Am Soc (2018) 49:434–447
https://doi.org/10.1007/s12108-018-9379-z

Bringing Sociology into the Public Policy Process: a Relational Network Approach

Roberta Spalter-Roth[1,2] · **Amy L. Best**[2] · **Patricia E. White**[3]

Published online: 29 June 2018

Abstract How does evidence-based sociological research influence public policymaking either directly or indirectly? Based on an analysis of a 2014 NSF-funded public policy research workshop and written case studies by workshop participants, this article provides a conceptual roadmap and varied examples of the pathways through which social science research and social scientists can inform public policy decision-making. Pathways include networks and relationships among academics, social scientists employed in government, special interest groups and non-profits, and members of the media. Many sociologists are committed to using their evidence-based findings to inform solutions to societal problems, yet are often too narrowly trained to write only for scholarly communities and are often unaware of *the relations, connections, and networks* that can increase the use of sociological and other social science research in public discourse and in the public policy arena. The paper highlights lessons learned about effective networks, communication channels and dissemination strategies from the workshop and case studies in order to better equip those social scientists interested to bring their research into a public policy realm with the tools to do so. Given the current political climate, this resolve seems all the more important.

Keywords Social networks · Social science research · Public policy process · Evidence-based

Organizations led by sociologists have a long history developing evidence-based research that meets scientific standards to create changes in public policy that are in

✉ Amy L. Best
abest@gmu.edu

[1] American Sociological Association, Washington, D.C., USA

[2] George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, USA

[3] Division of Social and Economic Sciences, National Science Foundation, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA

the public interest, beginning with the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory and the Hull House Maps and Papers in the 1890s. Yet, despite a full century of research-informed policy prescriptions offered by sociologists, a 2015 *New York Times* article on the importance of social science research for the Congressional Record noted, "Most striking is the poor showing of sociology, whose relevance to policy makers appears to be minimal, even though it focuses on many of our most pressing problems, including families, crime, education, aging, religion, community, inequality and poverty" (Wolfers 2015 in Cohen 2016). What should be made of this characterization of sociology's minimal impact, especially when set against its early and expansive efforts to promote the common good? What is to be the public role of the sociologist as we move into a new era marked by a growing divisiveness over public issues and eroding trust in the ability of our public institutions to address a range of social problems?

We suggest sociologists are uniquely poised to use scientific evidence to provide understanding to help us wade through the current morass. We argue given the current context in the United States, sociologists cannot simply lament our lack of relevance or extoll our accomplishments; we must provide concrete scientific evidence to address pressing social problems that resonate with both sides of the political spectrum. Further, we must develop strategies to encourage its use. Although not all sociologists (or even most) are committed to using their evidence-based findings to inform solutions to societal problems, many are. Academic social science researchers are too narrowly trained to write for the public, despite the increasing convergence between scholarly and public sociology. These academic researchers are often unaware of *the relations, connections, and networks* that can increase the use of sociological and other social science research in public discourse and the public policy arena. To more fully understand these relationships and networks, thirty-five social scientists, primarily sociologists, participated in a 2014 workshop funded by National Science Foundation's (NSF) Sociology Program, *A Relational Model for Understanding the Use of Research in the Policy Process* and provided examples of the networks, communication channels, and dissemination strategies they used to increase the likelihood their research would find its way into the public policy arena. Participants also wrote case studies focused on how networks facilitated the visibility and legitimacy of their research for public policy use (Fig. 1).

This paper reports on findings from the workshop and the participants' case studies, highlighting the lessons learned about effective networks, communication channels and dissemination strategies from them to better equip those social scientists interested to bring their research into a public policy realm with the tools to do so. These social scientists recognized that truth doesn't always win out, facts can be ignored and policy makers can "cherry pick" findings (especially when social science is under the gun as it is currently), but political winds change and opportunities to inform public and policy debate with social science research remain. They called on other sociologists to engage this work as well. Given the current political debates, this resolve seems all the more important.

Description of Public Policy and the Policy Process

Although policy occurs in all sorts of organizations, this article concentrates on public policy. Public policy and the policy process is often viewed as what government does

and is often portrayed as the production of legislation at the federal level (Booth 1990; Hill and Varrone 2017; Kettl and Fesler 2009; Prewitt 2005; Weiss and Bucuvalas 1980). The process is described often as a series of stages, from agenda setting, policy formulation, and implementation of legislation, often in the form of regulations developed by federal or state agencies (Kingdon 2011). This view of public policy is, in our view, too narrow. It ignores public policy making that occurs at local and state government levels. Public policy is not restricted to legislative and regulatory decisions. Instead, it can provide an understanding of the causes of social problems, clarify thinking, make sense of actions, and offer ideas for future directions (Weiss and Bucuvalas 1980). Too often, it ignores players beyond legislators and public officials. Policy can be spurred by civil society's pressure on private sector and can also result from judicial actions in state and federal courts. Further, few views of public policy and the policy process address how relationships and strategies can be effective for communicating policy relevant findings to a diversity of communities (Nyden et al. 2012; Wang 2016). Nor does there appear to be publicly-available discussions by researchers describing the context, networks, and relations that encourage those in the process to pay attention to social research findings.

For social science research to inform the policy process, at a variety of levels and either directly or indirectly, researchers cannot assume what has been referred to as a "textbook" model of the policy process (Nakamura 1987, pp. 142), whereby policy formation occurs in discrete stages, with little attention to where and how research becomes a part of the process. This textbook model is not new. One of its early proponents was the famous political scientist and sociologist Harold Laswell (1956, 1963, cited in Nakamura 1987). Laswell described the policy process as sequential and differentiated by stages. Other researchers, following Laswell, have also presumed a straightforward progression (Nakamura 1987). Kingdon's and other models are useful in that they emphasize the context and processes that govern the system, including the players involved, but they do not focus on the process and interrelations by which "the players" (in this case social science researchers) gain a "seat at the table." As Kingdon himself observed, "pre-decision processes remain relatively uncharted territory" (2011:1).

A Brief History of Social Science in Public Policy

Social science research and evidence has long been used in the public policy process to develop and implement laws, regulations and standards, usually, but not always, in the service of progressive outcomes. Prior to the twentieth century W.E.B. DuBois directed the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory in its attempt to improve the living conditions of Black Atlanta residents. During this same period, Florence Kelley and other residents of Hull House produced the Hull House Maps and Papers mapping the living and working conditions of Chicago slum dwellers (Residents of Hull House 1895). At the turn of the twentieth century the Russell Sage Foundation sought progressive social change through evidence-based research, primarily surveys to illustrate the working

conditions of the poor with the aim to influence power elites to bring about reforms (see for example Butler 2012). In 1923, the Social Science Research Council was founded with the motto "Necessary Knowledge for the Public Good." By the Great Depression's end, social scientists were firmly in the policy trenches, offering critical information to better direct institutions serving the public. In the 1930s the Committee on Social Security Analysis of the Great Depression, included issues such as crime, education, and the family—sociology's bread and butter. In 1934, the Brookings Institution examined what caused the Great Depression. The 1940s saw the beginning of opinion research conducted by Stouffer for the U.S. War Department with over one half million American soldiers being interviewed during World War II (Stouffer et al. 1949.) In all of these endeavors, sociologists played an important role. The mid-1960s saw the growth of the social indicators movement that used objective measures to represent social facts independently of personal evaluations (Land 1983). Indicators were used to measure the unemployment rate, poverty rate, working hours per week, and perinatal mortality rates. In addition, during the 1960s and 1970s social scientists were responsible for large-scale demonstration projects, such as the Guaranteed Annual Income experiments under President Richard Nixon's Administration (1969–1974), administered to find new and effective solutions to social problems (Theobald 1966). Social science research institutes, such as the University of Wisconsin's Institute for Research on Poverty, were established to create basic knowledge on poverty, and enabled socially engaged academics to respond to government policy needs (Medvetz 2012: O'Connor 2001). In the late 1970s, social scientists and practitioners, under the direction of sociologist Marvin Wolfgang, participated in a symposium sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency on serious juvenile delinquency, that concluded that the focus should be on state and local policy rather than on individual delinquents only.

Federal support for social science research directed at public policy or public knowledge declined in the 1980s (Silver 2001), in part because of cut-backs under the Reagan Administration and in part because of what became an impenetrable boundary between those doing "pure" and those doing "applied" research. During this period, the status of sociology as well as the number of sociology students declined. By the turn of the twenty-first century, however, social scientists were writing about the "convergence" of pure and applied research and the growth of more engaged scholarship that, among other activities, attempts to influence local, regional, and national policy (Hackett 2001; Slaughter and Rhoades 2005). During this period, the American Sociological Association appointed a task force on public sociology whose purpose was to examine the changes needed to valorize this companion to purely academic sociology in an effort to advance the discipline and have greater public impact, as it had previously.

Networks and coalitions, including alliances with non-profit, church and community groups, state and federal agencies, academic institutions, unions, and foundations were critical to these earlier efforts to bring evidence-based social science research into public policy and public action. They remain central to sociologists' current efforts to bring social science research to the policy table and to inform policy, whether directly or indirectly.

A Relational Model for Understanding the Use of Research in the Policy Process

The 2014 "*A Relational Model for Understanding the Use of Research in the Policy Process*" workshop, funded by the NSF's Sociology Program under the leadership of Dr. Patricia E. White, was intended to offer the discipline both a conceptual roadmap and varied examples of the pathways through which social science research and social scientists can inform public policy decision-making. Pathways include networks and relationships among academics, social scientists employed in government, special interest groups, private sector actors and non-profits, and members of the media and were based on a conceptual model first developed by White, based on reviews of the literature, and interviews with public policy researchers. In her research, Dr. White found "professional research and policy connections are instrumental for the dissemination of social science knowledge." White's schematic diagram (see below) emphasizes the types of pathways, networks and relationships, both direct and indirect among stakeholders in the policy process. White's model identifying pathways and relationships that facilitate direct and indirect use of evidence-based, scientific research in public policy and practice and was available to participants in advance of the workshop.

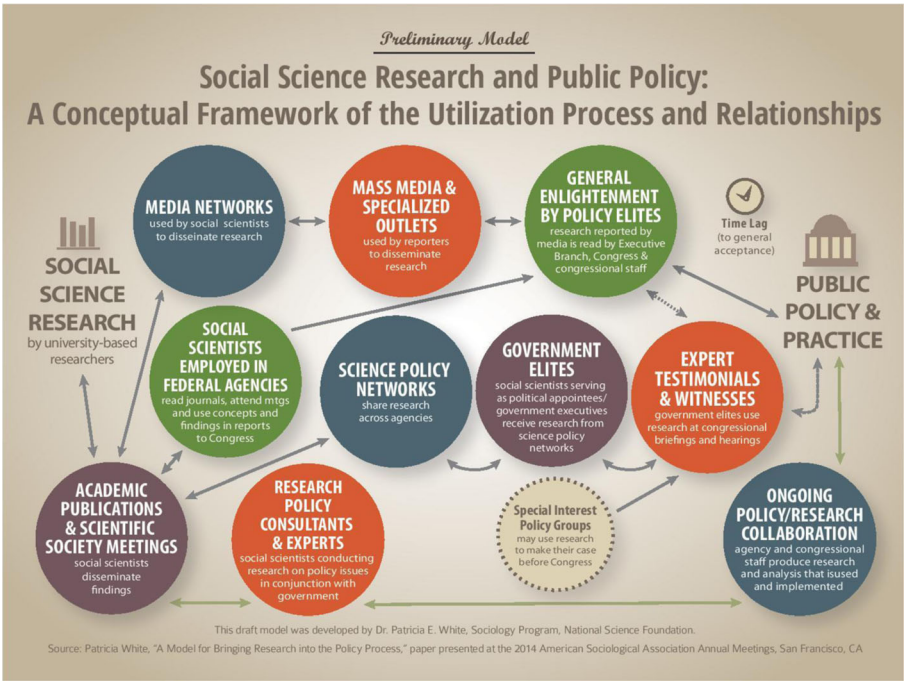

Fig. 1 A Model Showing the Networks and Relationships between Organizations that Result in Public Policy and Practice.

Using Dr. White's conceptual model as a springboard, workshop participants presented case studies detailing successful efforts to bring social science research into the public and the public policy arenas, and identifying strategic partnerships with a variety of public and third sector organizational actors including professional associations and non-governmental organizations. All workshop participants agreed that despite the perception of its relative obscurity and irrelevance, social science research is literally "everywhere" and can be employed in public policy *directly* to inform a specific public policy outcome in legislative and judicial spheres, at federal, state or municipal levels or *indirectly*, used for public understanding of the causes of social problems, to make sense of actions, and offer ideas for future directions. Case studies focused specifically on the role networks and social relations play in successfully moving research findings into public policy arena. Those who experienced successes stressed the importance of "trust networks" with advocacy groups, researchers in federal agencies, community groups, Congressional staff, and public interest groups and between institutions and actors (Buskins 2006: Kenis and Schneider 1991). Trust networks help participants gain a "voice in determining public policy" and a "seat at the table." The larger the network, the greater the likelihood for policy impact. Such networks make social science research visible and present. Workshop participants provided examples of three major types of networks and relations, including coalitions of stakeholders, working with federal, state, and local governments, and providing expertise to policymakers and for public enlightenment. Network linkages and coalitions require "trust chains", (a term used by Kingdon 2011) which develop over time and depend on the support of other institutional actors. Network ties can be formal or informal and can include sharing contacts, sitting on each other's boards or sharing resources. One workshop participant, Dr. William Spriggs from the Economics Department at Howard University and the AFI-CIO, noted that social science researchers can be excluded from networks because they have not built trust relations. He described his experiences at the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) when unions, who largely funded a project, "initially rejected me as the labor economist on the project because they didn't know and trust me even though a colleague had vouched for me. My colleague at the Economic Policy Institute said to the unions, this is who you're getting and in the end, it worked out. I gained the respect of the unions." Dr. Spriggs found that others repeatedly needed to vouch for his credibility as an African American labor economist working with unions. "It comes down to trust. You can be smart, accomplished, and even look like me, but that doesn't mean that I'm going to give you authority or trust."

We extracted six lessons from workshop conversations (such as Dr. Spriggs' comments), presentations, and case studies that we hope will be of use to sociologists who want their work to affect public policy.

Lesson #1 Bring Stakeholders Together in Coalitions Many of the case studies detailed partnerships and collaborations with different stakeholders, including, educators, community associations, non-profits, federal agencies, and church groups on different sides of an issue. Partnerships with community groups and movement organizations to achieve shared goals are a core component of community action and participatory action research. In the case below, social science research is used to assess environmental impact of everyday products found in households and its success in doing so depends on its partnerships with different community stakeholders.

Dr. Phil Brown of the Social Science Environmental Health Group at Northeastern University has collaborated with community partners on bio-monitoring and household exposure for a number of years with the goal "to inform better decisions among government officials and community stakeholders about environmental exposures and generate scientific knowledge to reduce environmental health disparities in low-income, minority communities. Low-income communities are often at disproportionate risk to harmful exposures. They also sought to develop more innovative approaches of reporting back findings to communities in order to build greater scientific literacy and trust within these communities.

The Silent Spring Institute, a community-based science organization, is a long-time partner in Brown's research on household exposures in both Massachusetts and California. The research, conducted with community partners, seeks to discover household exposures of endocrine disrupting compounds, many of which had not previously been identified and resulted in important local, state, and federal policy changes. The research was intentionally policy-directed and was funded both by the National Science Foundation's Science, Technology and Science Program and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences' (NIEHS) Environmental Justice Program. The work of Brown and his community partners was especially successful at the local level. "Communities for a Better Environment presented project data to the Richmond California City Council and Planning Commission in 2011 and argued in court for cumulative impact assessment to be included in all oil refinery permit applications."

Brown stated, "Our team helped in framing California's state biomonitoring program so that it included report-back as a mandate, and we are presently helping construct the methods for delivering that report-back. Our findings were used by a state legislator to seek removal of the California furniture flammability standard, in order to ban halogenated flame retardants in furniture and children's products." And because the California market is so large with influence over national market standards, the team anticipated a "domino effect" with other states adopting California standards. Manufacturers were required to remove toxic flame retardants from products under orders from the California governor as a result of the research findings that resulted from the partnership. The research partners were successful in persuading the Massachusetts Division of Fire Safety to adopt California's reform soon after and *Consumer Reports* used the findings to advise on product safety. Taken together, these outcomes suggest a successful collaboration with various community stakeholders. Without community partners, these policy changes would have been less successful since the community organizations and actors were able to apply policy pressure that researchers alone would likely be unable to do.

Lesson #2 Become an Expert Experts are widely recognized as a reliable source of knowledge or skills, accorded authority and status in a specific domain. A social scientist can become a regularly called upon expert through credentials, participation in organizations, extensive research knowledge. Relationships to the public through the media are critical to becoming a publicly-trusted expert. As a case in point, Dr. Gregory Squires, as a member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, worked with non-profit organizations, the mass media, and a government agency to address a longstanding history of racial discrimination and redlining by the home insurance industry. Having

written in this area (including scholarly publications and op-eds), Squires was contacted by attorneys for the plaintiffs in the case of NAACP v. American Family (a mortgage lending company) in which the company was accused of redlining Milwaukee's black community. Squires co-authored expert reports as the litigation proceeded. The case settled favorably with the company committing to open new agencies in Milwaukee's black community and developing new policies to better serve previously redlined neighborhoods.

Dr. Howard Iams, a sociologist at the Social Security Administration has been conducting research on retirement and economic well-being among aging populations for three decades. As a recognized expert on retirement and economic wellbeing, he has on-going relationships with groups such as American Association of Retired People as well as Congressional Committees and Executive Agencies, all of whom he consults as he completes his analyses.

Dr. David Segal, of the University of Maryland, built strong relationships over several years that led to becoming a publicly recognized expert on the treatment of racial, gender, and LGBT groups in the military. Early organizational ties, as a guest scientist at the Walter Reed Institute of Research enabled him to develop ties with military researchers and gain legitimacy among the military and Congress on matters of military personnel. Dr. Segal had also developed a research program on comparative military institutions at a time when military officials were increasingly interested to understand how other nations' military had addressed socio-demographic changes in enlistments. This research program led to his providing congressional testimony regarding the experience of gender and sexual orientation integration in other national militaries. This early experience of being called upon as an expert on matters relating to military personnel had reverberating effect, with Dr. Segal again being asked to present social science research on the impact of Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT). The research, collected in collaboration with social scientists at West Point, the Naval Academy, Air Force Academy, the Marine Corp War College and Columbia University demonstrated no negative impact of DADT' repeal on cohesion, recruitment or retention. Congressional testimony was broadcast on CSPAN and NPR, leading to numerous media interviews, helping to increase public awareness. Though he was not an expert on the issue of gays in the military, Dr. Segal was an expert of role of group integration and cohesion. Dr. Carla Howery of the American Sociological Association reminded Dr. Segal that if nobody else knows anything about an issue and you know a little bit, you become the expert. Segal was asked to take a position on lifting the ban, to advise on strategies to follow if the ban was lifted, and to identify the possible impact on cohesion if openly gay service personnel were allowed to serve. There were also extensive discussions in the Pentagon and ultimately the policy was implemented.

Lesson #3 Learn to communicate research findings in terms appropriate to the audience Dr. Karl Alexander's case study illustrates how presentation of research findings and strategic partnerships with issue stakeholders can successfully frame a public problem. Alexander has studied what has come to be called "summer learning loss" among low-income children as part of longitudinal research on community and educational inequalities for decades. Initially published in traditional academic journals, his findings that poor children fall behind their middle-class peers in reading comprehension and math during the

long summer break were easily summarized in non-technical terms. What began as very traditional academic research morphed into powerful public statements demonstrating the need for policy change. Alexander explained,

> Today we say "summer slide" or "summer setback" to an audience of practitioners or folks involved with educational policy, and you are likely to see many knowing nods. We introduced those phrases, and it is gratifying to see how they have caught on, but that wasn't because we published in ASR. We also published in The American Educator; published in edited volumes directed to practitioners; made presentations at conferences attended mainly by summer program providers, foundation officers, and non-profit advocacy constituents; made a presentation at the Hart Senate office building, and testified before one state legislature." Eventually the general media caught on, with a lead article in Time magazine ("The Case against Summer Vacation," 2010) and six pages devoted to our work in Malcolm Gladwell's Outliers (2008).

This research has been written up in the Washington Post, the Chronicle of Higher Education, Ed Week, Mother Jones, the Huffington Post, three Baltimore Sun columns and Alexander was interviewed for several public radio and TV programs. The visibility of Dr. Alexander's research helped frame the issue in the general policy milieu, ultimately reaching the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. The key was an early decision to partner with a highly effective advocacy non-profit, The National Summer Learning Association and striking the right communicative tone.

Lesson #4 Use Networks to Conduct and Disseminate Policy-Relevant Research Dr. Heidi Hartmann, of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, described the close networks that help to pass the Family and Medical Leave Act—a network with communications across various stakeholder groups (including other women's organizations, church groups, the House Education and Labor Committee, and the American Federation of County, State, and Municipal Employees). Hartmann explains:

> A women's organization came to us and said the coalition working for the then-proposed Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) would like to have some scientific evidence that could make the case for the Act. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce was preparing estimates of the costs to business of providing workers with unpaid leave that they hoped would thwart the Act. (Unpaid leave is in essence a job guarantee that enables a worker to return to work after the need for leave is over.) The advocate suggested it would be interesting to know how much it cost workers NOT to have leave when they have a baby, have sick family members, or are sick, themselves, and compare these results with those of the Chamber of Commerce. The information would help members of Congress understand the need for leave from the worker's point of view…Fortunately for the case the advocates wanted to make, we found that while all women lost considerable earnings when having a baby, but those who had a job to go back to lost less than those who did not.

The individuals and organizations shared media contacts and other resources. In this case, the American Association of University Women had the resources to hold a press conference, and IWPR had the data; the two joined forces to help inform and mobilize the "marching millions" –groups of women who were organized to pressure policy makers to pass family leave policy. The American Association of University Women hired a professional PR team allowing for wide dissemination of the findings.

Partnering is required by IWPR to produce policy-relevant research. Hartmann observed, "At IWPR, our raison d'etre is to contribute to public policies that improve women's lives." She went on, "We do this by conducting accurate, reliable research that we hope is credible in all venues, so that it's of use to policymakers as well as the advocacy groups who are pushing policy agendas to help women and other vulnerable groups." The findings that emanate from social scientific research do not always reflect the views of the advocacy groups. Social science should not be limited by political affiliation nor ideological commitment. After checking and rechecking the results, IWPR stands by its findings.

Lesson #5 Work with State and Local Governments Social scientists can work with or provide information to state and local governments when an issue is not gaining traction at the federal level. Federal government is often thought as the driver of change, but impact is often greatest at municipal and state government levels. Dr. Margaret Simms, Institute Fellow and Director of the Low-income Working Families Project at the Urban Institute, focused on her work on the issue of welfare reform in the 1990s while at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Policy. The work centered on forecasting the impact of what would become a major welfare reform, The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), in the 1990s. According to Simms, "When it became clear that some type of "welfare reform" would make it to the top of the policy agenda, The Joint Center for Political and Economic Research (a think tank oriented to black elected officials, where Simms was working at the time) developed a detailed research plan designed to provide information for several different audiences. The project involved multiple research strategies. First, a special survey of low-income individuals about their views of welfare and policy reform was undertaken. Second, focus groups of low-income women in four metropolitan areas were held prior to the survey to inform the survey questions and additional focus groups were held after the survey, to add some context to the survey findings. Finally, since one option for putting welfare recipients to work was to place them in non-profit organizations, the Joint Center conducted a survey of a select group of nonprofits in cities with the largest caseloads to determine how many job slots might be available to employ former welfare recipients.

Dr. Simms's research provided valuable information that could have informed how the federal legislation on welfare reform should be shaped. However, the Joint Center was not able to gain much traction in terms of finding platforms for informing the general public and policy "influentials," nor did the findings resonate with the press. Without stories in the media that countered prevailing policy discussion, audiences within the policy community were limited to the "faithful." In the end, PRWORA was passed in 1996 without these detailed findings getting a wide airing. Dr. Simms argued that "at least three factors resulted in the failure to affect the policy agenda at the federal

level—timely completion and release of research, having the resources to get the attention of the media and policy "influential", and the public."

After the federal legislation passed, the Joint Center shifted its emphasis to a more concerted effort to disseminate the findings to black elected officials at the state and local level who would have roles in shaping state policy and implementing the new system in their states. Dr. Simms found that if translated from academic language, policymakers at the state and local level and their staffs were willing to review the findings.

Lesson #6 Appreciate Power and Political Context Institutional power was recognized as the single most important determinant shaping policy contexts. Who holds the seats of power and type of political climate were identified as key factors that could determine whether a set of findings get a wide airing or not. Participants noted the key role that gatekeepers play as "inhibitors and enablers moving research into the policy process." Participants also acknowledged that in a context of political discord and factionalism, research that supports a political position or ideological agenda can enter the policy arena, even if it is not properly vetted. Policy makers can and do "cherry pick" research they want to use in support of their own ideological agenda, or they might dismiss a cumulative body of sound, peer-reviewed research when it stands in contradiction to a specific proposal. In the context of increasingly bi-partisan divisions, policy makers can take the position that "I have my science and you have your science" affecting research usage. This type of rancorous climate can set the conditions for a politically-motivated backlash against social science research, calling into question the legitimacy of the scientific enterprise itself. Several participants further observed a more general decline in public trust in the institutional authority of both government and the scientific enterprise as significant factors shaping public receptivity and political interest in social scientific research findings. Yet all agreed, coalitions and networks can provide some balance to this power.

Despite political contexts that undermine positive policy impact, there are effective ways to disseminate findings to enable an easier translation for policy use. Work should be translated and made relevant to practitioners. Workshop participants cautioned that findings should be streamlined avoiding jargon and giving concrete examples and suggestions. Statistical data should be used strategically– limit yourself to a few key numbers. Tell stories with the data. They help convey the message and inspire policy action. At the end of a project, ask yourself (or colleagues) the following: what is the most exciting thing that you found out in your research? What do you want to achieve with your dissemination? Who is your target audience? What do you want them to do with the information when you get it? Are you interested in other forms of dissemination like blogs?"

The timing of specific evidence-based policy initiatives is crucial to whether research gets a wide airing. Nonetheless, issues may reemerge and gain traction even if they had not before. Earlier research can be recycled and additional audiences and funding can be sought. Public sentiments change as do political tides. The life of a research finding can be a long one, even if little headway is made initially. Repeat findings over and over in different venues and types of media.

Dr. Judith Federer, former Dean of Health Policy at Georgetown University, summed up the role of researchers:

Not every researcher wants to participate in the policy process, but every analysis can become a part of that process. Participants engaged in a political battle will take advantage of whatever analysis they can use to support their position. If researchers want their analysis used appropriately, it is their job to frame it—that is, use it to tell an easily accessible story, answer the "so what?" question, and spell out the inferences they believe can be drawn for policy, with any caveats they deem appropriate. She concluded, "Although analysts cannot control all uses of their research, they are better protected—and policy is better served— if they make this effort than if they do not.

Recommendations: Suggestions and Caveats

As workshop participants demonstrated in case studies and discussions, the work of social scientists may be excluded from federal agencies and Congress for ideological reasons, especially given proposed budget cuts to core governmental offices and key social science agencies. Nonetheless, workshop participants agreed that the work of social science should not stop, regardless of political context. In the last year, we have seen a remarkable mobilization of researchers and stakeholders aimed at all levels of government, within legislative and judicial spheres, and in partnership with public, private and third sector actors. Much of these efforts are backed by social science research. The social sciences are needed to provide reasoned direction, based on scientific findings for institutional governance, to help temper inflammatory public policy action rooted in fear and uncertainty, and provide a critical check on capricious use of power. Social scientists interested in incorporating their research into public policy to serve the common good should maintain their resolve, even in the face of setbacks. Remember trust networks are key for moving research into the public policy process.

Finally, workshop participants offered a series of specific suggestions for researchers interested in influencing public policy. They are:

1) Repeat findings over and over, early and often in a variety of venues.
2) Identify the gatekeepers to policymakers, but do not expect them to come to you.
3) Examine the quality of research not the politics of the researcher.
4) Seek out and be open to partnering with organizations that can take your work to places you might not be able to access on your own. Share resources with network members to develop trust networks.
5) Understand how your research relates to the mood of the public, and frame and translate findings for the public and the media so that it reflects the mood of the public.
6) Be alert to windows of opportunity for research that can answer timely policy questions. It is often easier to get research accepted at the local and state level than the federal level. It is important to develop relationships there.
7) Social scientists should try not split policy research and academic work or should consider working on Congressional staffs or in federal and state agencies where they have more opportunities to be central to policy networks.
8) Researchers should follow a code of ethics and should be prepared to call out "bad science."

9) Be aware that politics can trump research and evidence-based research does not always triumph.
10) Don't drink your own Kool-Aid." Social Science research must walk a fine line between promotion and propaganda. While policy can be "value based," it must also be "evidence based."

Take the lessons from the cases and caveats provided here and carry on.

The full report and case studies can be reviewed at http://asa.enoah.com/Bookstore/Research-Briefs-and-Volumes/BKctl/ViewDetails/SKU/ASAOE632R1….

References

Booth, T. (1990). Researching policy research issues of utilization in decision-making. *Science Communication, 12*(1), 80–100.

Burowoy, M. (2005). 2004 ASA presidential address: for public sociology. *American Sociological Review, 70*(1), 4–28.

Buskins, V. (2006). *Social networks and trust.* Springer Science and Business Media.

Butler, E. B. (2012). *Women and the trades: Pittsburgh, 1907–1908*. New York: The Russell Sage Foundation.

Hackett, E. J. (2001). Science as a vocation in the 1990s: the organizational culture of academic science. In J. Croissant & S. Restivo (Eds.), *Degrees of compromise*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Hill, M., & Varone, F. (eds.) (2017). *The Public Policy Process*. London and New York: Routledge. Seventh edition.

Kenis, P., & Schneider, V. (1991). Policy networks and policy analysis: scrutinizing a new analytical toolbox. In B. Marin & R. Mayntz (Eds.), *Policy networks, empirical evidence and theoretical considerations* (pp. 25–62). Boulder: Frankfurt Campus Verlay/Westview Press.

Kettl, D. F., & Fesler, J. W. (2009). *The politics of the administrative process*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Kingdon, J. W. (2011). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. New York: Longman.

Land, K. (1983). Social indicators. *Annual Review of Sociology, 9*, 1–26.

Lasswell, H. D. 1956. *The Decision Process: Seven Categories of Functional Analysis*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland Press.

Laswell, H. D. (1963). *The Future of Political Science*. New York Atherton Press.

Medvetz, T. (2012). *Think tanks in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nakamura, R. (1987). The textbook policy process and implementation research. *Review of Policy Research, 7*(1), 142–154.

Nyden, P., Hossfeld, L. H., & Nyden, G. E. (2012). *Public sociology, research, action, and change*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

O'Connor, A. (2001). *Poverty knowledge social science, social policy, and the poor in twentieth-century U.S. history*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

O'Rand, A. (1992). Toward a history of game theory. *History of Political Economy, 24*(Supplement), 177–204.

Prewitt, K. (2005). *Political Ideas and a Political Science for Policy*. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences.

Residents of Hull House. (1895). *Hull-house maps and papers: a presentation of nationalities and wages in a Congested District of Chicago*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Sons.

Silver, H. (2001). *Fostering human progress, social and behavioral science research: contributions to public policy*. Washington, DC: Consortium of Social Science Organizations.

Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2005). From 'endless frontier' to 'basic science for use': social contracts between science and society. *Science, Technology and Human Values, 30*, 336–572.

Stouffer, S. A., Suchman, E. A., DeVinner, L. C., & Star, S. A. (1949). *The American soldier: adjustment during army life (studies in social psychology in World War II, volume 1)*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Theobald, R. (Ed.). (1966). *The guaranteed income: next step in economic evolution*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Book.

Wang, J. (2016). Knowledge creation in collaboration networks: effects of tie configuration. *Policy Research, 45*(1), 68–80.

Weiss, C. H., & Bucuvalas, M. J. (1980). Truth, tests and utility tests: decision makers' frames of references for social science research. *American Sociological Review, 45*(2), 302–313.

Wolfers, J. (2015). Cited in Phillip Cohen note from the editor, *Contexts* (15:1) 3.