or bad intersections. Changes in highway design and maintenance are the needed remedy.

Note that each theory of causality implies a different responsible agent. The individual, the car, or the road may be responsible. Analogously, if we are talking about crime, causality may rest with the individual, the justice system, or society at large. A multi-causal explanation is perhaps to be preferred. This, however, raises the issue of the relative weight to be assigned to each factor.

Moore's analysis is important for two reasons. First, he demonstrates the intimate connection between the attribution of causality and the assignment of responsibility. The key criticism of the Moynihan report, though in our view a misplaced one, was that it appeared to assign responsibility for the condition of the African-American family to African-Americans themselves—it blamed the victim. The second key aspect of Moore's analysis is that he illustrates how the relativity of truth differs from the issue of which of two competing theories is true. If a social process is truly multi-causal as in his accident example, then one has a choice about which aspect of the theory one emphasizes. This implicitly involves a value judgment.

VALUES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

As discussed above, Massey (1995) has argued that a key reason that Herrnstein and Murray were able to write *The Bell Curve* was that social scientists in the 1970s and 1980s failed to a great extent to research the importance of I.Q. in determining economic and social success. Murray's (1984) *Losing Ground* provides an opportunity to test this hypothesis.

In a way similar to the I.Q. debate, the intellectual retreat that resulted from the Moynihan controversy gave first George Gilder (1981) and then Charles Murray (1984) the opportunity to set forth the thesis that gov-

ernment social welfare programs promote poverty and dependency instead of alleviating them. The research that might refute this assertion simply had not been done when Murray wrote *Losing Ground*.

Since the mid-1980s, however, considerable research has been carried out by top academics on the effects of welfare. This literature argues that there are three essential problems with Murray's argument: (1) During the time that out-of-wedlock pregnancies and welfare roles were rising rapidly, welfare payments in real terms were falling precipitously; (2) There appears to be no relationship across states in the level of welfare payments and the rate of out-of-wedlock births; and (3) Other Western countries have experienced the same rise in out-of-wedlock births over the last several decades, although in many of these countries social support of unwed mothers has remained relatively constant. In a recent article, Robert Moffitt (1992) summarizes the last decade of research in this area by noting that studies have found welfare payments have either no effect, or at most a very small effect, on out-of-wedlock birth rates.

The juxtaposition in this case between the views of academics and the public is dramatic. The Brookings publication *Looking Before We Leap* (Weaver and Dickens 1995) is essentially a tirade about the need for policy makers to take into account the considerable research done since *Losing Ground* when they are formulating new legislation. Yet in a recent public letter Murray (1994) states:

> it is worth recalling that my *Losing Ground* was also subjected to widespread accusations about its science and selective use of data. The conclusions on which the book was most criticized ten years ago—the failure of social programs, the economics of the welfare trap, the development of an underclass—are now conventional wisdom. It is perhaps also worth noting that, all the shrill allegations of 1984 notwithstanding, there was not even a single error of fact that needed to be corrected in the tenth anniversary edition of *Losing Ground* that recently went to press.

Thus, despite the considerable amount of research that has been done which undermines Murray's claims, he continues to enjoy considerable public influence. At least in this instance, Massey's argument that all the social scientists need to do is the research appears wrong. In the case of *Losing Ground* they did the research, yet Murray's ideas have continued to have wide public appeal.

The debates around Murray's two books, as well as the earlier Moynihan and I.Q. controversies, point to the influence of values in science. The classic treatment of science and values is Karl Mannheim's work *Ideology and Utopia* (1936). He argued that truth is interpreted through

prior held beliefs based on historical, political, and ideological positions. Hence, the position of the observer always has to be taken into account in the pursuit of truth. However, ideology intrudes and disrupts the norms of inquiry. He was optimistic that a science of policy (which he called politics) was possible, but it required that the observer rise above his ideological position. He assumed that intellectuals could reach this position.

Mannheim's work generated much criticism when it came out. It challenged science's claim to objectivity and the Marxist claim for a privileged position of the working class. For these scholars science is just like any other enterprise, with self-interest and politics being the driving forces. We do not intend to discuss this extensive literature. The claim that objectivity of any type is wholly impossible impresses us as too extreme. Although ideology and self-interest certainly are a regular part of the scientific process, the norms of replicability and peer review, if followed, allow for true progress in the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

Our interest in the relation between science and values is different. It lies in the question of what the public should view as truth if scientific truth is tentative and there are viable competing theories. We want to argue that when truth is not absolute, then it is appropriate that other aspects of a position should contribute to its attractiveness.

James March, in a thoughtful essay entitled "The Model Bias in Social Action," argued, "Independent of its truth value, a model has a justice value . . . two equally correct models may have radically different action implications and radically different moral force" (March 1972, 414). This is a powerful position that is worth examining. March asserts that when we consider social action—that is, the domain of doing and not merely thinking—there are often values to be realized in addition to truth. In some situations the truth values of our model might conflict with its justice values.

March provides a number of explicit examples of theories that are most informative. Consider three:

- Human beings aspire to power and direct their behavior primarily toward gaining a favorable power balance with respect to other people. Power is secured by offering resources, or promises of resources (e.g., support, money, respect) in exchange for acquiescence.
- Adult human behavior is understandable in its basic form as stemming primarily from experiences of early childhood.
- Things are not what they seem. Human beings are guided by a number of unconscious motives that affect their behavior in subtle ways.

March then goes on to discuss the unattractive moral implications of each of these positions: the first theory undermines the possibility of trust; the second, individual responsibility; and the third, our ability to take individuals at their word.

March's primary attack was on the rationality assumption implicit in most models of applied social science. His basic argument is that this theory is inadequate because it takes goals as given. Rational action is an elegant, beautiful theory whose propositions can be simply stated: a good policy joins "consequences systematically to objectives"; "action should be consistent with belief"; and "goals come first, and action later." Each of these propositions can be radically wrong. In the policy arena, goals can be contested or ambiguous. Our discussion below of Clinton's welfare reform plan illustrates this. Thus, in March's language there is always potential conflict among the beauty (parsimony), justice, or truth of particular positions.

Jurgen Habermas (1993) made a similar point. He argued that public policy is confronted with different practical questions in trying to answer the question, "What should we do?" When goals are known, the practical problem is making "a rational choice of means in the light of fixed purposes." There is substantial scope for rational action when we are dealing with trivial preferences. When strong preferences enter and questions of identity and meaning come to the fore, then choice is concerned with "the good and not merely the possible." How one lives a good life is primarily the sphere of ethics, not rational choice. Finally, the question of, "What should I do?" undergoes a further transformation when it concerns not only what is good for me, but how it affects other people. The concern is with the sphere of morality and justice.

Thus, practical reason has three elements—the rational, the ethical, and the moral. We typically associate the rational with the search for truth. In March's argument truth is only one value. Ethics and morality are alternative and potentially competing values that can and should enter into the choice of a policy position.

How, precisely, can we identify the values that are important in public policy? Mark Moore (1996) has developed a useful framework which suggests the beginnings of an answer. He calls his approach a relational theory. He believes that the theory provides a legal foundation for social policy based on man's relationship to each other, rather than a position of absolute rights which exist independent of obligation and responsibility. His general argument is that social policy should be grounded in social norms. We agree.

According to Moore, individuals judge a policy in part by the relations it legitimates between individuals. Moore argues that people understand social welfare in relational terms as gift giving or charity. As a result, it carries with it the implicit expectation of gratitude and reciprocity. Furthermore, there is the expectation that recipients as part of the implicit social contract embodied in this relation will abide by the norms of the broader society. The public is then deeply frustrated when they feel that welfare recipients have violated this tacit agreement.

Moore's theory appears to be widely applicable. Consider the current debate about imprisonment and its effectiveness in curtailing crime. From the perspective of Moore's theory, the public is just as likely to be concerned with what the appropriate consequences of criminal action should be as they are with the question of whether imprisonment will act as a deterrent to future criminal behavior. It is not surprising that calls from the left to reduce or abandon prison terms for drug offenses fall on deaf ears. Such propositions totally ignore the normative question of how offenders should be treated. To many members of the public it is morally reprehensible to suggest that individuals can engage in criminal activity without consequence. Below, we discuss how Moore's ideas are embedded in David Ellwood's notions that anyone who works full time should not be poor and the idea that welfare should provide a short-term safety net.

Where do relational norms come from? A plausible political theory we find attractive is that relational norms represent the consensus of active citizens who have different values. In Rawls's terminology, a democratic society is based on the principle of reasonable pluralism and a commitment to reaching consensus. In a community of pluralistic values, a political theory of justice is based on what "a substantial majority of politically active citizens freely support" (Rawls 1993). In Rawls's view, justice is a political theory of what individuals can agree on rather than a metaphysical theory based on first principles. There is no obvious ordering of what is socially preferable and no absolute normative truth that can serve as a general guide for deliberation.

In a provocative article, "The Economist vs. Madmen in Authority," Bell Sawhill (1995), former Associate Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), asserts that when there is conflict between truth and values, values will always win. Sawhill may take too extreme a position. In a world in which truth is not absolute, however, it is hardly surprising that values enter into one's choice of explanation. The importance of March's analysis is that it shows that this may actually be good. When truth is tentative, both the moral implications of a policy and the empirical validity of its assumption should be weighted. For example, if social scientists offer a theory of poverty or crime that states that individuals' behavior is determined by the structural features of their environment, precluding the possibility of moral responsibility, it is hardly surprising that the public finds it unattractive, if not totally unacceptable.

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC POLICY IN PRACTICE

The two themes that emerge from our discussion of controversies are that social science cannot be authoritative and that the search for truth uncovers tacit and explicit values. They reemerge when we consider how social science comes into play in the case of legislative reform. The question is whether social science can contribute to the development of social policy.

With this in mind, let us review the abortive effort by the Clinton administration to reform welfare. To show how the relationship of truth and the centrality of values is played out in the welfare reform case, it is useful to identify three main tasks that needed to be accomplished: problem definition, program design, and selling the program product. Design, as Ellwood (1996, 12–13) explains, must proceed simultaneously from a position of values, politics, and policies. This is another way of saying that defining a problem, solving it, and selling the solution are the challenges of policy analysis.

The first task is the definition of what is problematic in the situation and what needs to be reformed. What makes the task of naming the problem and framing the issue so difficult is the competition of partisan beliefs strongly held by influential interests.

The second task is designing an approach for dealing with the problematic situation. Designing requires not only insight about what to do, but also understanding that all action is constrained by what is taken for granted and accepted and what is considered as potentially changeable. Financial, political, and intellectual constraints are the obvious starting point for any exercise in design.

The third task is selling or persuasion. Even if one could define a problem and design a solution, there is still the task of convincing others that in a competitive world of alternative ideas this approach is the one to be accepted.

The Clinton administration's attempt at welfare reform provides a useful example of the difficulties in overcoming each of these three challenges. It also illustrates the role that truth and values play in the process. Our analysis is based largely upon David Ellwood's account as one of the three architects of Clinton's welfare reform effort (Ellwood 1996).

Ellwood describes the policy environment in which the attempted reform took place in terms of four competing frames—that is, prescriptive accounts of what is wrong with welfare and how best to correct the problem. These frames identify what is problematic from different normative perspectives. We will not elaborate on the sponsors of these different frames and the value positions they imply. Simply naming the problem and its proposed remedy is sufficient to suggest the value positions that are at stake.

The four frames are: (1) Work is a remedy for economic dependency; (2) Illegitimacy rather than dependency is the root problem, and welfare is its cause; (3) Devolution of authority from central to local government is the needed remedy to address both dependency and illegitimacy; and (4) The root cause of both these conditions is an over-generous and inefficient welfare state, and sharp budgetary cutbacks are essential.

Cutback and devolution are clearly conflicting remedies since cutbacks leave local government with fewer resources to develop flexible strategies. By contrast, the first two frames agree broadly on what is problematic, but differ on the recommended remedy.

The starting point for Clinton's program design was a strong value commitment to a two-year-and-work definition of the problem. The first step was the reframing of the basic approach to welfare. The traditional task in any welfare office is to consider the structure of welfare benefits in terms of the rules which establish who is eligible to receive the welfare package. Rather than focus on welfare as a structure of benefits, the new naming and framing of the problem reconceptualizes welfare as a process of transition. This conclusion is partly based on early empirical work (Bane and Ellwood 1994) and partly on the normative position that welfare should be limited to providing a temporary safety net for families that fall on hard times. The analytic task is to understand welfare as a transitional process; the design task is to design a program focused on the process of transition from welfare to work within a two-year period of time; the administrative task is to retrain welfare workers to focus less on eligibility and more on the transition from welfare to work.

Ellwood identified "four particularly vulnerable parts of the policy: the rigidity of two years, the need for subsidized jobs, the cost of the program, and the focus on work more than family structure." Dealing with each of these vulnerable points involved reconciling "policy soundness and political viability" (Ellwood 1996, 15). In other words, problem solving and solution selling are, in the end, one and the same task. Consider the task of design and selling in more detail.

In response to the rigidity of a two-year limit, the design was modified so that "the clock would stop for people when they were ill, if they were minors completing high school, and when they had a very young child" (Ellwood 1996, 16). The moral principle that people should work was modified in the revised design to take account of individual situations which require exceptions, on the grounds of fairness, to the norm that everyone should work at the end of two years (Jonsen and Toulmin 1988).

The issue of subsidized jobs required two pragmatic resolutions. First was an agreement with the public sector unions which were concerned that welfare recipients would displace union members from public sector jobs. The president of the largest public sector union explains, "Near as

I can tell, you want to put more welfare recipients to work on public service jobs than I have members. I find that mildly threatening" (Ellwood 1996, 18).

Second, the issue of cost led to another design change which called for slowly phasing in the work requirement for one-third of the case load and then gradually extending the requirement to the rest. The cost of the program was addressed by the principle of "saving in some areas and spending in others" (Ellwood 1996, 27). This meant getting other areas of the federal budget to cover part of the cost. "Ultimately, we found most of the money we needed, but it remained one of our most complicated and contentious issues" (26).

The focus on work rather than family structure is of particular interest in understanding Murray's role in the social policy discourse. As we have discussed, social science has been unable to provide strong evidence for any of the competing explanations for the dramatic rise in female-headed households. The left blames a lack of employment opportunities for young black males, whereas the right accuses the welfare system itself of promoting dependency. A result of this ambiguity is that it was impossible for the administration to make any authoritative claim as to what would solve the "welfare problem." Consequently, the claims for added funds were difficult to make. "If we really had a reliable and effective intervention," Ellwood asserts, "I believe it would be relatively easy to find more federal resources" (Ellwood 1996, 32).

How then could the administration design a program when there is no known solution? The answer was to design a planning strategy based on the principle of variety and selection. This involved both a strategy of experimentation and a strategy of choice. The Clinton proposal to deal with the problem of reducing teen pregnancy included the following items: "grants to 1,000 schools to create community-based programs, several large-scale demonstrations, a nation-wide clearinghouse of information, holding fathers accountable, and insisting that teen parents stay at home and stay in school if they want aid" (Ellwood 1996, 31–32).

Then there was the task of selling a design to a wider public. There is the obvious danger that the sponsor of the design will be tempted to suppress evidence which reveals fundamental weaknesses in the logic of the design. This tendency is especially reinforced in the American system, where the sponsoring agency also commissions studies.

The most dramatic recent example of suppression concerns the Negative Income Tax studies commissioned by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in the 1970s to determine whether an income guarantee would affect family structure. The study was carried out by sociologists at the Stanford Research Institute. They found that a negative income tax which guaranteed family income substantially increased divorce rates and reduced remarriage rates. HEW suppressed the findings,

which obviously threatened the viability of the negative income tax as a solution to the problem of poverty. Eventually, Congress learned about the results and independently called for testimony about the findings. The research results helped defeat the bill once the divorce results became widely known. In this example, "HEW was interested in the use of research results not primarily to frame policy, but primarily to help sell a policy already designed. This may have led to the suppression of these results which were not helpful toward this goal." When the findings came out in public, the negative income tax concept was defeated (Coleman 1984).

It is not difficult to imagine that in the course of designing the Clinton administration's welfare reform, uncovering a fundamental weakness might also lead to a suppression of evidence. Particularly vulnerable in this proposed reform is the question of job availability. This is an especially difficult problem in depressed rural areas where only a limited number of jobs are available and the idea of welfare and work in a two-year period may not be viable. Public policy has not developed an institutional form to protect against the conflict between telling the truth and promoting or selling a program design. Thus, the tasks of problem definition, design, and promotion in welfare reform show the way that truth and values interplay at each stage of the reform process, reinforcing Ellwood's observation that "values, politics and policies" are always present in program reform (Ellwood 1996, 12–13).

LESSONS LEARNED

Despite the efforts of the academic social science community to repudiate *Losing Ground* and *The Bell Curve*, these works have continued to be influential. In a new afterword to the paperback edition of *The Bell Curve*, Murray (1996, 553) gives his account of the response to the book. He might have written the same account, in a lower key, of *Losing Ground*:

> Then came the avalanche. It seems likely *The Bell Curve* will be one of the most written-about and talked-about works of social science since *The Kinsey Report* fifty years ago. Most of the published reaction was virulently hostile. The book was said to be the flimsiest kind of pseudo science. A racist screed. Designed to promote a radical political agenda. An angry book. Tainted by the work of neo-Nazis.

Returning to the question we posed at the beginning of the chapter: How can we explain academic social science's inability to discredit policy entrepreneurs such as Murray (ignoring, at least in this chapter, the va-

lidity of entrepreneurs' arguments)? There are three lessons from the reception given these books that we believe provide partial answers. None of these is new or surprising when viewed separately, but when treated as essential features of the interplay between science, politics and policy, they present an important challenge for the direction that social science takes in the future.

First, and perhaps the core lesson, is that the debate about policy is not essentially about establishing empirical validity, but rather about persuasion. "Persuasion stands as a fundamental feature of all political systems" (Lindblom 1980, 30).

If one treats persuasion as a supplement to analysis, then the role for rhetoric seems trivial. However, if persuasion redefines problem formulation, problem analysis, and problem solution, then it changes the essence of science as an autonomous domain for discovering truth. Persuasion can corrupt (a strong version) or influence (a weak interpretation) the analytic task. This interpretation of persuasion is rather radical because it changes the fundamental idea that analysis is the interpretation of evidence.

Policy entrepreneurs such as Murray explicitly understand that the process is about persuasion. They write well and with color. They appeal not just to the "facts," but to the public's common sense. *Losing Ground* is persuasive in part because the proposition that supporting women who have children out of wedlock will lead more women to have children out of wedlock seems logically transparent. Similarly, *The Bell Curve*'s arguments are compelling for many in the public, because the idea that "smart" people succeed is consistent with many individuals' personal experience.

In an environment strongly shaped by norms of persuasion, the temptation to misrepresent findings is very strong. Our earlier discussion of the Negative Income Tax illustrates this (Coleman 1984). The task is made more difficult because of the way we organize applied social science through the Request for Proposal (RFP) system, where agencies that commission analysis also use the analysis for persuasion, often bypassing peer review. Only much later in the process does critique sometimes come into play.

The second lesson concerns the issue of nondiscussibility. Why are some issues nondiscussible in academic deliberation? What seems to be involved here is a struggle over the definition of which questions the academy should be discussing and who should set the discourse agenda. When social science is viewed as autonomous and authoritative, then it claims a central role in the definition of what is problematic and what alternative resolutions should be considered. Defining the agenda of what is a permissible, acceptable issue is an important theme that emerges from our analysis of *The Bell Curve* and the Moynihan and welfare reform controversies. Social science tries to restrict the agenda, but in so doing it "impairs inquiry," to use Lindblom's evocative terminology. Policy entrepreneurs are often willing to ignore the norms of permissibility in the social science community and address questions that are of clear and deep importance to the public.

In this context Murray's role might be interpreted as alerting the social science community to the norms and values guiding public opinion. Murray brings public opinion to a reluctant academic world with an independent agenda. A provocative article in *The Boston Globe* makes the following case: "In the last few decades, increasingly arcane, mostly leftist, schools of thought have captured disciplines and colonized departments, moving them farther and farther from the mainstream realities of American life" (Lehigh 1996, 73). In Lehigh's view the academic world has failed to recognize that there is a misalignment between its liberal conceptions and the more conservative preferences of the general public. Murray brings the relational theory that Mark Moore has developed to the political agenda. This effort, of course, is deeply disturbing to the academic community.

The third lesson concerns recognizing the moral implications of social science research and theory. This has been central to Murray's efforts. One crucial aspect of how values influence analysis is that the same facts can lead to different policy prescriptions and program design when screened through different value perspectives. The "simple stories that economists tell themselves and each other to give meaning and structure to their current research efforts" are "the scholarly equivalent to creation myths" (Romer 1994). These are diagnostic-perspective stories with strong value positions on how social problems are to be thought about.

As Herrnstein and Murray point out, one implication of the fact that individuals do not control their genetic heritage or the environments in which they are nurtured is that we need "a Rawlsian egalitarian state compensating the less advantaged for the unfair allocation of intellectual gifts." This argument implicitly makes the case for big government intervention. The alternative position challenges the belief that government is an appropriate vehicle for the solution of social problems. *The Bell Curve* argument is that "differences, including intelligence, are not readily manipulated by public policy." Value enters the choice of views "because more is at stake than a particular set of arguments from psychological science . . . the sin attributed to Herrnstein and Murray is theological; they destroy hope" (Murray 1996, 555).

Since the Enlightenment it is no longer acceptable to justify public policy with the argument that "God told me." We need other justifications. But as the above example shows, the search for scientific explanation as justification still has its roots in positions that depend on faith. There is faith in government and faith in individual responsibility. How-

ever, there is a tension between the two faiths if one believes that an enlarged role for government "crowds out" individual accountability. Integrating and reconciling these faiths is a central dilemma of social policy.

Lindblom (1990, 208) describes the role of values in analysis in a different way:

> social scientists proceed selectively in their choice with respect to causation and responsibility. Not driven by the facts of their choice, they choose under the influence of conventions shared with a public impaired in its probing . . . the evidence of their impairment lies in the absence of their recognition of arbitrariness or conventionality in attributing causality and responsibility.

Persuasion, discussibility, and values are linked. Values shape, or at least guide, theory choice. Theories of causality embed value preferences that broadly correspond to the liberal-conservative ideologies about the respective role of personal responsibility and societal obligations. Implicit social conventions influence what kinds of issues are not publicly discussible (e.g., illegitimacy, or intelligence by race). The justificatory and causal stories are joined (Rorty 1986) in the development of rules for action that are persuasive.

One implication of these lessons is that knowledge is malleable and, even when it is not necessarily partisan, can be appropriated by different interests and beliefs (Nelkin and Lindee 1995). We have tried to stress that this arises not only because scientific uncertainty is exploited in the partisan work of decision making, but for deeper reasons about the nature of science itself. The same facts can be interpreted as yielding different meanings depending on the theoretical perspective adopted. Even theories that are committed to value neutrality implicitly are embedded with normative propositions, either because they contain assumptions about the priority of different causal processes (Moore 1984) or because they imply particular relational norms (Moore 1996). It is tempting to try to resolve these difficulties with a strategy of "first science, then policy"—"Get the science done first and then proceed to engage the various ethical and moral issues" (Massey 1996). But science and policy are inherently entangled and such advice ignores the reality of doing science in a policy environment.

Lindblom is a strong advocate of the view that social science should be viewed only as partisan—enlisted or appropriated by sponsors who hold different interests and beliefs. He believes that knowledge can be advanced by a struggle of alternative views. In advancing this position, he rejects the contrary position that social science might contribute to the pursuit of consensus. Lindblom regards such a view as "half blind and dangerous" because it leads to "an authoritative view of social science" (Lindblom 1980, 266).

We, the authors, find ourselves most uncomfortable with this view of Lindblom's. To make our position clear, let us recapitulate the issue. We have shown in our analysis that if we start with a search for truth, we cannot avoid the ethical, pragmatic, and moral issues that are embedded in a policy debate. These value questions enter into the theory of how causality and responsibility are linked in the relational theory of fairness and justice that is widely shared by the general public, and in the selection of problems for analysis. Value positions are unavoidable, but when social science knowledge can be appropriated by different interests and beliefs, it also runs the risk of suppressing evidence and creating undiscussible policy issues.

Alternatively, if we start with a conflict of interests and beliefs in a public debate and ask what is the place of truth in public discourse—and if our only answer is that social science knowledge is relative, inconclusive and partisan—then we are forced to accept the position that social science has virtually no capacity to describe truth about social reality independent of values and partisan positions. We have thus undermined a modest position of value neutrality for policy analysis in politics.

While we have tried to argue that truth alone is not sufficient for justifying a social policy, still it must play a role in public debate. We believe that social science is necessary for good policy and that it is a mistake to be backed into the extreme position that the partisan view implies. If this is correct, then society is faced with the quandary of how to balance the weight of truth with the imperative of values in its effort to create good social policy.

NOTES

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2. The October 31, 1994 issue of *The New Republic* provided initial reviews. For an extensive collection see *The Bell Curve Debate* (Jacoby and Glauberman 1995).

3. The success of *The Bell Curve* is almost certainly partly due to the enormous effort and money that was spent to promote the book.

4. There are at least two opposing forces in the process. One is pursuit of questions that strengthen the existing paradigm by providing evidence and theory which try to resolve the existing puzzle of the field. Students and those seeking tenure at the Economics Department at the University of Chicago are encouraged

to follow this path (Reder 1982). By contrast, the other involves challenging the conventional social science wisdom (Davis 1971).

5. However, there were attempts to limit the reproduction of welfare recipients in some southern states, where during the 1960s it was common practice to sterilize women on welfare with large families or limited intelligence. When the practice became visible, it was discontinued. Eugenic policies in the United States probably can only flourish as a twilight practice in a quasi-legal realm.

6. Before his death, Richard Herrnstein was a tenured professor at Harvard. Thus *The Bell Curve* was partially a product of the academy. In this case tenure allowed him to pursue research that many academics viewed as illegitimate.

7. In fairness to Herrnstein and Murray, they would have had a difficult time publishing their research in traditional academic journals because of the political perspective it advocates.

8. The Brookings Institution and the Rand Corporation are the most striking exceptions, but a more detailed analysis might reveal many more.

9. "The White Underclass" article was used as an example in a book on rhetoric, which deals with how an article is read and interpreted when the reader holds strong value beliefs about the article (see Murray 1995).

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