Reflections of a Sometime-Public Intellectual

Amitai Etzioni

This article draws on Etzioni's book My Brother's Keeper: A Memoir and a Message *(Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).*

At least once a month, I receive an e-mail, phone call, or question from one of my colleagues—how do you get an op-ed into the *New York Times*? It seems that a great number of my colleagues have at least one public intellectual (PI) bone in their body that they are keen to display. They hold, often for good reason, that they have something to say that will serve the president, the American people, or even the world. Although I have no answer to the immediate question—it is easier to win a lottery than to get into the *New York Times*—I do have a few thoughts about the greater question: how can an academic, especially a political scientist, gain a public voice? Here, then, follow the lessons of fifty years of trying to speak in that voice, drawing on both my experiences and those of my colleagues.

SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

Perhaps because I did my undergraduate studies in Jerusalem, I have long held a biblical view of the role of PIs—namely, as a modern equivalent of the prophets. As a student, I had an image of standing in the public square and denouncing the king for his plans to go to war, his neglect of the poor, or whatever was the cause of the day. I was very taken with Zola's "*J'accuse*" and later with C. Wright Mills's *Listen, Yankee*. They called it the way they saw it, did not mince words, and did not worry about their careers. Such a stance sounded both very gratifying and very worthwhile.

When I tried years later, after settling in the United States, to follow in their footsteps, I found that often the king simply was not listening. Time and time again, whatever critical lines I—and my co-critics—wrote tended to slide off the back of those we rallied against. It took eight years of teach-ins, demonstrations, op-eds—and a tremendous loss of life—before Washington ended the war in Vietnam. Moreover, none of us could even begin to measure how much of this change in policy could be attributed to us.

Thirty years ago, I wrote *The Moondoggle*, a brief against NASA's decision to heavily invest in manned missions instead of using much less costly and much safer robots, as well as its focus on deep space, when most gains were to be found in near space. I returned to these subjects whenever I got a chance. NASA and its supporters in Congress and the private sector—and researchers receiving grants from it on the campuses—were hardly moved.

Particularly painful was the year I spent in the White House. Although my desk was indeed very close to the seat of power, it might as well have been on the dark side of the moon. President Carter was not to be moved on these—or most other—issues either, and certainly not by whatever I had to suggest.

So, lesson number one: if you have the urge to become a PI, especially of the critical type (and all PIs should be, at least to some extent, critical), first lie down and see if the urge will go away. And if you are still committed to this goal, be prepared for frustrations, disappointment, and inattention. The achievement of glory on this road is rare; failure to be heard is all too common. Therefore, lesson number two: becoming a PI takes a boatload of stamina, perseverance, and an inner voice that makes you continue even when the road ahead is steep and slippery.

On those rare occasions that I did have an impact, the experience was not unalloyed fun either. In 1990, I started writing about communitarian ideas. The reason that my voice carried a bit further this time was not due to my efforts, skills, or hard work—whatever I had in these departments, I had during previous engagements in my self-appointed role as a PI. My somewhat greater effect was largely due to the fact that the time was ripe. After a decade of Reaganism and Thatcherism, characterized by the celebration of Numero Uno and the unfettered aggrandizement of self-interest, there were growing signs that the common good and the community at large were suffering. Americans (and others in the West) sensed a growing need for a course correction—a point well-documented by Robert Bellah and his associates in *Habits of the Heart*. Hence, the thesis that my fellow communitarians and I raised—that individual rights were paramount, but so were social responsibilities—was rather well received by the public.

Bill Clinton made such ideas a central part of his first election campaign. However, the extent to which Clinton drew these ideas from the New Democrats, communitarians, or some other source is far from clear. The influence was clearer during my meeting with Tony Blair, who embraced communitarian ideas openly. Community, responsibility, and opportunity

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became the keystones of his election campaign, and communitarian text replaced the old Clause IV—a tale from which we can learn much.

In mid-1994, the British press started to refer to me as someone whose ideas had influenced Tony Blair. The *Observer* flatly stated that I was the "Father of Tony Blair's Big Idea." An influential columnist, Melanie Phillips, told her readers,

> Well before Labour's leadership campaign, Tony Blair had begun to set out a vision of community as a key feature of his redefinition of socialism. Now he is a leader, he has to say what he means. Hovering over this enterprise is the shadow of an American sociologist and a new philosophical movement. Etzioni, professor of sociology at George Washington University, appears to advocate a new politics. (Phillips 1994)

The column then proceeded to spell out communitarian ideas. Shortly afterwards, the *Guardian* followed with a huge profile of this American who was said to influence Blair, accompanied by a sketch that made me look like a cross between a nut and a prophet. Other members of the media, including the *London Times* and the BBC, soon followed suit.

I was flattered but also keenly worried. If I learned anything in Washington, it was that if you succeed in getting a politician to buy into your ideas, the last thing you want is for the press to report that you are the source. John Gardner put it well when he said, "You must say it over and over again until people think they knew it all the time—and then you do not get any credit for it." Luckily, the *Sunday Times* quoted me as saying, in reference to the communitarian message, "It is not my own influence, but an idea whose time has come. People have come to this in their own way and all we can do is hold each other's hands and cheer each other on" (Baxter 1995). I repeated this point whenever I had a chance. The issue might have been dropped, had it not been for Clause IV.

During this era, Blair was fighting to change the Labour Party. A major bone of contention was the clause that called for nationalizing everything that moved if Labour ever returned to power. Every time that Labour seemed close to winning an election, the Tories would point to this clause (as well as the fact that the party members called each other "comrade" and that the party was Socialist), which sufficed to deny Labour a majority vote. Blair succeeded in dropping this wording—replacing it with a communitarian text that stated: "The Labour Party . . . believes that by the strength of our common endeavor we achieve more than we achieve alone . . . The rights we enjoy reflect the duties we owe, and where we live together, freely, in a spirit of solidarity, tolerance and respect."

The *Sunday Times* called the clause a "communitarian document" and added: "The new clause 4, with its emphasis on rights and duties, sounds remarkably Etzioni-ite" (Baxter 1995). Other papers followed suit, claiming that Blair had fallen under the spell of an American sociologist. A long time passed before I was again invited to meet with Labour leaders.

Lesson number three: the more impact you have, the lower you should keep your profile and the less credit you should expect.

TENURE HELPS

Some assert that you can be a PI any time, any place, and that you do not have to be an academic or hold a campus perch. Look at E. J. Dionne and David Brooks. Their voices are heard, even though they make their living as columnists. This is true enough. However, I found that not having to worry about pleasing my employer or being able to pay the next month's rent freed me to hitch my wagon to whatever star I believed I was called to follow.

I learned this lesson when I was challenged while teaching as a young assistant professor of sociology at Columbia University. I had written a review of the movie *Hiroshima Mon Amour*. I used this platform to argue for ideas I was trying to advance as a member of the anti-(nuclear) bomb peace movement. I was called to the chair's office and told in no uncertain terms that Columbia was fighting to have sociology recognized as a science, and that writing movie reviews—especially with a normative political slant!—did not fit this mission one bit. I did not exactly keep mum after that meeting, but only after I gained tenure did I feel free to combine my scholarly work with raising my public voice when I believed it was necessary.

Lesson number four: you can be a PI any time, any place, especially if your rich uncle left you a trust fund or you do not mind waiting tables if all else fails. Otherwise, think tenure. It provides a strong underpinning for that which must be done.

EVERYONE IS A PUBLISHER, BUT ARE THERE READERS?

One of the clichés of the brave new cyberworld is that everyone is a publisher. You have been told that you no longer need to convince the ever-tighter publishers to issue your book, nor the editors to accept your article in one of their shrinking magazines for your ideas to see the light of day months, if not years, later. Now, we are told, you can just start a Web page and say all that you want, as often as you want, without delay, at next to no cost. Just blog.

The bitter truth that has somehow escaped the cyberspace champions is that there are now so many "publishers" online, that many of them have very few readers. Given that the whole purpose of the PI is not just to speak, but also to be heard, it is important to note that blogging often will not get you much of a hearing.

You can have more of an effect if you join one of the established forums that have a developed readership, such as Talking Points Memo and Politico Arena. Here, too, you soon will find that some people are much more widely read than others, and you will need to figure out what brings eyeballs to your text, and—if you are willing to do what it takes to gain attention for what you believe needs to be said.

Some years ago, I wrote an essay for *Time* magazine. When I met with the editor, he told me that he wanted "a forehead-slapping piece." When I meekly replied that I did not know what this meant, he explained that he wanted the reader to exclaim, "Wow, why did I not think about that?!" The editor was less keen to determine whether the idea could be well supported. This conversation came to mind when I read an article in a recent issue of the new *Newsweek*—which has gone to extremes to build circulation—by Jonathan Tepperman.

Mr. Tepperman announced that we are all dead wrong: "Nuclear weapons may not, in fact, make the world more dangerous." Wait, wait, Mr. Tepperman is just warming up. "The bomb may actually make us safer," he claims. Mr. Tepperman finds that more nuclear-armed states are not dangerous, and that they are, in effect, "agents of peace" (Tepperman 2009). The *Newsweek* journalist modestly refers to this revelation as "the truth" and claims that his conclusion is based on a "growing and compelling body of research." However, on reading further, it becomes clear that there is no research—let alone *compelling* research—to support this forehead-slapping claim.

I flatter myself to believe that one reason that the reach of my public voice was more limited than the reach of some others' voices is that I tried to take facts into account, as well as to see both sides of the issue at hand, and sometimes more than two.

Lesson number five: Whatever course you follow, you had best figure out how far you are willing to go to gain an audience and, beyond that, a following.

DEVELOP A VOICE

Often, before I am invited to participate in a program on NPR or some other radio or TV program, I am pre-interviewed by someone who resembles one of my younger and less-prepared students. For instance, I was recently asked to speak about communitarianism on a radio program called "The Philosophy Hour." However, I must have failed the pre-interview. After I was asked some preliminary questions over the phone, the promised call to set a date for taping the show never materialized. It felt like going out on a blind date and never being called again.

One major reason for failing such pre-interviews—or for not being invited to interview in the first place—is that the

media tolerated more than two voices or had a special interest in a communitarian subject.

Lesson number six: choose your position and determine not merely whether you seek to be labeled "left" or "right," but also whether you are willing to be pigeonholed in the first place.

SPECIALIZE

At first, this suggestion may seem an odd one. Scholars are said to specialize, but PIs are, almost by definition, people who generalize. However, if you look around, you will see that one effective way to be heard is to find a place in the Rolodexes (or their digital equivalent) of the media, which are by and large organized by topic. Thus, if journalists seek a quote or producers need to place someone on the *Diane Rehm Show*, they quickly look for PIs who specialize in the hot issue of the day. For instance, they are likely to turn to Larry Sabato (University of Virginia) for election results in general and Virginia in particular; Shibley Telhami (University of Maryland) for Israel-Palestine relations; Norman Orenstein and Tom Mann for comments on Congress, and so on. True, all these PIs have a broader expertise and are occasionally consulted on a variety of subjects. Nevertheless, they are most likely to be called upon to speak on their established areas of specialization.

Indeed, I was removed from quite a few Rolodexes when *Time* magazine scoffed at my reluctance to specialize. I had shifted the focus of my attention several times, from arguing in favor of rolling back the nuclear arms race, to arguing against the war in Vietnam, shifting major public investments from lunar visitations to domestic social programs and near space, and addressing issues of bioethics. *Time* pointed to my "bustling omnipresence" in a profile published on my forty-sixth birthday entitled "The Everything Expert" (*Time* 1975). *Time*

The media tends to look for either one conservative and one liberal voice, or one voice in favor and one opposed to the issue on the table, such as gay marriage. Typically, Jim Lehrer's NewsHour *casts Mark Shields as the liberal and David Brooks as the conservative representative. FOX uses conservatives, MSNBC uses liberals, and so on. Hence, if you take an intermediary position or are a dove on some issues and a hawk on others, you will be left out in the cold most of the time.*

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Communitarians like myself do not fit into this rigid format. I do not mean to blame the media for not granting me more of a forum. Indeed, I have gained quite a bit of a hearing over the years, but mainly on those occasions in which the

did not mean this to be flattering, nor, it seems, did others who read the article.

My excuse for my "omnipresence" was that I sought to discover what new light one could cast on a variety of subjects if one examined them from the particular sociological and normative viewpoint I adopted, which later came to be called communitarianism. However, I could not append a note to this effect to each publication and interview, and I doubt that such notes would have reversed opinions if I had.

Lesson number seven: you had better not follow my footsteps and instead stick to your knitting—or at least do not pick up too many subjects about which to pontificate.

FASTEN YOUR SEATBELT—IT IS A ROLLER COASTER RIDE

If you make it—if you have been quoted three times in a row by major newspapers and the Associated Press to boot, penned an op-ed for the *Washington Post*, and had your picture in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*—then beware. The same media that gave you a voice will just as quickly take it away.

For a while, one could hardly open the *New York Times* without reading a book review, essay, or op-ed by Alan Wolfe, a true, broad, and deep-thinking PI. In 1998, he published eight articles in the *Times* and six in each of the following three years. But in 2002 and 2003, the *Times* published only one of his articles each year. The same situation befell Noah Feldman, who, for a while, was the go-to source for Muslim issues. Although the *Times* published 11 of his articles in 2007 and 10 in 2008, only three have appeared in 2009. Niall Ferguson lasted longer in the limelight than many, but he too has now been eclipsed. If you are lucky, you may ride a second and even a third wave, but very few PIs remain at the top of their game year in and year out.

Lesson number eight: Don't mope. It isn't personal. This is the way of the world, or at least of the public arena. You can hope to catch a second wave some day, but do not sit by the phone waiting for it to ring.

CROSSFIRE IS GOOD FOR THE MISSION, BUT …

PIs face the danger that they will stray too far from the facts, overgeneralize, simplify, and emote. Scholars face the danger that they will stray too far into subjects that matter to no one but themselves, overspecialize, make things more complicated than they need be, and suppress their affect. Actually, the sniping that takes place between scholars and PIs is functional: scholars attempt to keep PIs from yielding to the sirens that tempt them and from becoming too popular, and PIs attempt to help scholars from becoming, well, too academic.

If you plan to try your hand at being a PI, you should expect criticism from your academic colleagues. As Russell Jacoby points out, "The worst thing you can say about someone in an academic meeting or when you're discussing tenure promotion is, 'Oh, his work is kind of journalistic.' Meaning, it's readable. It's journalistic, it's superficial" (2001). Richard Posner accuses PIs of being "often careless with facts and rash in predictions" (2001, 35). Jean Bethke Elshtain writes that intellectuals "[possess] a worldview whose logic promises to explain everything, and perhaps, in some glorious future, control and manage everything" (2001, 43).

The *New Yorker* wrote about John Kenneth Galbraith that "even some of those economists who personally like Galbraith dismiss him with the usual tags—'popularizer,' 'gadfly,' or, worst of all, 'journalist'" (Cassidy 1998). Cornel West was savaged by the *New Republic*, which wrote that his books were full of pomposity and demonstrated "a long saga of positioning" (Wieseltier 1995). Carl Sagan was not allowed to rest even after he died. He was described as a "cunning careerist" and, the ultimate put-down, "compulsive popularizer" (Mallon 1999). I was not treated much better.

PIs have responded that academics today learn more and more about less and less, study trivia, write in ways that cannot be comprehended, and, above all, that their works are irrelevant to the burning social issues of the day. Mark Krupnick wrote that "as their critical idiom has become more and more technical and specialized, they have exercised less and less influence on the general culture" (2005, 274). C. Wright Mills dedicated a good part of a book, *The Sociological Imagination*, to blast academics for being abstract, socially unaware, and otherwise irrelevant.

If one puts aside the overblown and harsh ways that both sides attack one another, one can see some value in the standing conflict between the PI and the academic roles. The fact that PIs are under constant pressure to generalize less, document more, and so on helps to keep them more intellectually responsible than they would be if they were not exposed to such pressures, and it protects them from becoming more ideological, from being commercially bought, from seeking to ingratiate themselves to governing elites, or from playing to the public—all temptations they face from the public side of their role. And in turn, PIs help keep academics from becoming lost in ever-narrower specializations and meaningless concept splits and arguments about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin.

Lesson number nine: Do not expect kudos from your academic colleagues. Treat their barbs as ways to help keep you from drifting too far from scholarly standards, and—when the sprit moves you—fire back. Such a response will keep the academics from becoming too scholastic.

DRIP-DRIP

Once upon a time, before I spent a year in the White House, I had a *West Wing* image of how major decisions are made and how our voices might be heard. This picture resembled a football huddle, only one that lasted longer and allowed everyone their say. I had an image of a bunch of people standing around the president's desk in the Oval Office or sitting around a table in the Situation Room. Fierce debate would take place. You would throw in your two cents. If you were right, after a few more rounds of give and take, more and more people would nod their heads in agreement with you. The president would stand up—meaning the meeting was closed. Voila, a decision had been made, and you had carried the day for the nation, maybe the world.

Actually, with extremely rare exceptions, your voice is likely to be heard first in the public realm before reaching the seats of power. Thus, President Kennedy's thinking about the war on poverty was influenced by Michael Harrington's book *The Other America*, not because he listened to Harrington (or read the book), but because he read a review of the book in the *New Yorker* (Troy 2010). Cass Sunstein's book *Nudge* (coauthored with Richard Thaler) was widely lionized in the media before President Obama appointed Sunstein as head of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs within the Office of Management and Budget. (The two did know each other in their days in Chicago, before either moved into the White House.) I was drafted by the Carter White House after the *Wall Street Journal* ran a front-page story about a paper I wrote when I was a visiting scholar at Brookings.

It seems that preparing the ground in the public realm is a valid reason for people in power to draw on your voice. After

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all, we are dealing with politics; simply having good ideas will not often get you very far unless you can bring the public along. Think about the public arena as a screen test before you can move into the inner circles of power—although some do manage to find a shortcut, circumventing this test.

Next, be prepared for the fact that, with rare exceptions, few voices carry the day alone. Most times, voices are accumulative: You find kindred spirits in the corridors of government or they find you. You together prepare a memo (a much more common way to communicate an idea than having a place in the presidential huddle or at the Situation Room table). You run the idea by others, revise the memo, convince others to cosign. Then, often, you need a gatekeeper—the chief of staff or a senator's administrative assistant—to let the memo through the gate, usually after he or she runs it by still other people. In short, whatever grandiose notions I once cherished about making a mark, I learned that in order to have a mark, one must be prepared to allow one's ideas to be reformulated, modified, and folded into other ideas.

Lesson number ten: being a PI is more of a process than a role.

DOWN THE ACTION CHAIN?

I have focused so far on the seats of power in Washington and London. However, if you seek to influence the labor movement, the greens, the Democrats, or another politically relevant body, many of the same observations will apply. Moreover, on all these fronts—and fronts they are, rather than welcoming open doors—a PI must decide how far down the action chain he or she is willing to descend. Some decide to stick to the higher reaches, formulating ideas that they float in the public realm, hoping that they will wash up on the right shore when the time is right. Others jump in and paddle, trying to ensure that their ideas will reach the right harbor just in time. They impatiently call the press when it does not call them and flood editors with op-ed pieces. You hear them on radio call-in shows when they are not on C-SPAN.

Still other PIs are willing to go even further. For instance, I discovered early in my Columbia days where my place was. I could not resist going beyond words. Thus, I joined others in demonstrating against nukes in Trafalgar Square and against the Vietnam War in DC, and I participated with others in knocking on the doors of members of Congress in support of the Voting Rights Act. I do not regret any of these steps, but I do note that the further you go down the action chain—the closer you shift toward an activist rather than a PI role—the more you must realize that not everyone will welcome this transition.

CONCLUSION

Think of the role of a PI as a calling or public service, rather than a joy ride that will get your picture on the front page or on the evening news. There will be many more times that you will be damn sure everyone should listen and nobody will than occasions when you will carry the day. Being a PI has its rewarding moments: when a war finally ends, or when the number of nukes is cut back. (The discovery that I was on Nixon's enemy list—together with a great number of Americans I much admired—made my day.) However, if you are going to persevere, you need a thick skin and considerable stamina, because you will encounter one hurdle after another. Hence, you had best not start down this road unless you are quite sure that this is a mission you firmly believe you ought to take on. See you in the trenches. ∎

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"You Might Be a Public Intellectual If...": A Checklist for Political Scientists, a Challenge for Political Science

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Amitai Etzioni has written something of a pocket guide for public intellectuals, proffering hard-won lessons from his own time in the trenches. I wish that I had read his primer before I tried to break into the club. And I hope that *PS* readers seeking to be PI players read his guide with the right mix of humor, curiosity, and skepticism about the rules of success that Etzioni evinces.

As someone who, like Etzioni, has been granted the "father" moniker for PI grunt work (better than "godfather"!), I can relate to the double-edged nature of the sobriquet. In my case, the label came as a result of my advocacy for the so-called "public option," the idea of creating a Medicare-like public insurance plan to compete with private insurance that became a central issue in the recent health care debate. As the "father of the public option," I was featured in a none-too-friendly YouTube video purporting to uncover my covert agenda for total government take-over of American medicine. (Simultaneously, I was attacked by critics on the left for having given comfort to the private-sector enemy by advocating a public plan that would compete with private insurance, rather than a single public plan.) Needless to say, in these years of Tea Party outrage, I have received more than a few e-mails and phone calls helpfully pointing out that I should be—among other things—"ashamed," "shipped to Gitmo," and made to "pay for [my] treason."

I do not know if Etzioni has some letters of this sort that he pulls out whenever he wants to remind himself why academic solitude is not all bad. But he is correct to emphasize that anyone who wants to push their ideas into public discourse should also be prepared to receive the slings and arrows of American politics.

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On the other hand, Etzioni is rather quiet on the question of *why*. Why should political scientists leave the relative comfort of engaging other political scientists to take on the occasionally rewarding but often bruising—and, in scholarly circles, generally unappreciated—challenge of shaping public debate? In Etzioni's account, public intellectualism is portrayed as some kind of primal urge. "If you want to be a PI," he seems to say, "here is what you need to keep in mind." But why should you want to engage in public intellectualism in the first place?

The question really has two parts. The first is personal: Why should *you* want to engage in public intellectualism? Is this a calling that you can and should heed? Like Etzioni, I prefer to think of "being a PI" as more of a process than a role. Aspiring to *be* a PI is a recipe for frustration, not least because the identity is not self-chosen but bestowed on us by the informal but effective network of gatekeepers who determine access to the public sphere: editors, journalists, advocates, think tanks, political staff, television producers, politicians, and so on. Yet many of us can do the things that PIs do. The question is whether we should desire to.

We all know those "you might be a redneck" jokes made famous by the comedian Jeff Foxworthy. (Clue: "Chiggers are included on your list of top five hygiene concerns.") In my version of the list, "you might be a PI" if you meet the following three criteria: First, your research centers on substantively important issues about which others care. Second, you have the ability to convey your ideas using clear and persuasive language, both written and spoken. And, third, you have enough interest in getting others to agree with or learn from you that you are willing to devote a good deal of time to the challenge. These characteristics certainly do not describe all political scientists, and indeed they probably describe a decreasing share of political scientists as the discipline becomes more specialized (Mead 2010). But they surely describe a fair number more than the handful who actively take up the charge.

Why do so many political scientists who might be PIs not act as PIs? Part of the reason, no doubt, is the ingrained idea that the "intellectual" in the PI moniker is just for show—that many people who are called PIs are simply smooth talkers or facile writers spouting conventional wisdom or personal opinions without serious research to back them up (Posner 2001). No doubt such folks are out there. But dismissing the mission of public intellectualism on the grounds that the field contains

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some substandard practitioners is like dismissing the mission of academic scholarship on the grounds that some academics do work that is shoddy or without impact. The best public intellectuals ground their advocacy in true expertise. They bring substantial learning and hard-won knowledge to bear on contemporary issues. They take carefully derived, sometimes highly technical research findings and translate them into insights that can guide public policy and public discussion. They understand that making their insights accessible or linking them to larger issues is not "dumbing them down," but scaling them up.

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Which brings us to the second part of the question: Why should *political scientists*, in particular, engage in public intellectualism? To put the question more pointedly: why does political science appear to be so underrepresented among the upper ranks of PIs? After all, some fields—history, law, and economics come immediately to mind—tend to produce many more PIs than does political science. Is there some reason why political scientists are not prominent in the roster of contemporary PIs? Should political science be more prominent?

To be sure, we all know (or know of) great political scientists with serious PI credentials. But clearly the list is not as long as the discipline's subject matter would suggest it should be. Political scientists, after all, study politics and public affairs. The discipline's roots lie in the very public intellectualism of the Founding Fathers. The discipline's own founding fathers—Wilson, Bryce, Merriam, Lasswell, and others of similar stature—were, almost without exception, deeply involved in public life as politicians, advocates, and advisers. What has changed? Is this a change for the worse or the better?

I can only speak from my own perspective, of course. But there is a strong case to be made that the lack of a substantial

political science can offer, made vivid by Republican Senator Tom Coburn's thankfully unsuccessful effort to cut off National Science Foundation funding for political science research. ("Theories on political behavior," Coburn opined, "are best left to CNN, pollsters, pundits, historians, candidates, political parties, and the voters" [quoted in Tucker 2009].)

The highly technical quality of much research in the top political science outlets cannot be the core problem, since economics has this tendency in spades and yet has produced a steady stream of PIs. The core problem, it seems to me, is that political science today—unlike political science of previous generations, and unlike many subfields of economics today—is simply not all that interested in the substantive activities of governance (that is, policy). In American politics research and, to a lesser but growing extent, other empirical subfields, the great bulk of research centers on public opinion and political behavior, on the one hand, and models of basic decision making, such as roll-call votes, on the other. The struggle to use the levers of public authority to change the economy and society in durable ways is almost entirely missing from the discipline.

Now, it is certainly possible to have a discipline that studies public policy and produces no PIs. My coauthor Paul Pierson and I have argued for greater integration of substantive public policy into political science on the grounds that it will improve the scientific quality of the discipline (Hacker and Pierson 2009). A political science that ignores policy, we argue, is a poor political science, a political science that fails to capture extremely important aspects of the phenomena under study. Nonetheless, there does seem to be an elective affinity between research that engages with what government does and research that stems from a desire and willingness to wade into policy discussions. A discipline concerned with how policy is made and how it reshapes the economy, society, and polity is simply much better poised to produce scholars

There is a strong case to be made that the lack of a substantial PI presence in contemporary political science is not just paradoxical, but lamentable and avoidable. As a discipline uniquely well-suited to support public engagement, political science suffers when public affairs cease to be an abiding concern of its practitioners. The costs include unhealthy disciplinary self-preoccupation, a fascination with trivial but technically tractable questions, supreme indifference to the stakes of politics—i.e., what government actually does—and a related lack of appreciation outside the discipline for the insights that political science can offer.

PI presence in contemporary political science is not just paradoxical, but lamentable and avoidable. As a discipline uniquely well-suited to support public engagement, political science suffers when public affairs cease to be an abiding concern of its practitioners. The costs include unhealthy disciplinary self-preoccupation, a fascination with trivial but technically tractable questions, supreme indifference to the stakes of politics—i.e., what government actually does—and a related lack of appreciation outside the discipline for the insights that

equipped to speak to fundamental questions about the allocation and use of public authority.

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As Etzioni's commentary suggests, one should not take up the PI banner with visions of easy success in mind. Nor—given where the discipline is right now—should one do so with illusions about winning the minds of fellow political scientists along with the hearts of the people. Political scientists do not

all frown on public engagement, but there is no question that a strong current of skepticism and even hostility toward the PI path runs through the discipline. Certainly, this suspicion has some salutary effects—among other virtues, it encourages scholars to build a strong foundation of research on which to base their policy and political advice. Yet it also carries a major, mostly unacknowledged cost. The message sent to members of the profession is that they should feel free to do what they want in their own spare time, but they should not let these other activities get in the way of their *real* mission of scholastic achievement. Informed attempts to shape public debate based on serious research are, in this perspective, something like a hobby in which one can indulge occasionally and privately—and which others might frown on if they found out about it. No wonder so few political scientists are PIs.

Yet speaking truth to power is not a hobby. It is, as Etzioni puts it, "a calling or public service" (655). As a profession dedicated to the understanding of how societies resolve collective problems, allocate resources, and manage—or fail to manage— conflicts with sometimes life-or-death stakes, political science has a special ability and, yes, a special obligation to seek

to influence the direction of governance when it can offer real guidance. It would be good for neither the discipline nor its practitioners if every political scientist started to fixate on the *New York Times* op-ed page. But it would be good, at least in this political scientist's view, if many more integrated the study of public policy into their research. And it would be even better if at least a modestly larger number felt willing to take up the PI mantle when they believed their research had clear implications for the construction of a better society. ■

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A Life in Civil Rights

Gary Orfield, *University of California, Los Angeles*

I have lived a life in which I have often been involved in public debates and controversies, but not as a public intellectual whose ideas were embraced by the White House or celebrated by the *New York Review of Books.* Mine has been a very different kind of experience that could be characterized more as an against-the-grain persistence in digging into some fundamental questions of social inequality that were fashionable a half century ago but were abandoned by most Americans with influence and power. I am convinced that we have no viable policies in place that will produce a healthy and successful society as our vast racial transition continues. My research has convinced me that there are much better answers.

Over the years, I have worked to understand the realities of racial injustice and possible cures, expand knowledge, and participate in the great debates over policy. I began this work in college and knew that I wanted a career of both research and action. Over many years, I have learned how to create and disseminate important new information on unpopular and sometimes explosive topics. My work has primarily been invested in a large, sustained collaborative effort to create new knowledge and policies that enhance civil rights. Increasingly, this has meant that my role has shifted toward being an organizer and collaborator in intellectual, legal, and policy networks, rather than being a stand-alone academic. I co-founded a unique university-based think tank, the Civil Rights Project, which has worked with colleagues across the country in a growing national network of scholars concerned with civil rights. We have worked to commission more than 450 studies, publish numerous books, and foster a new generation of interdisciplinary civil rights researchers in a difficult time.

I was told at various stages of my career that playing an active role in policy battles was incompatible with being a political scientist, and that this engagement would hurt my career. Sometimes it did. I lost some job opportunities, particularly early in my career, and I did not receive any significant funding for many years. Nevertheless, my career turned out to be endlessly fascinating. I have had many amazing colleagues who were willing to work very hard on issues that lacked prestige in their discipline, with little or no money, even when they knew that their work was likely to be ignored or attacked. The dissemination of research disclosing discrimination and supporting racial change often leads to attacks by agencies with resources and skilled lawyers in high-stakes legal battles. Anyone who wants to be seriously engaged in intellectual, legal, and political struggles would be foolish to think that the leaders of the institutions being challenged would simply yield to the force of research. Working for deep change in the worlds of law and policy means working under fire.

BEGINNINGS

I always wanted to do work on social justice. Even as an undergraduate, I ran the student government and organized student projects on Minnesota's Indian reservations while researching my thesis on presidential leadership in racial crises. I grew up in Minnesota, a state where progressive politics had some of its greatest triumphs, and I always believed that research and ideas can make a difference. I wanted to become a political scientist to understand the nature of American political institutions and ideologies in order to research and teach, but also to use this knowledge to be part of efforts to address what I saw as the tragedy of race in American society. I have always been fascinated by the operation of institutions and political processes, but frustrated by the fact that few political scientists have any significant role in operating or improving those institutions or playing a major role in policymaking. Sociologists, economists, lawyers, and others who do play important roles in these processes usually lack the understanding of institutions and politics that would make policy more effective.

During graduate school, several professors gave me advice: "Don't get involved in politics or causes, keep your head down, stay clear, publish a lot of things in refereed journals, develop new concepts that speak to the discipline, and you'll have a wonderful career." I was warned against bringing values into my work and told that my very high math scores meant that I could ride the next big wave. Instead of conducting a sophisticated statistical study with theoretical innovations, however, I chose to write my dissertation on the administration of the racial transformation of the South under the Great Society. When I first entered the job market, I was turned down by three universities on one very sad day—Stanford, Minnesota, and Rutgers. My thesis was about the politics, law, and administration of a social revolution, but faculty members, especially at Stanford, wanted to talk about theoretical models. It was hard to understand why many political scientists were not interested in a law that peacefully ended deeply rooted apartheid institutions in a third of our states, an astonishing accomplishment for a democracy. After the University of Virginia hired me at the last moment, I received a contract to publish my dissertation and was pleased to discover that there was a market for my work, even though it ran against the grain.

I have always had a Midwestern skepticism about intellectual pretensions and disliked academic politics. Although I spent a quarter century working mainly in political science departments and research centers, the most important contacts

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I have made have been with networks of researchers from many disciplines and activists and policymakers working on social policy. Although I have written for and been an editor of many academic publications and believe they serve an essential purpose, I have always considered them, with few exceptions, of little importance for policy, because they have so few readers in that world and their publication delays mean that they are often unable to address a current issue before the policy has already been decided. I have learned that other kinds of writing and action have far greater policy resonance, and that most of the research that makes a difference in these spheres becomes important either because it is created for or taken up by major governmental leaders, or because it becomes very visible in the media or in social or political movements. Much of my work that has made a difference and has made me visible has been produced in the form of reports, testimony, and work with courts on major class action cases. We are a nation governed largely by lawyers and with extremely powerful courts, so legal disputes and decisions are a critical source of ideas and policies, especially when the political institutions are deadlocked—as they usually are on civil rights issues. I became far more involved in the courts than I ever expected, and I am grateful for my judicial process training.

WORKING AGAINST THE TIDE

I decided very early in my career that I could not be a "value-free" researcher. I never accepted the value-free behavioral positivism that was becoming increasingly dominant in the profession. Although I greatly respect serious empirical research, American social science has too often mistakenly understood the true positivist proposition that one cannot prove what one cannot measure to mean that researchers must limit themselves to what can be measured statistically. While it is important to conduct the collection and analysis of data in the most serious and objective way, it seems clear to me that the selection of what questions one studies and decisions about what one does with the new knowledge after the research is done are also important and different in character. Acknowledging my values, I think, makes me more careful, knowing that others will be looking for bias in my work. Too much research has implicit, unacknowledged biases.

Scholars have a very privileged position in society, being paid to study, write, teach, uncover data that no one else has ever seen, and challenge the dominant ideas of their time. They also have a corresponding responsibility. If a person discovers something very important, he or she should let people know. In a very stratified society in which different groups have radically different abilities to communicate, I feel a special responsibility to help the voiceless be heard.

CIVIL RIGHTS

The civil rights movement deeply influenced my understanding of the nature of American society. I was in the midst of researching the poverty program in the middle of Watts the day the Los Angeles riots went out of control in 1965 and hastened the end of the liberal era in California. I saw places I knew become ruins and racism dramatically break out on both sides of racial boundaries in a city where many thought great progress had been made. The day after Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, I saw great pillars of smoke rising from riots in Washington, DC. I interviewed the GOP congressman whose vote shortly afterwards saved the fair housing law; he told me that he had been praying with his minister because he did not want the kind of country he feared we were becoming. I saw a conference room in Atlanta full of federal civil rights bureaucrats who had done much to transform the South begin to cry when they received the message that President Nixon had ordered them to stop using the most powerful enforcement provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In cities across the nation, I saw sweeping changes occur year after year, first in the direction of racial progress and then toward reaction and retreat.

My graduate studies with John Hope Franklin, the great African American historian, had a lasting impact on me, particularly his vivid description of the way that white scholars abandoned the cause of civil rights and developed studies rationalizing and praising the reinstitution of unlimited white supremacy in the South. I resolved to become engaged in the battles over the destiny of what some called the second reconstruction. There were already signs that the brief consensus to address racial segregation was collapsing. By the time I began to teach, it was apparent that the country was heading into a period of intense conservative effort to dismantle civil rights. I watched the Democrats retreat and the Republicans forget about Lincoln and join in a coalition with southern segregationists. It was depressing to see how fast white intellectuals moved from active support for forced change in southern racial practices to a tacit and sometimes explicit embrace of the idea that nothing could be done about the racial conditions in our northern and western cities. I had hoped to interact regularly with a progressive government working on civil rights. That turned out to be a pipe dream.

When you decide to engage in large national issues, you confront the unpredictable tides of history. The political and legal setting became far harsher than I had expected. Coming of age in the 1960s, under the Warren Court and in the Kennedy-Johnson era, I had no idea that the next 40 years would see no liberal administrations, and that in terms of civil rights, as Julian Bond has said, we would have one party that was "shameless" and another that was "spineless." I had no idea that the Warren Court would be the high point of civil rights law for the next four decades, that the conservative movement would virtually eliminate GOP congressional moderates, or that the Democratic Party would win the White House only twice in forty years, and only with moderate pro-business southerners who would produce no significant new initiatives on race or urban policy.

My view was that even at the height of the civil rights reform, we were barely beginning to seriously discuss the issues of metropolitan racial inequality. The Civil War had shattered the nation's first system of racial oppression, slavery, and the civil rights movement, and the laws of the 1960s had ended many aspects of legal apartheid in the South, but we still had a system of profound inequality based on residential

segregation in our metropolitan areas, where education and other opportunities were allocated by location and location was allocated by race. It was clear to me that policies such as affirmative action and fair housing were essential but seriously inadequate. Urban school desegregation became the only substantial effort to break the self-perpetuating nature of metropolitan segregation in the twentieth century, and this policy was fiercely resisted from the outset and critically limited within three years of the first favorable Supreme Court decision in 1971.

My career had to take shape largely on the outside. The political climate left only research and pockets of government as places to work for change. I did some research for what turned out to be a crucial Supreme Court decision, I wrote in presidential campaigns that failed. I published magazine and

would be a better social policy climate in Congress. A great campuswide meeting of students and faculty was held in the chapel following the invasion, and I proposed creating what I called the Movement for a New Congress, asking students to commit to participate in congressional campaigns. One quarter of Princeton students volunteered, and the idea quickly spread to four hundred colleges. Within days, students were working in primary campaigns. Almost immediately, candidates appealed for support, and the New Jersey GOP Senate candidate actually offered to change his position on the war if we would endorse him.

It was an amazing moment. Although all my classes met during this time and we spent no university resources, the Nixon administration threatened to revoke the tax-exempt status of Princeton unless the effort was shut down. I was called

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newspaper articles. I testified and worked against three of Nixon's Supreme Court appointees—Carswell, Haynsworth, and Rehnquist—people I saw as a racist, a mediocre anti-civil rights conservative, and a fiercely anti–civil rights Justice Department official. When Rehnquist was first nominated in 1971, the FBI actually called my home in Princeton junior faculty housing demanding that I call back that night to tell them whether I planned to testify against him and what my source of information was. It turned out that the bureau had called all critics of Nixon's appointees on orders from the White House. That made me determined to testify.

The vast majority of my policy work was off campus. I have had limited interest in campus issues, generally agreeing with Wallace Sayre that "the politics of the university are so intense because the stakes are so low." There was one significant exception to this rule. When President Nixon invaded Cambodia in 1970 after promising to end the Vietnam War, an incredible surge of opposition rose on campuses across the country. I perceived antiwar protests on campus to be ineffective and thought that it would be much better to direct student energy against congressional candidates supporting the invasion, which would have the side effect of producing what I hoped

into a meeting with the provost and several elite New York lawyers and asked to go on leave without pay. I refused, saying I was meeting my academic responsibilities, and that I had academic freedom to engage in this effort. The salary from this job was also my only income, and I had a baby at home. The provost called me the next day and apologized, but this incident and other problems cut short my time at Princeton, a campus on which I did not fit, in any case. My departure led me to spend five years in Washington, which turned out to be invaluable for understanding the policy process.

Ironically, because of the notoriety of the Princeton experience, two publishers offered me contracts to write a book on Congress, which became *Congressional Power: Congress and Social Change*. This volume grew directly out of the lessons I had learned about Congress from my involvement in policy battles and presented ideas that differed sharply from the then-received wisdom in the discipline. I believe that this book convinced colleagues that I was a true political scientist with something important to say about the central political science questions. The lessons I learned from activism gave me the understanding that eventually helped me gain tenure in the discipline.

SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

After leaving Princeton, I went first to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, then an independent, bipartisan federal agency that had formulated much of the legal agenda of the civil rights revolution. I was chosen as scholar-in-residence for a year, a position that allowed me to go anywhere in the country and study whatever I thought important. That time was the height of the busing controversy, as scores of cities across the country implemented desegregation orders following the Supreme Court's 1971 *Swann* decision. I decided to visit 10 school districts across the country to hold confidential discussions with teachers and educational leaders about what was happening. What I found within the schools bore no resemblance to the public perception of the issue, which had been inflamed by the bitter attacks of Alabama's George Wallace and President Richard Nixon.

At the same time, I also worked with a leading polling firm to conduct a national survey on busing and learned that public opinion was much more complex than the popular surveys suggested. This experience, and other surveys over the years, convinced me that public opinion on issues is malleable, and that attitudes tend to change in a notably positive direction after people come into contact with the people they fear. It is also clear that attitudes can become more hostile when policies are reversed and opposition incited, and when people no longer have such real-life experiences. Too often, researchers assume that public attitudes—some of which are the product of political exploitation of fears—must be taken as inherent limits on policy.

ENTERING THE CRUCIBLE OF COURT BATTLES OVER CIVIL RIGHTS

Life in a policy stream is unpredictable. While the research world has clear pathways for progress through conferences, publications, and subjects featured in leading journals, the policy world is disparate and multidimensional. Sometimes a chance conversation at a meeting or an interview for a newspaper article leads to an important idea, while research requiring a year of serious work disappears without a trace. It is important to network broadly, interact continually with people in the field, be willing to participate in events of little apparent value, respond to media inquiries, and be ready to seize unexpected opportunities. Networks often open up important opportunities.

My visits to schools undergoing desegregation, for example, had surprising consequences. One article that I wrote for a law journal became an important source for school districts facing sudden desegregation orders, and I was invited to speak and meet with leaders and educators in cities with new orders to help them strategize. The Justice Department cited the article in a brief to the Supreme Court in a case, *Milliken II*, in which the Court authorized ordering states to pay to treat various educational deficiencies of segregated education. A visit to Louisville initiated a long-term involvement that, years later, led to a role in a case that went before the Supreme Court in 2006. The same school district interviews became the basis for my testimony as a central witness for a Florida federal court case, *Debra P*, which saved the diplomas of thousands of Florida's black students and set important standards for implementation of high school exit exams (which have highly disproportionate racial impacts), although it failed to end the practice. I never claimed that those interviews were systematic or scientific, but I had gathered more information on the issue than anyone else, so they mattered. In public policy or in court, decision makers have to make decisions using the best available information. Even admittedly exploratory research can sometimes have a large impact.

Shortly afterwards, my Civil Rights Commission work led the Brookings Institution to offer me a job writing a book on the busing conflict. This was an immensely complicated and controversial study, and it took years to complete *Must We Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy*, a combination of legal analysis, study of trends in urban segregation, analysis of the relationship between housing and school segregation, public opinion trends, the politics and law of the issue, and the best existing evidence on what worked under which conditions. During the process, I published articles on these issues in legal, political science, education, and other journals, magazines, and newspapers. I sponsored a research conference on the "white flight" controversy and chaired the committee of the National Institute of Education, which was developing a research agenda in the field. Those articles established me as an authority in the field and led to many opportunities to become part of the policy process as courts and communities tried to figure out what to do.

At this point, the judge in the Los Angeles (*Crawford*) case, the largest case in the country, called, informed me that both sides were using my articles, and asked me to serve as an expert to the court. Working to answer the hard questions posed by the court about the feasibility of remedies for a vast city undergoing massive changes made me far more conscious of the immense growth of the Latino population and its massive impact on the nation's future. This understanding lead me to spend the next summer in Mexico to begin to acquire Spanish and study the nature of the immigration that would make Latinos the nation's largest minority two decades later.

The reports that I and two other experts filed in Los Angeles concluded that serious, stable desegregation was impossible inside the city but could work if extended far into suburbia—a move that was feasible technically and would have been possible under California law. The reports provoked a referendum called Proposition One, the passage of which radically cut back on the state's constitutional rights to desegregated education. This referendum was upheld by the increasingly conservative California and U.S. courts.

It is a reality that telling the truth—that large changes are needed—can sometimes trigger defeat. Voters in white areas were convinced that they could block racial change in their neighborhoods by blocking busing. In fact, however, as our reports predicted, many of these previously white neighborhoods became Latino as segregated housing spread and most white families left. Ironically, the best chance of preserving a stable, interracial neighborhood where whites would continue to live and use public schools was offered by the plan that their votes struck down. Decades of evidence now show that residential and school integration outcomes have been

the most stable in areas where the desegregation plan included the suburbs as well as the city.

When the Justice Department submitted a plan for the desegregation of Cleveland that required all schools to enroll three-quarters black students, I criticized it as counterproductive, because the scheme was unlikely to last and would produce very few educational or social benefits. A similar plan was submitted in St. Louis, one of the poorest, most rapidly declining central cities in the United States. Because the lawyers feared a likely loss in the court, they asked me to testify on the last day of the trial to offer another possible alternative. The idea that I proposed was to create as much stable integration and expanded magnet choices as were feasible inside the city, and to bring in the suburbs as much as possible. To my surprise, the Court of Appeals affirmed my idea and ordered the judge to appoint an expert to work with the district in developing a plan. The judge offered me this task, and a very capable and brave school superintendent agreed to work with me, his own planning staff, and a citizens committee to figure out how to transform the school district within the two-month deadline. Superintendent Robert Wentz recognized that the court order created the opportunity to make changes on a scale that would be impossible within the normal parochial politics of school boards and state agencies. Within six weeks, we had formulated a plan to close more than 20 unneeded schools, initiate a new grade structure, create 16 new magnet schools, create as many 50-50 desegregated schools as possible, heavily subsidize the remaining segregated schools, and begin an effort to exchange students with the suburbs. The school board, which had previously been bitterly divided, voted unanimously to support the plan.

I submitted a report to the court recommending approval, which the judge quickly granted. A central problem we encountered was how to pay for any remedy, since the city was desperately poor, no tax increase referendum had passed for many years, and many schools were literally falling apart. Because I knew of a Missouri federal court decision that held that the state must take affirmative measures to desegregate, I sent a young Washington University political scientist, Karen Dawson, to the state capital to interview key education officials about whether the state had taken any affirmative steps. They admitted that they had done nothing. My report documented the state's failure and recommended that it be required to finance the entire plan. Within weeks, the court found the state liable and ordered it to provide the funds, generating an endless set of attacks by the state Attorney General, John Ashcroft, who would become governor, senator, and then U.S. attorney general under the second President Bush.

The St. Louis order produced more than a billion dollars to rebuild schools, finance new magnets, and give extra funds and programs to the schools that could not be desegregated, and it set the stage for a battle that eventually led the suburbs to accept sufficient voluntary transfer of students from the city so that the population of each school would become about one-quarter black. One reason that the suburbs eventually accepted this plan was that the judge announced that if they went to trial and were found guilty of intentional segregation—a finding for which there was powerful evidence—he would order implementation of my proposal, which would simply merge them with the city district and fully desegregate the metropolitan area, as had been done in Wilmington, Delaware. The consent agreement created the largest voluntary suburban transfer plan in U.S. history, which produced powerful benefits for the 14,000 students who were transferred to suburban schools each year, before conservative Supreme Court rulings began to cut back the plan in the late 1990s.

Understanding the legal and educational systems allowed me to help foster large changes. Few people initially thought that families would be interested in transfers, but this approach worked on a large scale for three decades. The experience convinced me that under the right policies, considerable desegregation was possible in almost all metropolitan areas and could produce substantial educational and social gains. Had the times and the Supreme Court composition been different, this example might have had large national implications. The St. Louis experiment showed, in a very difficult context, that options existed that no one had believed possible. My first meeting with the suburban superintendents was accompanied by National Guard helicopters flying overhead and a climate of extreme tension. One year later, a group of the superintendents invited me to dinner and talked about how well the plan had gone. A bitterly resisted idea actually developed serious support in suburbia. When one affluent suburban community considered withdrawal decades later, the local white students shamed the school board into abandoning the idea.

In another case in the early 1980s, in San Francisco, I represented the judge and helped negotiate a settlement between civil rights groups, the state, and the school district for a plan that produced a high level of desegregation and educational change largely through choice mechanisms and desegregation standards. After I visited schools in which no teachers wanted to work and to which no students would transfer, we invented a method of emptying out failing segregated schools and "reconstituting" them. Under this approach, new principals gained extraordinary power to hire from anywhere in the nation and received resources and strong professional support from the school district to create new schools with appealing educational programs. At the same time that a program of simply allocating funds for locally designed reforms at the school level failed, our longitudinal research showed real progress for students at the reconstituted schools. This method was subsequently adopted in Chicago and elsewhere and became part of the Obama reform agenda, but it was disconnected from both the resources and the desegregation that made it successful when conducted properly in San Francisco.

Reconstitution is like open heart surgery. The process is disruptive and should only be done in the absence of other good alternatives, and only then with expert support. Unfortunately, reconstitution became a popular, tough-sounding idea that policymakers tried to enact cheaply on a mass scale. Although research showed that its implementation failed in Chicago, it became a priority in the Obama program under the name of "turnaround schools." Researchers need to fight against misuse of their research. No one wants open heart surgery when the procedure is not really essential, and no one

wants surgery to be conducted by a medical team that does not have the needed resources.

RESEARCH AND POLICY

Major research projects are very important in contemporary policy debates. Civil rights supporters are often accused of lacking fully developed research evidence. The coin of the realm tends to be large-scale national surveys with data that follow a national sample of students over time or randomized experiments. A basic problem of this kind of research is that getting access from school districts and collecting high-quality data over time on such sensitive issues costs a great deal of money and is extremely hard to do without official support. The government rarely places money and support behind issues it does not want to address.

During the Carter administration, I ran a federal committee of leading scholars from various disciplines and ideologies that generated and selected research proposals on racial diversity for the National Institute of Education. This committee had a consensus of leading liberal and conservative scholars. As soon as the Reagan administration came into office, the committee was disbanded, the staff was fired, and none of the proposed studies were ever funded. Over the next three decades, the federal government funded no major studies of segregation and desegregation. We do not have the highest quality data today, because the government does not want it. As well, you cannot scientifically measure alternatives that do not exist on a reasonable scale or that have never been seriously studied. Much of the civil rights revolution concerned changes that had never been tried in the South. Should researchers have said nothing about the apartheid system of education because gold standard research did not exist? For me, the answer to such a question is that we should use the best available tools and data to investigate important issues while acknowledging our limitations. We should figure out how to expand research, report descriptive data when they are the best that is available, and state what we think these data mean. This is how new ideas are created, policies are tried, and agendas are expanded. It is important to notify the public of data about inequalities that would not otherwise be known, stimulating public discussions about causes and solutions, and demanding the research and experiments we need.

I have tried hard to translate and write popular versions of my research without distorting the findings. Most people who make policy do not read academic studies. Many cannot interpret simple descriptive data tables or graphs, and they are uninterested in the meta-analyses. The typical scholarly conclusion that we need more research is seen by policymakers as a dodge. Decisions must be made, so the question becomes whether intellectuals should engage in presenting the best available evidence or should simply abstain, letting obviously important decisions be made on the basis of prejudice or anecdote. My choice has been to be engaged.

Sometimes a group whose goals I share backs policies or programs that are not actually working or are even causing harm. I have decided that my greatest value to these groups is to be honest. Lawyers often push for testimony that is unambiguous and goes beyond what the research actually shows because they

are fighting to win a case. If they lose, they get nothing for themselves or their clients. Similarly, groups running programs always want positive evaluations. In lawsuits, the opponents usually have far more resources and power, and the judge is often part of the local establishment, so the process is stacked against change. Both expert witnessing and program evaluation are often corrupted by witnesses whose opinions can be bought and evaluators who always find benefits. But if you lie for your side, you violate your profession and ultimately undermine reform goals, prevent needed improvements, and contribute to a loss of credibility for the organization. Researchers and advocates must develop mutual respect for long-term success and realize that it is much better to tell the truth than to play politics, though the truth can be harmful in the short run.

Scholars warn of the dangers of involvement, but you also gain knowledge and data that are impossible to get from the outside. No scholar can command public agencies to provide data (although freedom of information requests sometimes work), but courts can issue commands. Lawyers involved in discovery processes in lawsuits, as well as legislative committees, can force disclosure. A researcher would normally never see these data. While working with a legislative or congressional committee, I have seen data emerge from agencies with lightning speed to produce new insights and findings.

I have had to become tough about the attacks that are often made in response to research on racial problems. There are leaders of major institutions who are political hacks, racists, or passive representatives of the status quo, and they will do almost anything to try to discredit a critic, including launching press attacks, attempting to cut off funding, and claiming bias. Press attacks can stir up angry responses—I once received a signed death threat. Insults are normal. I do not respond in kind to attacks; instead, I try to return the discussion to the data, which critics want to hide. In civil rights battles, the people who are attacking are often the same people who must implement the remedy if a case is won or a policy changed. I have found that if you treat those people who attack you with respect and appeal to their professionalism without retreating on the facts, they will sometimes change their minds and become advocates of the new policy, or at least implement it better. Officials who have publicly assailed a civil rights policy have privately told me that they knew what was right but could not propose it without risking their job. Many scholarly studies relying on public records lead readers to think that there is much more polarization and much less capacity for peaceful and successful change than actually exists. The resulting research is inaccurate and contains its own bias.

CHICAGO, METROPOLITAN REALITY, AND BIG RESEARCH WITH FEW DOLLARS

When I was appointed to the political science department at the University of Chicago, I expected to be there for the rest of my life. I knew that a central problem for American civilization was how to produce equal opportunity in the metropolitan areas that had become home to four out of every five Americans, and that I wanted to truly understand the greater Chicago community. I joined the boards of a number of civil

rights and urban reform groups and conducted many Chicago-based studies. I learned that, with rare exceptions, the institutions that were engaged in issues of minority rights and opportunities had almost no research capacity, and government agencies had almost no interest in looking at racial inequality. Black and Latino groups did, however, represent huge constituencies with urgent problems, have rich experience and important networks, and command attention from the mass media and political leaders. They were often happy to publish reports written by me or my students. Sometimes, these reports got a great deal of attention. It was great to work with them, and this work built relationships and led to good scholarly work and deep engagement by the students.

In studying metropolitan issues, it became apparent that the one-person research model would not work. Getting information from multiple institutions and sources, analyzing the

Then, in 1988, after working in Chicago for seven years, something truly unexpected happened. The president of the Spencer Foundation, the nation's only major private funder of educational research, visited my office and told me that I had been named a Senior Scholar by the Foundation and would receive $300,000 that I could use in any way I thought best. After working for years to scrape up a few thousand dollars for out-of-pocket costs for my local studies, this grant was a godsend. I used this money to start new research ventures that were often much broader in scope, sparing myself the very long delays and uncertainty of foundation grants and allowing myself to respond almost immediately to new possibilities or urgent policy issues, and to initiate many studies over a 10-year period. Unquestionably, this funding helped in the national projection of my work and the development of many projects, including the book, *The Closing Door: Conser-*

Scholars warn of the dangers of involvement, but you also gain knowledge and data that are impossible to get from the outside. No scholar can command public agencies to provide data (although freedom of information requests sometimes work), but courts can issue commands. Lawyers involved in discovery processes in lawsuits, as well as legislative committees, can force disclosure. A researcher would normally never see these data. While working with a legislative or congressional committee, I have seen data emerge from agencies with lightning speed to produce new insights and findings.

data, and understanding policy, legal, and political contexts required the work of many people. I could not get funding for the kind of issues I was interested in researching during the 1980s. I could not even get data from the Reagan administration, in which one head of the civil rights office informed the staff that anyone who talked to me would be fired. I did not have colleagues at the university who were interested in doing this work. The solution I discovered was to make my students my colleagues and create research teams that offered course credits, real world research experience, publication, and opportunities to testify about their studies. The basic model was something as much as possible like a professional research team working with a large research grant: we gave ourselves an impressive name, issued reports as if we were a major funded project, and insisted on professional quality work. Our first effort was a study published by the Latino Institute, which received substantial local attention. The next, the Chicago Study of Access and Choice in Higher Education, was the first study ever conducted that investigated the flow of students from all high schools through all colleges in a big metropolitan region. Our findings showed a pattern of segregated and unequal educational opportunity throughout all levels of the system, including a 3,000% variation in the level of successful transfers among the region's community colleges that was strongly related to race and community affluence. I learned that if we could gain access to the datasets of public institutions and independently examine their data, we could greatly expand what was known at little cost.

vative Policy and Black Opportunity, which used metropolitan Atlanta to directly challenge William J. Wilson's theory about the relationship between economic growth and racial inequality, arguing that race was more fundamental.

HARVARD AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT

In 1991, I moved from the political science department at Chicago to the Graduate School of Education at Harvard because I wanted to move to a more powerful and visible level of involvement with public policy. I was sure that future action would focus on education policy, since this is the one area of active government that is very widely approved by the American public.

Because political scientists have little direct connection with educational policymakers, I decided that the Harvard School of Education would be a better base. The most important education schools train many of the nation's key leaders in the field and have strong networks, legitimacy, and many opportunities for serious involvement. Chicago is a great social science graduate school, but because of its theoretical orientation, it has very weak connections with public policy. I decided to move to a much more diverse school, where virtually everyone shared the goal of equalizing educational opportunity and had practical experience in studying and implementing change. I did worry about the loss of disciplinary credibility that might result from leaving a social science department, but the School of Education had fine researchers from many disciplines and enormous prestige in the field, and I also taught in

the Kennedy School. Harvard is the most visible university in the world and provides great access to both the Boston–Washington policy corridor and the national media. Officials love to be invited to events at Harvard. The opportunities multiplied.

A turning point in my work came when I co-taught a course with a Harvard Law School colleague, Christopher Edley, a brilliant and eloquent policy entrepreneur who became President Clinton's advisor on affirmative action. An important book, *Dismantling Desegregation*, began in that class and my friendship with Chris deepened. That relationship became very important after the nation's two largest states, California and Texas, banned affirmative action for college admission in 1996, and it looked like the nation's selective colleges might well face resegregation if the conservative Supreme Court were to decide that any positive consideration of race in college admissions was inherently illegal. In a country with segregated and unequal public schools and families with profoundly unequal resources where most large public universities admitted students using formulas derived from test scores and grades, apart from affirmative action, the crisis seemed imminent. Drawing on Harvard prestige, Chris and I called an emergency meeting of college presidents, federal civil rights officials, legal and social science scholars, and civil rights groups in the spring of 1996 to consider the challenges and create a discussion about what to do.

The off-the-record session drew an astonishing array of leaders on very short notice but was a deeply sobering affair. We discovered that neither the college presidents nor the government leaders had any alternative plan. Scholars had done very little research on the central proposition that had kept affirmative action legal since 1978—that diversity produced educational advantages for all students and thus was a compelling interest that justified race-conscious admissions. This proposition was not a leading issue in sociology or education, and there were actually more studies on the difficulties that students of color faced on white campuses than on the benefits of desegregated campuses for all students. The empirical basis for the Supreme Court's 1978 *Bakke* decision authorizing affirmative action rested on the findings of a Harvard faculty committee. These findings were not likely to suffice in a much more conservative Supreme Court.

We were shaken by the meeting and knew that large research holes existed in other areas of civil rights policy. We decided to create a research center with the explicit goal of bringing together scholars in social science and law to address the fundamental legal and policy questions using the best possible research to create the knowledge base for future civil rights policy. We had no idea whether this plan was possible or what kind of response we would receive, either in the academic world or in the legal and policy arena. We received a small grant from the MacArthur Foundation, hired one graduate student, and created the Civil Rights Project, which is now 14 years old. The project has never had a large budget or more than four researchers on staff. It has basically operated as a collaborative effort of scholars across the nation working on projects that are coordinated by the directors, staff, and graduate students. The Civil Rights Project was a small project

that developed a large policy footprint, partly using the lessons I learned from my Chicago experience and Chris's Washington expertise.

The response from the academic world surprised us. It turned out that there were many people at all levels of academia who cared deeply about civil rights and an integrated society. With no political leadership and no organized academic movement, it had been difficult for these people to become involved in civil rights efforts. Many young people had grown up in a nation where there was no leadership on these issues, but they recognized the reality of sweeping racial change, knew something was wrong, and wanted to be involved. Some of the most intensely interested people had experienced desegregated education. Many academics were worried about losing what they saw as only half-completed affirmative action work on their campuses and had broader concerns about the social crisis of growing inequality. When we asked our best scholars to address these urgent issues and make their results accessible, the vast majority agreed, although we had very little money to offer them. Our Harvard Law School and School of Education connections meant that we had the power to bring people together, and we created intense meetings in which scholars were required to shorten and sharpen their points and to face skeptical interrogation by lawyers and activists—a system that proved to be very stimulating and greatly improved the research. Each year, securing funding was difficult, and we never received government or Harvard money, but Chris Edley was able to pull rabbits out of foundation hats.

At the Color Lines conference in 2003, a large, one-time grant enabled us to send a challenge to the academic world to look beyond the present crisis and investigate what was really happening to American society as it went through an unprecedented transition from two hundred years with an 80%–90% white majority to a time in the near future when there would be no majority population. We received over five hundred proposals from researchers and commissioned 110 studies, which were presented in a spectacular conference with a giant tent and scores of classrooms at Harvard Law School. More than eleven hundred scholars paid their own way to come, and we were forced to turn away many others for simple lack of capacity. This event told us that we had defined issues that were of compelling interest to many scholars from many disciplines, and that incredible potential existed. Unfortunately, we could only hold such a conference once, and it was always very difficult to obtain even small grants for research. Few foundations actually fund social research, and none besides the Ford Foundation have a continuing serious interest in civil rights. There was no liberal counterpart of the Heritage Foundation or the American Enterprise Institute in Washington with lots of money to generate progressive policy research on race and disseminate it powerfully. We could get individual projects funded, but we could not support a significant continuing staff, and we were never secure financially for more than a year at a time. Only briefly were we able to employ a public relations person, which makes an obvious difference in a program's success. No wealthy donor ever gave us money. At Harvard, we had to raise money to pay high rent for space. It is very

difficult to keep a research program going without any long-term or infrastructure funding. We wanted an ongoing staff with flexibility to move quickly on emerging issues, but most foundations work slowly and provide short-term, specific funding, and so we had to learn to be creative.

My job was to coordinate and manage the research, figure out how to create new lines of research, and launch new issues and publications while teaching large classes, which I loved. I had to decide whether I wanted to devote my research energy to my own projects and books, or to the organization of an intellectual movement. I knew that many voices had to be involved in the effort, and that it was essential that young scholars be launched and given visibility and voice. Every individual project involved many demands for overall direction, quality control, and framing of events and publications. From the beginning, our conferences included work by graduate students and young faculty, and the graduate students we hired to coordinate conferences and help with editing manuscripts and books were soon publishing and finding academic positions around the country themselves. Researchers found colleagues and co-authors in our conferences and publications. Subjects that had been largely neglected in research were revived. We learned how to create large discussions in the academic world by issuing calls for papers, staging private research roundtables to dissect and improve work, issuing reports to the media, holding national conferences, and publishing books as interest grew. More and more people—sometimes as many as a million a month—visited our Web site. I and many others became more prominent voices in the key debates.

When it went to the Supreme Court, the affirmative action battle was an excellent reflection of what we had created. We began almost immediately to commission research in this area, hold sessions, and let researchers know the questions that we thought would have to be answered in a high-stakes Supreme Court battle. We published two books of research on whether there really were compelling educational reasons for affirmative action and whether or not alternative policies that could preserve diversity existed. We never had enough money to put major research projects in the field, so much of this work involved finding scholars who knew how to tap existing datasets or institutional data to answer important aspects of the questions. Our first book, *Chilling Admissions*, investigated the aftermath of the bans in Texas and California, documented the obstacles the bans created, and analyzed the huge losses of minority students that could be expected in the absence of affirmative action. Much of the work we commissioned showed evidence of the positive benefits of diverse educational experiences and appeared in the book *Diversity Challenged*. In one project, we worked with former Harvard President Derek Bok to survey law students about their experiences at the Harvard and Michigan law schools. All racial and ethnic groups of students reported large and multiple impacts on their legal education and even their understanding of the society and their profession from the interactions that took place within diverse student bodies. Bok, a number of social scientists, and I served as expert witnesses in the trial, and an amazing array of lawyers used our research in briefs submitted by many of the most powerful corporations and interest groups in the United States.

Lawyers from the Civil Rights Project also drafted a brief submitted by the American Educational Research Association.

By the time the Bush administration asked the Supreme Court to end affirmative action, it had conceded the point that diversity was an important educational value—an important victory. They claimed that affirmative action was unnecessary, arguing that the "percent plans" operating in Texas and Florida showed that a nonracial system of preferences for top students in each high school could produce diversity without affirmative action. We had studied the Texas plan from the beginning and knew that this approach worked fairly well at the University of Texas at Austin because it explicitly built on the high level of segregation in the Texas schools and was backed by a targeted scholarship program and other supports that would not likely work on other campuses. We expected the administration to emphasize the 20% plan adopted by Florida when Governor Jeb Bush ended affirmative action there, a plan the White House had hailed. Anticipating this strategy, the year before the Supreme Court hearing, three of us went to Florida and conducted more than one hundred interviews in the state capital and on all the leading campuses. We found out within days that almost nothing that had been claimed about the plan was true, that almost all the students it purported to help would have been eligible for admissions in any case, that it did nothing to assure integration of the selective campuses, and that the University of Florida was still practicing many forms of affirmative action, although not in admissions decisions. The day after we released well-documented reports on Florida and a comparative statistical study of the three states with percent plans, we were harshly attacked by both the White House and the governor of Florida. These percent plans were little discussed in the oral arguments and the administration's argument failed.

When the decision was handed down the next June, the Supreme Court upheld affirmative action, and, in a rare honor, our book and other books by our collaborators were cited in the decision. Whether or not this research was the key factor in the ruling, the intellectual world had contributed a voice to the debate, and the essential research had been done in time for the decisive showdown. This outcome was exactly what we had hoped for. That case was not the end of the battle, of course. Civil rights issues are never permanently settled, and the Supreme Court later became even more conservative after the second President Bush's two appointments. It was, however, a great day for those who believed that research could broaden the nation's discourse and help decide important issues of racial justice.

RESEARCH ON BOTH COASTS AND THE FUTURE

In the 14 years of commissioning more than 450 studies, issuing reports, and publishing more than a dozen books, the Civil Rights Project has seen a number of successes and failures. But, in important ways, the country has been moving backwards.

We helped create a national discussion on the dropout crisis, conducted the first major studies of the racial impacts of No Child Left Behind, published pathbreaking work on discrimination in special education, commissioned studies of housing and transportation discrimination, and initiated many

other studies. Speaking on campuses, we almost always hear from students and others about how they follow and apply our work. It is impossible to know, but I often wonder if one of these students is a future Gunnar Myrdal, Kenneth Clark, Cesar Chavez, Thurgood Marshall, Sonia Sotomayor, or Barack Obama.

One of the Civil Rights Project's last major efforts at Harvard was a collaboration with scholars across the country to prepare a brief for the Supreme Court that summarized what had been learned in a half century of research on school integration. Working under the Court's tight deadlines, we had only two weeks to circulate the document for signatures by scholars across the United States. To our astonishment, 553 scholars from 201 colleges and research centers signed the brief. Although the Court decided 5-4 against the voluntary desegregation plans under review, this and other research strongly influenced the four dissenters, and the majority actually agreed that desegregation was a compelling educational interest. Obviously, a major intellectual network had been created.

After Chris Edley was selected as Dean of the Berkeley Law School in 2003, the Project faced very hard times at Harvard, with a declining budget, unmanageable costs, and no support from the institution. Keeping the Project running, raising funds, and producing major research while teaching many students proved to be an overwhelming burden. In late 2006, I moved the project to UCLA, and Patricia Gándara, a leading scholar of Latino education and language and immigration issues, joined as the new co-director. (We are married.) For the first time, we enjoyed substantial university support and space. I was delighted to receive appointments to the political science department, the law school, and the school of urban planning, as well as the education school, our home base. Our goal was to remain highly visible while expanding our work to more effectively include the issues of the West, an extremely multiracial area. We found that we did receive less attention at the beginning, but we were able to rapidly create much stronger involvement with Latino and immigrant issues and organizations, raise more funds, find many interested students, and tap into a steadily growing interest in new initiatives. At the beginning of 2010, we sponsored an extraordinary event in Mexico City that brought 150 scholars together from both countries to present research on "The Students We Share"—the millions of students with roots in both countries and lives often divided and damaged by incoherent and discontinuous educational experiences in two countries, compounded by a tragic immigration situation. In 2010, we released new studies by scholars about the education of English language learners, following a 2009 Supreme Court decision in an Arizona case, *Horne* v. *Flores*, that put the rights of these students—a tenth of all U.S. students—at risk. State officials sued to try to prevent some of the researchers from testifying. We have learned that the work can expand in important ways, that it can command attention without the VERITAS shield, and that it must continue, even when some believe that the election of an African American president means that all civil rights issues have been resolved.

Looking back over what has already been a long career, I still do not know whether I would call myself a public intellectual. For a long time now, my work has included constant writing but has mostly concerned the creation of new research and policy initiatives and collaboration with many colleagues. Some of this work is more about planting seeds and supporting other careers than being visible as an individual. I like to think that some of the most important things I have done will blossom in future work by people who are still students now, work that I could not have conceived, and that will come decades from now when the country will need it even more. Young minority faculty are still often told, "Don't study the problems of your racial group; that will be seen as biased." And white faculty are told, "Don't study race because you can't understand it or be credible." Race, however, is a fundamental cleavage of our society, and to ignore it is to ignore its strong ties to many forms of opportunity and outcomes. No one can understand all of its dimensions, but many can add something important to our understanding of it. Young political scientists have great contributions to make. We have to figure out how to live and work together, as whites become a declining minority in the United States and as we all come to depend more deeply on creating a successful multiracial society. I take great hope from the young scholars who have worked as students with the Project and now teach in many universities, and the messages I receive each day from other scholars and students who want to work on civil rights issues. I hope that they will have careers that are as intellectually and personally fulfilling for them as mine has been for me, share the joy of working with people who are truly dedicated, and become public intellectuals for the rising generation, continuing the struggle to help our diverse and divided nation. ■

Rules for Public Intellectuals

Lorenzo Morris, *Howard University*

Like many political scientists, I willingly align myself with the intellectual side of the public intellectual title, but I make no claim to having a public identity. Still, I am moved to join in the shared confessions of public intellectuals (PI) by responding to Amitai Etzioni's article, because the ten-point distillation of his trials and tribulations so strongly resonates with my own experiences. However marginal they may be, frequent media commentaries and interviews have given me enough exposure to the treacherous pathways between scholarship and the media to sufficiently understand the PI's dilemma.

While it is hardly a misnomer, the term *public intellectual* harbors its own built-in contradictions. It embodies the notion of exposing both the certified intellectual and his or her process of intellectual reflection to a broader public audience, which, by nature, is only interested in the product. The sharper the prediction, the more succinct the explanation, and the more tangible the causes and effects claimed, the larger the audience is likely to be. The thoughtful allusions, insightful background references, and the occasional vocabulary enhancements that provide evidence of the author's intellection then serve as added certification of his or her exceptional resourcefulness, if the initials following his or her name are not sufficient. The "public" label then is predetermined, not by any evidence of a popular audience, but by the preemptive labeling of the mass media.

Investigating the concept of the PI for *PS* readers, in contrast to the mass media, it initially seemed appropriate to provide a data-based methodology that, for example, would sample opinion pieces and interviews in the major media and categorize them by a range of subjects and variants in ideological interpretation. The value of such an exercise, however, would ultimately hinge on the legitimacy of the problem itself. What constitutes the concept of the PI is not simply the existence of meaningful participants in public dialogue, but also the processes by which these people come to acquire the label, maintain the status, and, eventually, if Etzioni is right, fall from its graces. That approach offers a broader kind of storytelling and criticism that leads to substantive description and precedes explanatory analysis. That is what Etzioni does with singular dexterity in telling his story in a way that leads to a useful description of the broader PI experience.

My commentary seeks to add to that description some rudimentary analysis or explanations of the characteristics he iden-

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tifies in the PI story. Before doing so, however, I address another fundamental characteristic of PIs that he understandably omits. That characteristic is their participation in what may be called "structural" policy advocacy. No intellectual's intervention on the air or in print normally starts with the goal of advocating a position or outcome, but no participants are chosen or invited back by producers or editors without a policy outcome in mind. I consider this an impersonal observation, since I view myself as an analyst rather than an advocate, although I see most prominent analysts heavily engaging in predictable advocacy. The trick here is to see oneself in a purely individualistic light, free of the editorial process in which the commentary is selected. In these situations, analysts are like weapons in ongoing public policy wars who, adapting a cliché, do not themselves do the killing. Rather, it is the editors and the journals that pull the triggers by picking these analysts. Hence, the intellectual is able to preserve the semblance of objectivity.

Objectivity still seems probable when the commentary is very general, as with Etzioni's communitarian analysis. As long as he is not directly advocating communitarianism as a problem-solving approach, he could be simply describing, for example, value conflicts in tax policy, in contrast to the self-exculpating individualism of the under-taxed elite. "Communitarianism," he says,

> maintains that society should articulate what is good—that such articulations are both needed and legitimate. . . Communitarianism is often contrasted with classical liberalism, a philosophical position that holds each individual should formulate the good on his or her own. Communitarians examine the ways shared conceptions of the good (values) are formed, transmitted, justified, and enforced. (Etzioni 2003, 224)

Ironically, for some political scientists who have spent time in France, communitarianism is seen as the battle cry of race conscious or sectarian minorities against the dominant individualistic (republican) value system. Although the terms vary across continents, the essential choice between valuing or diminishing individualist constraints undergirds much policy commentary. In France, communitarianism is expressly seen as a combative, hyper-pluralistic attack on an egalitarian and ethnically undifferentiated society. Although many of the residents of its ghettoized suburbs would not agree with this perspective, the mass media virtually prohibits any challenge to its conventional wisdom by opposing intellectuals. The simple willingness to recognize race in census data is itself a politically sensitive declaration, while in the United States, racial and ethnic identification is the norm. Communitarian values only surface in ideological references to a more holistic society. Yet, any communal reference itself excludes from the conversation more Wall Street conservatives and moderates and

more Washington liberals than right-wing or left-wing politicians, depending on their degrees of individualism.

Still, Etzioni's challenges to political and social assumptions seem to represent the most common issues that involve most political scientists in public commentary. Of course, we cannot generate a real measure of representative commentary by public intellectuals without empirical measures of what makes some commentaries fit the media parameters and others not. Although a behavior may be old, the analysis of it and the labels for it are always new or emerging. As a consequence, the uniqueness of Etzioni's contribution is that he has begun to provide meaningful categories for his anecdotal experiences that should be part of a sharper classification of experiences shared throughout the discipline. His experiences, which he turns into "lessons," also reflect very common experiences of others, along with characteristic behavioral

ence with the decision makers under review and, more often, seeks to expose their digressions from shared values, rather than to castigate them as nonbelievers. During the last election period, in my case, it was impossible to analyze election outcomes for black candidates in the press or on the air without recounting broader ideas of racial progress, even when they were not immediately relevant.

A more pervasive frustration for PIs than value-based conflicts with decision makers is perhaps the inattentiveness of news reporting to emerging issues. What matters in the major media today is some event-based evolution of what mattered yesterday. If reporters are on the ground in a disaster zone or a war zone, the attention of an editor is likely to remain focused there for some time, until it is jostled by another striking event. The PI invariably comes along after the striking event to offer an interpretation. If his or her comment is one of the few avail-

> *What matters in the major media today is some event-based evolution of what mattered yesterday. If reporters are on the ground in a disaster zone or a war zone, the attention of an editor is likely to remain focused there for some time, until it is jostled by another striking event. The PI invariably comes along after the striking event to offer an interpretation. If his or her comment is one of the few available that fits pre-established patterns, media attention is likely. If, however, the PI's interpretation diverges from the normal perspective or is a reinterpretation of an ongoing event, then his or her comments take an automatic back seat to those that reporters are prepared to market.*

constraints. My impression of these behavioral constraints on public intellectuals is that they form "rules" of behavior that might be turned into hypotheses, if one were industrious enough. These rules are used here to group Etzioni's lessons.

FOUR RULES AND TEN USEFUL LESSONS

RULE ONE: MEDIA EDITORS AND PRODUCERS DETERMINE THE SCOPE AND IMPACT OF THE MESSAGE

Lesson 1: The Frustrations of Speaking an Uncomfortable Truth to Power

As much as PIs may want to "speak truth to power," in Etzioni's words, they are largely propelled by the idea of speaking a truth that is different from the one currently holding the attention of power. The propelling force for this truth-speaking is some mixture of individual motivation and structural equilibrium in a typically liberal-conservative balance. As a consequence, PIs can expect to garner some attention if they are persistent, as long as they have had previous access to the same media. Patience, Etzioni's first lesson, is essential, because the PI, by the nature of his or her appeal, exhibits some contentiousness with the powers that be. Patience is also frequently rewarded, because the successful PI maintains a degree of proximity to the same powers. The idea of a community of interests or communitarian values is important in this context. The successful PI demonstrates a shared frame of refer-

able that fits pre-established patterns, media attention is likely. If, however, the PI's interpretation diverges from the normal perspective or is a reinterpretation of an ongoing event, then his or her comments take an automatic back seat to those that reporters are prepared to market. For example, the observation that Obama lost the white vote would have shortened any TV interview and cancelled subsequent ones for weeks after the 2008 election.

Lesson 2: Perseverance in Making the Inner Voice Public

After the decade-long ascendance of the "me generation" and the dissipated sense of social responsibility pushed by Ronald Reagan supporters, among others, media interest in Etzioni's more communally oriented perspective resurged. His persistence through the "thick and thin" of maintaining a public profile, though a factor, was less important than the inescapable factors of timing and changing socioeconomic circumstances. A change of course in political debate may have little causal relationship to intellectual contributions. Robert Bellah, whom Etzioni references in a different context, popularized the concept of "civic religion" as a factor in the stabilization of American pluralism (Bellah 1970). In the American civic religion, the ideological extensions of individualism and social responsibility are counterbalancing forces with their own pendulum potential. Pressure on the pendulum may be exerted by societal, economic, or political forces

on which the intellectual must wait in order to penetrate mass media consciousness. Perseverance is largely valuable only because the PI is available to the media when the time is ripe and when influential people are ready to listen.

Lesson 3: Recalibrating the Conventional Wisdom

Political sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron argue in *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* that higher education systems around the world are most stable when they allow and even encourage student protests (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). The protesters eventually became better advocates of the systems that seemingly allowed them self-expression and considered their demands than of the systems that did not permit them such freedoms. Regarding intellectuals in public life, the larger mass media may play a similar role. The media invites and absorbs political critique using established guidelines. When the critique pushes beyond the normal fringe, there is no immediate reward structure or host of commentators and reporters to hawk their agreement. With enough repetition of the abnormal idea, however, this response changes, because editors find other reinforcements for it. Then, the ideas start to look familiar. Intellectual insights' greatest impact on policy brings less credit to their authors than do their more insignificant observations. A few of us in political science argued for years in the media that higher black than white voter turnout was a likely campaign outcome, given reasonable ideological or candidate incentives. When or through whom that idea penetrated public consciousness is not clear, but post-2008, it is already common knowledge. Along with a black president, such higher turnouts, once barely conceivable, are now part of history. The bigger the bang, the smaller the credit for the intellectual, because big-bang criticism must come from media-tested insiders or else must be first ignored and later assimilated into frames of reference as if it were common knowledge.

RULE TWO: THERE IS A STRAINED DIALECTIC OF PUBLIC PURPOSE AND INTELLECTUAL INDIFFERENCE

Lesson 4 (with Lesson 9): Tenure—Keeping the Romance Alive while Risking Collegial Deference

Many years ago, in another academic position, I commented in some interviews and a magazine article that several college/university programs were not working in the way that policymakers had assumed they would. The evidence was clear, and yet the reaction from multiple university administrators was both hostile and unmoved by data. It is difficult to image that most researchers who publish comments are not similarly threatened at some point. Tenure not only provides reassurance, but, in some cases, also provides incentives. Faculty members increasingly identify with their institutions and their goals and missions the longer they stay. When economic crises or demographic changes create pressure, creative criticism of related policies may finally get a public hearing. During the Vietnam War draft, faculties' public criticism of the war, such as that by Bernard Fall at my institution, was seen as benefiting their students.

To these more noble motives, Etzioni adds the value of receiving a steady income while irritating the powers that be.

I would also add that the manageable work schedule and a community of potential or actual intellectual irritants are important assets.

Lesson 5: "Forehead-Slapping" Appeal, or Giving Intellectual Recognition to a Changing National Mood

A forehead-slapping piece, in Etzioni's colorful words, is one that offers some surprise to the reader as much because the specific observations are new as because the logic and analysis behind it are old. Readers' attentions are grabbed by statements that put things in a new light usually because the specific event is recast or reclassified, rather than because a new mood of analysis has emerged. In Etzioni's example, global uncertainty about the risks of a nuclear arms race meant that everyone agreed that nuclear build-up needed to be arrested, yet leaders continued to build bombs. As a consequence, the idea that building bombs would make the world safer seemed novel or striking, but it was still credible only to the extent that it was consistent with actual behavior. This frank recasting of behavioral norms is the PI's equivalent of making the reader look at the man in mirror. Most often, politically incorrect claims are recast in an analytical light that does not necessarily include more analysis.

More recently, a wave of post-Obama election articles in major papers like the *New York Times* have argued that black politics may be coming to a hasty end. These articles had forehead-slapping value for some readers because they referred strictly to the Obama campaign and a few other local and atypical campaigns. Since race consciousness in electoral campaigning has virtually never been separated from individual campaigning in media reports, a look at any black candidate was treated as an investigation of race through a universal lens. The fact that scholars who regularly discuss race were largely absent or excluded from these reports indicates the strength of social and media forces in generating these forehead-slapping moments. The audience must be ready and waiting for a reevaluation of relationships.

Every four-year election period, the larger political science associations, along with many other social science organizations, host major plenary sessions and roundtable and panel discussions centering on "new" approaches and methods in explaining and predicting voting patterns. Of course, no one would suggest that the cycles of methodological creativity or intellectual insight are geared to the presidential election cycle. On the contrary, this special research focus is supposed to serve as a value-free effort to make objective analysis more timely and relevant to the public. The goal of relevance is fine; the predictions are not, even when they prove to be right—which they rarely do.

These projects might be more credible if the associations did not expend extensive effort to attract media attention, hoping for C-SPAN, big city newspapers, radio, and other coverage. A hunt for publicity would not itself deform the objective mood if the search did not also prod the associations into making direct or indirect assertions of predictive reliability. Empirical specificity about the individual outcomes of the myriad variables involved in presidential choice can hardly be justified by research. Yet, papers presented in

these conferences and published in their journals automatically buttress tenure and promotion demands, because they bear the imprimatur of disinterested research. On the other hand, the same prediction-related research that is summarized in the mass media is generally viewed as transgressing academic standards or, at the very least, as falling from the academy's graces.

RULE THREE: ACCEPT THE IDEOLOGICAL LIMITS OF MEDIA LANGUAGE AND CONCEPTS

Lesson 6: The Discomfort of Being Pigeonholed

Anyone that has written or been interviewed about politics among African Americans, Hispanics, or women (among other marginalized groups), has probably felt the bonds of being narrowly classified in the eyes of journalists and editors. This straitjacket is particularly restrictive for those of us who engage in frequent commentary with foreign media. The French-language media largely treated me as an American political analyst—except in France, where I was cast as an African American analyst until Obama's election. After November 2008, my pigeonhole was enlarged, and I was able to spend much of 2009 in France commenting broadly on American and international politics.

In the United States, neither Etzioni nor many political scientists, myself included, would fit within the normal ideological range of conservative media such as Fox News. Occasionally, one can pass as a marked "liberal." Still, such sharp ideological categorization is an essential part of all sustained intellectual intervention. In other words, PIs are, by their very nature, deprived of their claims to objectivity by the media selection process, and yet they are marked with the label of objectivity. I once did a long interview with a local Fox News station, and the trauma of the realization of what I had done was abated by the realization that I was being treated as a left-winger. The essential constraint is that there is only one liberal-conservative continuum that has virtually no nuances.

Lesson 7: Be a Specialist, Even When Making Broad Claims

Etzioni's communitarianism led him to make broad claims about social responsibility on the basis of broad theory. Had he made specific claims, however broad their reach, on the basis of narrow theory, however weak its linkages, he probably would not have had the same problems with media resistance. Editorial and journalistic insecurity is rampant in a world of changing markets, readership, and lawsuits. Because intellectual intervention is unnecessary, it is expected to be predictable. In interviews, it is rare to find an American journalist who does not clearly hint at the answer that he or she expects to receive to a question. Over the years, I have been repeatedly approached by a Washington newspaper to comment on the imminent political demise of former D.C. mayor Marion Barry. My comments have almost never been published, because I have never seen his political demise as imminent. Yet my comments on other mayors and local officials are nearly always included in articles. The fact that Barry's political career survives is my consolation, but newspapers show no remorse.

RULE FOUR: INTELLECTUAL COMMENTARY MAKES A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE FOR THE PUBLIC

Lesson 8: The Media Life of the Public Intellectual Is Short

Like anyone in the public eye, the media lifespan of the public intellectual is probably a lot shorter than he or she thinks it should be. When issues, events, or organizations with which they are closely associated grab the public's attention, these scholars may be in great demand; at other times, they may be forgotten. This pattern would be sad, if it did not disguise the potential success of sustained intellectual commentary. The media, journalists, and editors—and even the larger public—sometimes learn. They absorb the persistent lessons of commentators. These lessons have often been simplified through the ongoing pressure for the media to explain things in readily accessible language, but some of the basic message does get through. In conservative circles, this process seems to have occurred with the concept of supply-side economics. The message, already simplistic, was learned and, later, hopefully unlearned. For most political analysts, there is constant pressure to simplify messages in order to supplant more simplistic ones. Still, some messages get through to the public, as with misunderstandings about persistent voting rights constraints in the 1970s and 1980s that political analysts pointed out, and that the activist public later came to recognize.

Lesson 10: No Public Intellectual Is an Island: Ideas Require Cumulative Support

If you want to stop editors and reporters from annoying you, come up with an original idea or interpretation of an ongoing event. Intellectual commentary can and sometimes should appear to be original, but it had better not be fundamentally original if it is going to get a second media airing. Shocking events can justify creative interpretations, but only for a while. Journalistic control and security require both predictability and confirmation. The PI is invited to contribute to or is selected for an interview because his or her likely comments fit a journalistic frame of reference. The market for that commentary or interview is confirmed by the reaction of others in the media to it. The difference between praise and condemnation is perhaps less critical than the difference between indifference and indignation or affirmation. Because intellectuals do not fare well in the emotional context of indignation, they are largely consigned to the pursuit of affirmation by their newfound media colleagues. They may not constitute a community of scholars, but they are an understandable, though modest, alternative. ■

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Public Intellectuals and the Public Interest: Toward a Politics of Political Science as a Calling

Theodore J. Lowi, *Cornell University*

Explaining metaphysics to the nation
I wish he would explain his explanation

—Lord Byron, dedication to *Don Juan*

Upon my first reading of the Etzioni autobiography, I recalled my favorite book review, written by a nine-year-old, who also should have won a prize for the youngest author and the shortest review ever: "This book told me more about penguins than I wanted to know."

There is a lot of information in Professor Etzioni's autobiography, but I still do not know what *public intellectual* means. Immediately upon reading his article, I asked myself, how is a *public* intellectual to be distinguished from a *private* intellectual? Having opened the box, it was only logical to ask, "What kinds of intellectuals are there?" And I am not alone in my confusion. Alan Wolfe, a confirmed public intellectual himself, turned down this assignment on the grounds that "there is no guidebook on how to become a public intellectual."

Etzioni's autobiography, it appears, began with a standard Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley, after which he became a professor at Columbia. That career move made him a *university intellectual*, teaching undergraduate and graduate students, sharing and expanding his learning with other university intellectuals.

Now that I have uncovered at least three types of intellectuals already, and since there will be others, I will need designations for quick comparison. So far, we have public intellectual (PI), private intellectual (PrI), and university intellectual (UI), signified by a Ph.D. at a highly ranked university and recognition through publication in learned journals and a learned society or guild—in Etzioni's case, the American Sociological Association (ASA, which, for good reason, replaced its original name, American Sociological Society).

But "the times they were a-changing," and Etzioni became an alienated intellectual (AI), along with Alan Wolfe and many more who were trying to get the attention of the APSA, ASA, and Washington through opposition to the war in Vietnam, while simultaneously trying to get an academic job.

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Etzioni's career as a PI seems to have culminated with an article he published attacking manned space missions, which apparently landed him a year in Jimmy Carter's White House. However, he reveals that although his desk was "very close to the seat of power, it might as well have been on the dark side of the moon" (651).

This appointment is far too modest an experience, but it serves his point—that he had moved from UI to PI and from PI to AI and on to GI (government intellectual)—another intellectual modality requiring "perseverance" and "a boatload of stamina." As a PI, he could pick his own topics and take his own position, but as a GI—and please pardon the coincidence with "government issue" or "gastrointestinal"—he would have to wait to voice his opinion until asked, and he would be expected to use his knowledge but to be sure to subordinate it to the president's wishes. If intellect implies the autonomy of thought from "the critical, creative and contemplative side of the mind" (Hofstadter 1963, 25),[1] the intellectual turned GI must put intellect aside, subordinating it to the goal orientation of the president or, indeed, two or more aides close to the president.

Etzioni's "particularly painful" year in the White House (651) was so painful that his advice to his would-be followers is to "first lie down and see if the [PI] urge will go away" (651). Or, if you reject rule number one, fill your boat with stamina and perseverance.

But it appears that Etzioni did not take his own advice. He shot out of the government into the open arms of a social movement called communitarianism. In this case, his need was not for perseverance and stamina, but for opportunity. Mind you, this does not mean opportunism. Communitarianism as a movement had been expanding throughout the 1970s as the Democratic South began to realign and the overlapping mobilization of Christian evangelical community conservatives drew the region into the sphere of an ambitious right wing of the once-libertarian Republican Party.

These shifts were genuine stuff. Conservatism fit extremely well with communitarianism, which allowed former left-wingers—too leftist to be comfortable as Democrats—to find a comfortable home as "neo-conservatives," spreading their embrace of Robert Bellah's *Habits of the Heart* all the way over to Robert Putnam's "social capital" in *Bowling Alone*, with its platform of "social responsibilities" up on an equal plane with individual rights. Note how smoothly a converted communitarian like Etzioni could embrace a marriage of conservatism

with communitarianism while denouncing "the celebration of Numero Uno and the unfettered aggrandizement of self-interest" (651). The communitarian movement could have come from socialism and its denunciation of the free market. Nevertheless, it rang loud and clear in the fusion of Reagan libertarianism with true conservatism, and its agenda was attractive enough to transform Tony Blair Labourism into a force that could counter the extraordinary Thatcher movement in England. On our side of the Atlantic, the communitarian movement was strong enough to move the discourse from *communities* to *community*.

Etzioni seems to have left the Carter White House to expand publicly the communitarian message, assuming his "self-appointed role as a PI" (651). And he was pleased by the spread of Reaganism and Thatcherism during the 1980s. He does not try to aggrandize his influence. As a good social scientist, he recognized that his "somewhat greater effect was largely due to the fact that the time was ripe" (651). This statement confirms my recognition that he had cast away his GI identity but did not return to his status as a PI. He had become a *movement* intellectual—MI—an identity that is a very large distance apart from the other types of intellectual.

and "moral lessons … toward the fulfillment of … destiny" (9). David Truman, in his master work *The Governmental Process* (1951), domesticated and politicized the concept of the jeremiad in the United States through his re-creation of a history beginning with the "faction," as invented by James Madison in the *Federalist Papers*, and then moving to "interests," "party," association," "conspiracy," "coalition," "caucus," "corporation," and finally culminating in "the group." Each type of jeremiad shares at least one great problem: cohesion. And they all suffer from the same danger, especially in democratic and democratizing societies: overlapping membership, which makes every movement unstable and insecure. These challenges are precisely why so many of the greatest public speakers became famous not by addressing the public, but by singing more to the chorus than to the masses.[2]

Charles Tilly located the origins of social movements around the late eighteenth century in Europe and the early nineteenth century in the United States, emphasizing the phenomenon of the campaign and its "spread and transformation across all the continents" (Tilly 2005, 216 and *passim*). But in our time, almost all classes and other social ties have devoted an immense amount of effort to "internal invest-

First of all, the MI lives a radical life but is not necessarily extremist and is certainly not violent. A "radical," following mathematics, is concerned with roots and getting at the roots. The antagonism of the Alienated Intellectual (AI) and the Movement Intellectual (MI) is rarely violent, but it often invites violence from those being demonized. Consequently, the MI does not address the public at-large but instead concentrates on speaking to members and supporters already drawn in by the theory and ideology of the movement. This approach is why Lenin—one of the world's greatest MIs, up there close to Jesus—was moved to assert that "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."

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Thus, we must revise the very definition of the social movement as a membership group *whose members require constant attention*. This need for attention is particularly true of faith-based movements, which have been given a proper name of American origin: the revival meeting. Virtually all movements are "a fusion of secular and sacred history" (Bercovitch 1978, 7); see also *jeremiad*: "a lament over the ways of the world"

ment." This idea is supported by another classic work by Pool, Dexter, and Bauer (1972) that recognizes that even associations of the highest social classes have to work very hard to "speak with a single voice."[3]

Thus, as a result of their internal instability, groups, and especially politically oriented movements, have a very special need for MIs. Some of these intellectuals are, like Lenin, "present at the creation." Others with PI, AI, or GI credentials are drawn in from one existing camp to another, as we shall see.

Etzioni is an outstanding case in point. He took his BA and MA at Hebrew University and his sociology Ph.D. at Berkeley (1958), before being appointed as an instructor at Columbia. He advanced quickly to become a full professor and department chair in 1967. He was a genuine UI during those years, making impressive contributions to peer-reviewed journals and books in the political science as well as sociology literature.

He defined himself fittingly as a leftist, and he took C. Wright Mills as his early model. But there is a big difference

between the two. Mills was a leftist, but addressed almost all of his publications to the academy in general and to academic sociologists and political scientists in particular. As one theorist put it, Mills was "armed not only with Marx … but also with … Max Weber, … and [Mosca, Michels, and Pareto]" (Young 1996). Nevertheless, Mills was not a PI as it is properly understood. He wrote for the learned journals (as a UI), but as he advanced in stature, his articles tended to grow longer and more in the style of an AI. Moreover, his books were not written for the mass public. He was a fine writer, far more accessible than his sociology and political science colleagues.[4] Mills was one of the most famous academic authors of the 1950s, but none of his books and articles, even *The Power Elite* (Oxford University Press, 1956) were in the mass public domain. Throughout his tragically brief career, Mills remained an Alienated Intellectual (AI). Daniel Bell recognized Mills' concerns with the sources of power and the causes of equality and inequality, but Bell insisted that "Mills is not a Marxist, and, if anything, his method and conclusions are anti-Marxist" (1960, 43). He did not join any movement and was thus not an MI. In contrast, Etzioni addressed the largest possible scope. First and foremost, he was a joiner. The "Affiliation" category in his CV contains 60 entries, not including his involvements as a member of 40 editorial boards and nearly 14 consultantships, all of which are not honorific or casual. Altogether, these roles indicate his position as a true UI, at least through the time of his appointment to the White House and his jump into the MI world. But his academic career was divided between hundreds of issues, each worthy of an intellectual's attention. A scan of the titles of his works during his early to middle academic career reveals that he had a finger in every pie that could possibly be attractive to any social scientist. The titles of his publications are a smorgasbord. The best advice we can give our budding grad students is to pick a limited number of commitments and stick to them." Etzioni surely treated these issues academically, but he cannot deny that he was spread awfully thin over the 383 "professional journals and books" in which he was engaged, as of the latest available in volume 9, issue 2 of *International Studies Perspectives.*

The best example of a successful PI from the late 1940s onward is probably David Riesman, particularly after the publication in 1950 of *The Lonely Crowd*, written with his junior partners, Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney. Popular acceptance of this book so surprised Yale University Press that they sold the book to Doubleday & Company, where a trade editor arranged for a 20% page reduction, "aimed only at greater clarity and conciseness" (Riesman 1950, 5–6) Riesman's general argument is based on a demographic theory of three "types of character and society," following an S-shaped curve from a tradition-directed social character to an inner-directed to an other-directed character. Beginning in the Middle Ages, equality of birth and death produced a "tradition-directed" social character; following that, the superiority of births over deaths produced an "inner-directed" social character; and in the third epoch, birth control gave us an "other-directed" character. Many lay readers consumed those three character types and discussed them in uncountable thousands of cocktail party conversations. But the entire academic social science audi-

ence gave the book a proper AI reading and offered devastating critiques—not out of jealousy, but in objection to his thesis—in the best tradition of academics—that is, AIs.

Let us return to Etzioni's decampment from the White House and his disappointment, which was apparently followed by a new-found inspiration: communitarianism. Although I have only been able to scan his publications, I would guess that he converted to this set of beliefs during the 1970s away from the standard leftist tendencies of sociologists and (to a lesser degree) political scientists. But his conversion was not to Buckley and the Burkeans, nor to the neo-cons through Irving Kristol and the Straussians, nor to the theocratic conservatism that is a cover for racism, nor to the wrongly labeled libertarianism that is often called conservative. It appears to me that his move was to a genuine conservatism, as observed earlier, from the *communities* of the social democratic phase of the Democratic party, to the *community* of a "moral majority" that was going to take root.

There was some elegance to this move. And it offered an opportunity to blow off the left and, especially, the Democratic Party, which was going through a phase of wandering in the wilderness. Many of the leading thinkers of the party had become communitarian to varying degrees. More to the point, the Republican Party was coming back into its own after nearly 50 years of bouncing on and off the Democratic agenda.[5] But the disaster of the Depression had become ancient history, Nixon's Southern Strategy was working, and the Christian Right was pulling together a genuine faith-based Republican right wing. Ronald Reagan turned out to be the magnet that pulled a new 50-state national Republican coalition together.

Reagan was necessary but not sufficient to this goal. To create a Reagan revolution that equaled Roosevelt's, the Republican Party would not only have to win an election, but it would have to catch up with changes in government. As the French might put it, the Republican Party would have to demean itself by "contamination from the Left." During the 1960s, American government became Europeanized (Lowi 1978)—or, to be more dramatic, nationalized. Until the 1960s, virtually all the governing in the United States was done by the states—and that includes all the New Deal legislation that was "delegated" to the states for implementation. This system changed after *Brown* v. *Board of Education* as a result of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and the enormous expansion of new national programs that finally completed the Roosevelt Revolution in the 1960s.

How did this governmental shift truly revolutionize the Republican Party? First off, national programs of regulation and redistribution were implemented through the national government, along with the traditional local government, in such matters as morality, family, education, social and racial classes, and public order. To conservatives, local means were the proper way to keep "our folks" in their proper place. City leaders rarely, if ever, had to look to Washington. In the face of new legislation, however, conservatives would have to nationalize their parochialism. For local and state politics, all that was needed to win arguments were one or more references to the Good Book. In national politics in Washington, you had to have intellect and you had to use it. But up through most of the 1980s, "conservative intellectual" was, in my class

lectures, a good example of an oxymoron. Conservatives didn't have *think tanks*. Even the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) was still identified as "mainly conservative" in the early 1970s, but the institution was mainly libertarian and became significantly more conservative (in the genuine sense) as its budget climbed from $1 million to $12 million in less than a decade. The still more truly conservative Heritage Foundation was established in Washington in its own $9.5 million building in 1983, with a professorial research staff on a $10 million budget.

This growth is indicative of conservative interests' recognition that the only way to make their influence felt was through *presence*. There were moments in the past when the Right had showed enough muscle to gain nationwide recognition. They created enough of a rumble in the 1950s to get the center and left riled up to the point of writing numerous

These factions were the making of the Reagan Republican party, but the group was not ready to govern beyond "anti-government," because the right wing still lacked a sustained conservative presence in the nation's capital. This party was what Etzioni left the White House to join, and he chose a fortunate time, because the intellectual environment was no longer hostile to conservatism—or his version of it—and the work environment soon became downright hospitable.

Let us examine these environments one at a time, using Etzioni as a case study. During the 1970s, a new movement of conservatism was emerging, shedding most of its burden of libertarianism (e.g., Barry Goldwater, an acolyte of Ayn Rand). The movement got going with the impetus of a genuine philosopher Russell Kirk (my undergraduate teacher at Michigan State) and William F. Buckley, MI, a writer and the founder of the *National Review*. This growing arena provided

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articles and books exposing the danger of this "radical right." But the fact that this upsurge did not last seemed to validate Louis Hartz's thesis that there is no "conservative tradition" in America (Hartz 1955, 56; Lowi 2006). Following these events, the cream of the American sociologists put together two collections of their analyses, coupled with explanations of how and why this "radical right" would not endure. The first volume was *The New American Right* (Bell 1955); the second, *The Radical Right*, was revised, expanded, and updated by the same author (Bell 1964).

Another example of increased presence from the right occurred in the mid-1960s, sparked by an effort to get Barry Goldwater to stir up Christianity to mobilize cold warriors against the threat of a world communist conspiracy. Goldwater did not bite, and the second right-wing revival collapsed. A third succeeded by tying conservatism to party politics. In my 1995 book on conservatism (Lowi 1995), I identified two Republican factions comprising the right wing: the patrician or secular right, and the populist or Christian right. The left wing comprised one faction: liberal or libertarian. Eleven years later, in the second edition (Lowi 2006), I had to expand the Republican right wing to include five factions, with the first remaining the same, the second being aristocrats (traditional), the third being paleocrats (racial), the fourth being theocrats (religion), and the fifth being neocrats (a secular cult).

a perfect niche for Etzioni, his conversion to communitarianism, and his institutionalization of the ideology in his Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies in Washington. He had a platform as well as support through his situation as a teaching instrument—a chaired professorship at the George Washington University. He was able to speak to the public—not, in my opinion, as a PI, but as an MI, because he was speaking to the chorus of the converted or the attracted. Alternatively, he was addressing his college classes and asking for discussion and criticism, which would then classify him as an AI. But I would not be very happy if one of my colleagues was trying, as an MI, to convert the students.

The work environment for conservatives was improving at an impressive rate, and their learning had to come from their adversary as the aforementioned "contamination from the Left." Money was virtually unlimited for conservatives in Washington, thanks to Reagan's tax cuts and conservative citizens' willingness to give once they recognized that the national government had become as activist as European governments. Moreover, conservatives recognized that you cannot buy enough legislators, but you can win them over with research, and you cannot win without the data, the argument, the package, and the delivery. Two cases demonstrating this will suffice. AEI was founded in 1943 but barely held together for nearly 40 years, when the organization suddenly

received enough of an endowment to expand their research staff tenfold, from $1 million in 1970 to $10.4 million in 1980, and to support a staff that grew from 19 in the early 1970s to 135 a decade later. Similarly, the Heritage Foundation, established in 1973, was able to support itself not only from the donations of a few rich families, but also from mail solicitation and sales of subscriptions for their periodicals and short "backgrounders." Although farthest to the right among Washington conservatives, the Foundation's financing was impressively successful. Beyond their explicit fundraising, Heritage, along with AEI and other organizations, were educating their conservative members and supporters in the art and craft of discourse (Ricci 1993, 160–62).

AEI and Heritage are key examples of think tanks. There are many work environments and work stations outside the government in the industry of policy formulation, policymaking, and policy implementation, as well as inside the government in legislative committee staffs, individual House and Senate staffs, and agencies and their experts, that generate large numbers of government proposals. But the most recent example of such environments since conservatives came to Washington is the work station that we have come to call first by a nickname and then rather officially as the think tank—an organization dedicated to research for the purpose of advancing the interests of its clients or supporters by favoring certain policies and more broadly ideological goals. These think tanks are known for their policy positions while at the same time maintaining, at least formally, a nonpartisan commitment.[6]

The most recent census of think tanks revealed 47 in Washington, DC, alone; the *World Directory* published by the National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA)—a think tank itself!—reports 42 (NIRA 2005). That is one hell of a lot of research activity, and all of it has become a key feature in any treatment of American politics and government. Just as we had to embrace the random sample survey as the new institution of democracy no more than 50 years ago, so do we have to incorporate policy-oriented research and the institution of the think tank into democracy today.

"Research" implies objective, unbiased inquiry into the problems concerning policymakers. The client expects that satisfactory (and favorable) research will be generated, but any bad news must be included in a report as well. A think tank like Brookings could be classified as "liberal," then, not because it is biased, but because its only clients are Democrats.

As wealthy conservatives began to understand the think tank concept, they discovered that they were being beaten by ideas. They created new think tanks and endowed small and needy ones. Most importantly, they began to attribute to established (liberal) think tanks exactly what they themselves were going to create: a movement mentality and orientation that were as ideological as possible. Moreover, the corporate money providers for these think tanks were able to attract trained academics who had converted from liberal (and left) to genuinely conservative positions—and from PI to AI and MI roles. I count Etzioni as one of these academics, and I do accept that his conversion from left to right was not "for the money." I will, however, go so far as to say that although his conversion from the left to the conservatism of communitarianism was

honest, his conversion during the conservative realignment of the 1970s had significant benefits for him, in that the movement embraced him and immediately raised him to very high and sought-after status and demand, beginning his self-stated career as a PI (but making him, in my terms, more of an MI).

It seems clear to me now that Etzioni's Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies is far too much like the evangelical think tanks and public policy programs and law schools that have flourished since the conservatives came to Washington. I would also include in this category the neatly scrubbed Federalist Society, whose leading members, along with Falwell acolytes, moved up to very high positions in the George W. Bush White House and to jobs as justices and clerks in the federal appellate courts and the Supreme Court itself. The addition of the term "communitarian" to his Policy Studies Institute separates Etzioni's institute from virtually all the other policy schools. Two hundred fifty-four schools belong to the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) in the United States, beginning with Syracuse and Harvard in the 1920s. These programs all offer professional MPA degrees (some offer Ph.D.s as well), and they all share a dedication to professionalism and the improvement of public service in all layers of government and the whole range of public services, non-profits, NGOs, and the like. What separates Etzioni's institute from theirs is an -ism. Take careful note of his flagship statement:

> The Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies at The George Washington University, the nation's leading center for communitarian policy research, is a nonpartisan research organization dedicated to finding constructive solutions to social problems through morally informed policy analysis and open moral dialogue. In its research papers and other publications, the institute seeks to bring the best scholarship and analysis to bear on policy issues affecting family, schools, the community, and the moral climate of society as a whole. It is committed to fostering a greater sense of personal and social responsibility among individual citizens; to strengthening the cohesion of families and local communities; to encouraging reconciliation among different racial, ethnic, and religious groups; and to fostering a national policy debate more cognizant of humankind's moral horizon and the social responsibilities of the individual and the community. Its aim is to contribute to effective solutions, derived from democratic dialogue, through a careful elucidation of alternative policies and competing models of social conduct in light of their moral implications and their likely practical consequences for family and community life. (http://www.gwu.edu/~ccps/about_us.html)

I regret that I have to draw the line of defense between the academic social sciences and what Etzioni stands for. I am, of course, impressed by his learning and his output, and I am sure that many of his books and articles contribute to the advancement of all the social sciences. But I rise in opposition to the thrust of his work as an MI. To put my objection briefly, I have to say, "You're no Carl Sagan"—a scholar and a PI with whom Etzioni claims kinship. Sagan and I were colleagues at Cornell and shared stories about our respective experiences at

the University of Chicago. Through this interaction, I had the opportunity to encounter two sides of his identity: first, as a public phenomenon, and second, as a teacher in introductory courses as well as the lab. Popularizer of ideas, yes, but he also opened up many millions of eyes to the romance of the unknown, the accessibility of science as an institution, and an appreciation of science as, in the words of the OED, "knowledge or cognizance … emphasizing the dysfunction to be drawn between theoretical perception of a truth and moral conviction."

Misuses of "science" and "research" for ideological purposes have led me to invent a concept of the ideal teacher, who teaches *not what to think, but what to think about*. Those who did not know Allan Bloom (as I did at Cornell) could well have gotten the message from his most significant work, *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), that we should open our minds. But, in fact, Bloom's appeal was for the closing of the mind around Western culture. He was the model MI.

I could probably have endorsed Etzioni as a PI 30 years ago—B.C., before conservatism—because he wrote many wake-up calls. But I cannot abide his position A.C., after conservatism. And I do not believe that political science should accept him now as a PI.

I am writing against this powerful figure in fear that he might win. The "About Us" section of the Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies Web site is virtually a platform for the takeover of the right wing of the Republican Party. I was premature in the prediction in my book *The End of the Republican Era* (1995; 2006), but I was wrong for all the right reasons. The Republican Party, I argued, was doomed by the schismatic tendency of all moral associations. Its ability to pull the moral absolutists together again was because the magnetic force of communitarianism is so accommodating. A look at the "About Us" statement reveals five kinds of moral appeal by name, none with any more theoretical basis than a soap opera: "morally informed," "moral dialogue," "moral climate," "moral horizon," and "moral implications and their likely practical consequences for family and community life." According to its own pledge, the Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies will produce communitarian and nonpartisan policymakers who will pursue policies that will keep everyone in their proper place within the community—races in their places, laborers in theirs, homeowners in theirs, artisans in theirs, and counter-mores workers and seekers in theirs. And so on.

In sum, there will be no place for PIs in the communitarian curriculum. Once this agenda is set, it will be all MI or nothing, because the test for graduation will be the Bloom-like closing of the student mind. This invitation by Robert Hauck, editor of *PS*, to respond to Etzioni's PI autobiography calls me back nearly 15 years to the time of the publication of the first edition of my book *The End of the Republican Era*. In its pages, I expressed my fear that "although Etzioni has not succeeded in organizing a movement, communitarian views have reached the White House and are indeed influencing the Clinton agenda" (1995, 242). It is easy to be beguiled because "communitarianism today (1990) is just a form of good old-fashioned sentimentality…. Nobody likes crime and almost everybody

agrees with the proposition that rights and responsibility ought to be linked" (244). Today, a concept that is also beguiling and worth repeating is that "liberalism is concerned with communi*ties* … [and] conservatives are concerned with communi*ty*." Liberalism is in danger of losing the race. In contrast, communitarian conservatism is so beguiling because it shows itself as "just a form of good old-fashioned sentimentality about traditional values." What kind of stern egalitarianism could win out against a communitarian ruling by no less than the Clinton Department of Health and Human Services that stated in an official declaration that the "father's presence is crucial for [family dinner] to be a family hour" (Lowi 1995, 242)?

I will have to call such a platform the end of the PI. And from here into the distant future, until the dust clears, the discourse among the intellects will be "fair and balanced."

POSTSCRIPT: "EVERY POET HIS OWN ARISTOTLE"

Every political scientist should be a public intellectual. But the urge is trained out of us in graduate school, to stick to our research, the methods and the results as contributions "to the field." What a waste.

I have been trying to meet Lord Byron's appeal, expressed in the epigraph to this article, for at least 35 years, beginning with my appointment to the APSA Administrative Committee. I made a modest proposal that the APSA should adopt an *APSR* editorial policy to accept only articles of a theoretical nature that try to synthesize findings, extend criticism, and address arguments toward the political discourse of a couple of thousand years. Articles of merit that are specialized would be referred to the more specialized journals. My motion was voted down by roughly (and I mean roughly) 18 to 2, and I also alienated the then-managing editor, who took my motion as a personal insult.

I continue to embrace that motion and will look forward with hope to APSA's coming of age, not with *Perspectives*, but with a new outlet I would like to call *Theories and Speculations on Politics*. Here are some steps toward becoming a PI without having to abandon PS itself, or PI in Etzioni's terms, or MI, AI, GI or any other posture.

1. Do not waste your time trying to meet the mass-media rules that an op-ed essay be no longer than 800 words and that a TV comment be no more than a 30-second spot. When the media turn you down, strengthen your critique.
2. When you have a full-length book manuscript or journal article, don't cut—*expand*. When you seek the larger audience with your larger argument, your writing style will change. In fact, it will improve. You will move outward from cross-sectional hypotheses and proofs away from specialized literatures toward speculations and consequences in narrative form, far beyond what the data can support but cannot deny.
3. As a corollary, you should look for pathology in the body politic, not merely for how a process or institution works. And when you have a discovery, speak to its originality and importance. Make it a megillah, the whole megillah.
4. Reaction to events is poor PI strategy. Whenever there is an event, try to remember that for every event, there is a

cause—in fact, there are lots and lots of causes. Today's PI will appear to be wise and prescient by the facility of pulling two or more causal explanations out of the hat. You can win by re-characterizing the event. No event defines itself.

5. Stress concepts. Every serious experience cries out for one or more concepts. And when you have hit upon a concept that seems to encapsulate that experience, play mind games with it. Don't come to the event—make the event come to you by categorizing it: How many kinds of this event can there be? Who is associated with the use of that concept? What leading PIs are associated with that concept? Are they wrong or just wrong-headed? You can immortalize your own mind game by attacking theirs.

6. Finally, if your polity is ever in trouble, try to be the first to report it. And be mean. Get a name for the pathology. If the name is conceptual, all the better. Be the first to give it a name. And, yes, be mean. ■

NOTES

1. There are innumerable instances of presidents and other persons high on the ladder of power and responsibility who are "anti-intellectuals." Even Woodrow Wilson, a Ph.D. in political science and a reformer, "had a persistent distrust of what he called 'experts,'" and claimed that "the only thing I am interested in is facts" (Hofstadter 1963, 209–10). His 1911 APSA presidential address carried the title, "The Laws and the Facts."

2. Truman's work still stands as the best account of the phenomenon and consequences of overlapping membership (see especially chapter 6 and *passim*).

3. Lowi (2008) also notes that internal cohesion varies according to the type of policy at issue. See especially pp. 40–41.

4. Note also that Mills's books were published by university presses—all but one were Oxford University Press books, which may have given his later books a "trade" (commercial) promotion. His only book aimed at a larger public, *The Causes of World War Three*, was published by a London press, Seeker & Warburg, in 1958, and had little if any clout in the American reading public.

5. My best case study is Richard Nixon. A cursory review of the political economy of the eight Republican years will confirm that Richard Nixon was the last *Democratic* president of the twentieth century. See Lowi (1995, 269–71).

6. There are many research organizations outside the realm of policy advancement, and they are habitually referred to as think tanks, but not in a policy sense. The best examples are in Boston, proudly called "the Massachusetts Miracle" and strung out along the circumferential Route 128.

These organizations depend heavily on research contracts from government at all levels, but they generally stay away from political or ideological positions—a sad restraint on citizenship.

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Second Time Around: A Response

Amitai Etzioni

First, I am grateful to *PS* for putting together this illuminating symposium. Second, given the strict space limitation set aside for my response, please see *My Brother's Keeper: A Memoir and a Message* for all that I would love to say here.

Lowi turns the focus of his scholarship onto PIs. Like many a good scholar, he draws distinctions. He finds all kinds of different PIs—all ring true—and I confess to having walked in many of their shoes at one point or another. Special thanks to Morris for taking my brief point and vastly enriching it with his lessons, rules, and illuminating discussion.

Hacker's question, "Why should you want to engage in public intellectualism?" is a compelling one. My answer is: because I can do no other. I tried to stick to my academic knitting, but these New Years' resolutions typically did not make it past the evening news. PIs, like the rest of us, have complex and overlapping motives. However, if they proceed to absorb the body blows that are their share despite feeling that they could find peace of mind in the grove of academics, they should have their heads and all their other parts examined.

Why should political scientists and sociologists engage in public intellectualism? Because we have much better keys to

Like adherents to most other bodies of thought, communitarians come in different flavors. Some are authoritarian (they privilege the common good and downgrade rights and autonomy). Some are Burke-like conservatives who champion small platoons. Some are academics who are so embarrassed by abuses of the term that they avoid it like a plague, while simultaneously writing communitarian tomes.

A word to both about communitarianism: Like adherents to most other bodies of thought, communitarians come in different flavors. Some are authoritarian (they privilege the common good and downgrade rights and autonomy). Some are Burke-like conservatives who champion small platoons. Some are academics who are so embarrassed by abuses of the term that they avoid it like a plague, while simultaneously writing communitarian tomes. I labor with those communitarians who seek a carefully crafted balance between individual rights and social responsibilities. I would rather not be lumped in with any of the others—and I assure you, they would much rather not have to account for me.

understanding the world around us than other disciplines— *noblesse oblige*.

The lesson that took me the longest to learn is that you must mind the historical context. I challenged NASA too late; the war in Vietnam too early; I called prematurely for bioethics guidelines and demonstrated against nukes long before such ideas were ready to take root. Communitarianism of the kind that I contributed to developing was well-timed and placed. I had just turned sixty. Better later than never. ∎