HISTORY, POLICY AND PUBLIC PURPOSE

Historians and Historical Thinking in Government

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For my mother, a constant source of intellectual inspiration, loving critique, practical support, lively encouragement and quiet faith in me—and so much more.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Abstract The introduction to *History, Policy and Public Purpose* makes the case that historians should consider government a vital domain for historical practice. Insisting that historical perspective is essential for good policymaking is not compatible with a refusal to engage seriously with the demands and difficulties of practical politics. The introduction outlines the aim of the book to go beyond the model of the external expert translating academic research for policy audiences. The alternative approach proposed is to integrate historical thinking into the policymaking process. Doing so means critically examining assumptions about scholarship and attitudes to history outside the university. Public history has proved a problematic concept and label for such work and Green suggests reimagining it as history with public purpose, an agenda of concern for the whole discipline.

Politics matters, from decisions taken on a global stage—authorising air strikes, responding to epidemic disease, controlling carbon emissions—to local issues of potholes and policing. Our lives, and the lives of others, are affected by what governments do or choose not to do. As citizens, we know this even as we decide not to vote in elections and claim that Parliament is remote from our lives. We are critical of how the political system functions and express profound distrust of our elected representatives, while

at the same time regarding democracy and its associated institutions as the only legitimate model. Rather than cultivating a healthy scepticism of power and the rhetoric of the powerful, a pervasive and corrosive cynicism conditions our attitude to politics. The policymakers of popular caricature are inevitably and irredeemably self-interested and incompetent, yet we still look to them to make decisions of great complexity and consequence.

Academics often find themselves subject to similar internal tensions and contradictions. We are in the knowledge business; we operate within disciplinary frameworks that give us intellectually coherent ways of understanding, explaining and shaping the world (and beyond). However diverse those processes may be—from behavourial psychology to astrophysics to literary studies—we deal in evidence and substantiated argument. We contend, sometimes among ourselves, sometimes addressing wider audiences (often in vociferous tones) that academic enquiry matters. Historians are not alone in claiming a distinctive purchase on the problems facing contemporary society. And yet we are often reluctant, even hostile, to the idea of getting directly involved in finding policy solutions.

It is easy to recognise in the abstract that politics is necessary. In complex societies, where many different groups must ideally coexist peaceably and productively, a 'political method of rule' provides structures and processes for conciliating their interests. This is the classic defence of politics.[1] There may, of course, be many deficiencies and flaws in any particular political system. The UK General Election held in 2015 demonstrated the distortions of 'first past the post'. A 50% share of the vote delivered 56 of the 29 seats in the Westminster Parliament to the Scottish National Party (or 25,972 votes per seat). By contrast, the UK Independence Party and the Green Party needed 3.9 m and 1.2 m votes respectively for their single seats.[2] Large majorities in individual constituencies mean 'wasted' votes, yet at the same time some concentration of support is needed to win at all.

It is no great claim that political systems of rule based on the principle of conciliation, however imperfect they may be, are preferable to alternatives that involve coercion: dictatorship or totalitarianism, for example. I rehearse this argument not for its own sake but to draw attention to a dissonance in how the relationship between academe and policy is conceived. We can broadly accept that conciliating diverse interests is an essential task of political systems, while holding the assumption that *our* 'expertise' should prevail in the policymaking process.

As experts, we may be sceptical of politicians', particularly government ministers', motives for seeking our input. We may question their willingness to listen or even have little confidence in their ability to understand and assimilate our advice. How critically attentive are we to preconceptions such as these? Speaking truth to power is an alluring notion but how many of us have stopped to consider what we are actually saying by using this phrase, what status we are claiming for ourselves and what relationship we are describing between academe and government?[3]

The uses and abuses of history in the twentieth century—including the justification of war, genocide and terror—have given historians a particular set of problems in its dealings with political elites. The explanatory and rhetorical power of historical narrative has made the past a prized possession, invoked, celebrated and represented not just in political speeches, parliamentary debates and propaganda, but also in school textbooks, university curricula, film, journalism, memorials and museums, among many other sites and settings. Historians have had understandable misgivings in particular about the risks of placing history in the service of the state. A 'practical bias' makes history 'frankly propagandist', as V. H. Galbraith warned in 1964: 'You cannot, in fact, make history pay a dividend'.[4] At the same time as expressing scepticism about and aversion to connecting scholarship and politics, historians have insisted on the value of historical perspective for policymakers. This has led in the UK context to notable intiatives to translate the findings of academic research for consumption inside Westminster and Whitehall, such as the *History and Policy* network.

This book is different. It aims to go beyond the model of the external expert 'translating' academic research for policy audiences and engage with ways of rethinking historical practice inside government. I also have broader themes and audiences in mind than British historians addressing British policymakers. I am interested in a more fundamental sense of 'public purpose': a moral, methodological and intellectual impetus for working in ways that contribute to public life and societal good. What constitutes a vital public life or a 'good' society is, of course, a matter of conviction. Attitudes and beliefs differ significantly and may rest on received opinion, cultural norms or perceived common sense, as well as informed judgement. Among scholars, differences of definition, emphasis or substance are profound; journals, seminar rooms and conferences provide contexts for the exchange of views. That disagreement exists does not, however, release us from the wider responsibilities suggested

by public purpose. Given that politics must manage, even if it cannot fully reconcile, a diversity of interests, commitments and priorities, it would seem preferable for scholars to contribute to the process than to remain remote from it. Our differences can invigorate and inform processes of debate and decision-making.

Public scholarship provides a useful framework for thinking about the responsibilities that may arise from the privilege of pursuing knowledge.[5] Few of us occupy (or would wish to occupy) the ivory towers of media mythology and research is only one of the many competing demands on our time and energy. Nonetheless, we should acknowledge the privilege of intellectual enquiry, however imperfectly the structures, funding and expectations of academic employment may allow it to be realised. Since the 1970s, many disciplines have gone through a process of debating the meaning and implications of public purpose for their particular fields of knowledge, including philosophy, sociology, geography, anthropology and archaeology, as well as history.

The term 'public' can usefully be recognised as a code or shorthand for complex questions about the nature and use of power. As an adjectival descriptor—public philosophy, public sociology and so on—it poses a series of challenges to academic fields: what are their purposes and responsibilities, to what end are they pursued and in whose interests?[6] These questions are, or should be, of fundamental concern within and across disciplines. In the case of history, however, 'public' has come to carry rather different connotations, which have diverted historians away from the complex, reflexive issues of practice inherent in the term.

Public history is different from its analogue fields, perhaps because history is already *in public* in so many powerful and pervasive ways, from memorials to museums, and online, on the news and in built and natural environments. It is an important currency in which transactions of society are made, from the rhetoric of high politics to the forming and reforming of individual identities and affiliations. People claim, consume and construct history without the inevitable mediation of the academic discipline. This is, in many senses, a positive and productive basis for scholarship with public purpose, and historians in many national contexts have embraced the possibilities of collaboration and shared authority with their publics. But this defining quality of public history is, at the same time, a problem for the field.

As a concept or label, public history tends to be identified by its non-academic or 'popular' character and this seems to me to distinguish it

from analogues in other disciplines. We should recognise that such associations cannot simply be put down to unfamiliarity with the terminology. To interpret 'public' in terms of its essential difference from 'academic' approaches and concerns is a decision—and a political one—even if it is made instinctively. Public history must have space for popular history under its umbrella but there are adverse consequences to rendering the two synonymous. Most clearly, it is easy to marginalise public history if it can be characterised as the past presented for mass consumption; this, indeed, was the core of the critique of heritage as 'bogus history' in the 1980s.[7] More nuanced engagement with issues of ownership and agency has followed, along with greater attention to communicating historical research to wider audiences and, more recently, the emergence of co-production models, incentivised in the UK by funding streams. Yet the fundamental challenges posed by the term 'public' have not prompted substantial and sustained debate within the wider discipline.

Recognition of public history as a specialist sub-field, now well-established in the USA, does not resolve but reconfigures these difficulties of status and credibility. Following established patterns of professionalisation, graduate training programmes have been developed to accredit practitioners for work in historic preservation, archives, museums, consultancy, government and so on. Membership associations—most notably the National Council on Public History—provide an organisational identity for the field, and conferences and periodicals forums for discussing matters of professional interest. Institutionalising public history as a specialism does create a space in which those fundamental questions—'whose history?', 'why history?'—become a central concern. But it also ensures that the wider discipline need not address them. 'Public' is not operating as a code (or a signal) for historians to confront the purposes and aims of the discipline. Instead, public history is often treated as an entity in its own right, without critical and reflexive attention to its constituent parts. That is, it is neither 'public' (in the sense of inflected by concerns about the power, purpose and point of scholarship) nor 'history' (as in belonging to the field of academic enquiry) but something in and of itself. Understandings of 'historianship'—to borrow John Lukacs' term—have not been greatly expanded and enriched through the advent of public history.[8]

In countries where historians are still exploring the shape and scope of public history, the question of whether it should pursue specialist status or develop as an intregrated part of the discipline is a live and a significant

one. This book takes a clear position in favour of integration, insisting that public history as *history with public purpose* raises questions relevant to the whole discipline. Public scholarship provides a framework in which to locate and redefine public history, which in turn allows us to reconceptualise historical practice in government. The case for the integrity of public scholarship, and for seeing history in policy as valuable and valid, is the focus of Chap. 2.

Scholarship with public purpose may entail not just public engagement—now prominent in funders' criteria for awarding research grants, particularly in the humanities—but a more significant reconsideration of how and where historical understanding is made. Engagement and 'impact' (another term that has come to loom large in British academic life, essentially a way of asking researchers to demonstrate a return on public investment) have not fundamentally challenged the linear model of knowledge production and dissemination.[9] Only recently, as the concept of co-production has moved from periphery of practice (including, notably, in public history) to the mainstream of funding policy, has this logic come under pressure.

It is surely no great insight to recognise that public scholarship, of whatever disciplinary flavour, may need to happen in the contexts in which it is required, valued and used (even if it still draws intellectual energy from an 'academic' core). Historians—or philosophers, sociologists and economists—may need to be 'insiders', actively involved and committed to the objectives of the organisation, as opposed to being critics, commentators, consultants, participant observers or taking other roles premised on retaining an external standpoint. If we are to become co-producers of knowledge inside a particular context, then it is reasonable that we gain a working understanding of how it operates—its priorities, processes and practices—and of the other forms of expertise involved.

This is no straightforward task. Historians may encounter literature on museology during their training, for example, and students may have the opportunity to design a small display or to undertake a work placement in a museum. By doing so they cannot gain the depth of professional understanding needed to make co-curating an exhibition as an 'insider' an easy transition. Nonetheless, there is a cognate foundation on which collaboration between historians, curators, archivists and others can build, while recognising distinct professional identities and fields of competence. The same cannot be said for policy work. While there are often sympathies within government for the value of historical perspective, historians

are less likely to encounter people with a developed sense of the applied potential of history there than they would in the museum or historic site. Valuing history as a cultural resource, or even having a degree in history, is clearly different from a Minister or official recognising the relevance of history to, or its traction on, their core purposes.

The challenges of acculturation for the 'historian on the inside' are significant, and made more complex by the ambivalence with which the political system and the relationship of 'truth' to 'power' is often regarded. In Chap. 3, I suggest how we might see policy differently—as a messy, uncertain and unstable process of managing incomplete information and incompatible interests that bears an affinity with how historians work. Shifting our attention from *histories* (content) to *historical thinking* (process) could help make co-production in government possible.

Taking government as the focus reflects the centralisation of much policymaking in Britain, whether in Westminster itself, or in the devolved administrations in Edinburgh, Cardiff or Belfast (so, central as opposed to local government). By government I mean the ministerial departments and the resources available to the Prime Minister, Cabinet or President, although the executive agencies and 'quangos' (Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisations) operating at 'arm's length' could be included. The issues and ideas explored here are not, however, relevant only to Britain or to national government as a context—or, indeed, to history as a discipline. Complex decision-making, wherever it takes place, has an inherent historical dimension; people, communities, organisations, ideas and problems all have pasts. Historians bring with them a range of tools, discussed in Chap. 4, to help think through the dilemmas of the present, and the solutions that suggest themselves, in careful and critical ways.

The arguments presented here could be developed equally for contexts such as local government, business, charities and NGOs, or for policy-oriented organisations such as think tanks. Similarly, the case for bringing different forms of expertise into a collective process of problem-solving explicitly values the approaches and contributions of other disciplines and professions as complementary to those of historians. I am not advocating history as a master discipline but the value of mixing different forms of expertise as part of collaborative projects to address current policy issues. If we want to bring academic insights more effectively to bear on policymaking, we must do more than champion our own disciplinary interests.

The shift in emphasis from the content of historical accounts to the process of historical thinking raises a number of questions about the practice of history, including how we train our students (the concern of Chap. 5) and allocate reward and esteem in scholarship. We tend to celebrate the book or journal article that constitutes the final product of scholarship, leaving the essential intellectual labour in the archive largely uncommunicated and unexplained—even though the 'cognitive moves' involved in searching, reading, interpreting, synthesising and so on underpin the discipline's distinctive knowledge claims.[10] Analysis distinguishes history from chronicle and it is hardly radical to advocate a greater emphasis on analytical approaches in history teaching. If, however, we take a pluralised model of academic practice seriously—in which historians may spend time in government and other settings, as well as the university—the ability to think *with*, rather than just *about*, history assumes an additional importance.

This is, therefore, fundamentally a book about historianship, concerned with articulating the value of 'disciplinary-history' (a term I use to denote the complex, careful, purposeful intellectual labour of the field) and exploring the nature and potential of historical practice with public purpose. History is, of course, more than 'past politics', and politics more than 'present history', but the two are related—and can be actively connected in creative and productive ways—whatever our personal attitudes to political systems, institutions and individuals.[11] One of those ways is 'in the context of practical politics—[to] make this link the object of a study that is both historical and theoretical in scope'.[12] This book may only sketch the outlines of such a study but it is an endeavour that is far more an opportunity than a threat for historians—an opportunity to reimagine the role of history in public life.

NOTES

1. B. Crick, *In Defence of Politics* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), p. 62.
2. J. Garland and C. Terry, 'The 2015 General Election: A Voting System in Crisis.' (The Electoral Reform Society, 2015).
3. Raphael Sassower has recently challenged the 'myth of "speaking truth to power"' in *The Price of Public Intellectuals* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), chapter 1.
4. V. H. Galbraith, *An Introduction to the Study of History* (London: C. A. Watts & Co., 1964), p. 59.

5. I take and adapt the term 'public scholarship' from Karp: I. Karp, 'Public Scholarship as a Vocation,' *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 11, no. 3 (2012).

6. J. D. Brewer, 'The Sociological Imagination and Public Sociology,' in *C. Wright Mills and the Sociological Imagination: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. J. Scott and A. Nilsen (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013), pp. 220–21.

7. The most prominently cited text being Robert Hewison's *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987).

8. J. Lukacs, *The Future of History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2011).

9. L. King and G. Rivett, 'Engaging People in Making History: Impact, Public Engagement and the World Beyond the Campus,' *History Workshop Journal* (2015).

10. On the cult of the archive: L. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder Arnold, 2006), pp. 161–3.

11. I. Hesketh, ' "History Is Past Politics, and Politics Present History": Who Said It?,' *Notes and Queries* 61, no. 1 (2014).

12. K.-G. Faber, 'The Use of History in Political Debate,' *History and Theory* 17, no. 4 (1978), p. 38.

Integrity, Advocacy and the Public Purpose of Scholarship

Abstract Green explores the roles and responsibilities of history and historians in public life through the notion of scholarship with public purpose. She suggests that the validity and integrity of history as a discipline can be located in its methods, which equip historians to add to human understanding about the world in distinctive and important ways. A moral commitment to contribute to the public good can animate historical scholarship and historians can gain intellectual inspiration through the inherently interdisciplinary and collaborative enterprise of public scholarship. A final discussion argues that the unproductive binary thinking of academic/public must be abandoned. Instead, there is potential in seeing historians as holding resources on which constituencies outside the university—including policymakers—can usefully and legitimately draw.

This chapter is about history in public life. Historians may claim that 'history matters' but on what basis do we do so? Can we better understand and explain how the study of the past shapes, informs and connects with modern society in vital ways? These questions underlie any specific expressions of history in public, from museum exhibitions to historical drama, from school curricula to the commemoration of war. Addressing them must precede any attempt to make the case that disciplinary-history and its practitioners

have something valuable to contribute to public policy. Otherwise, we have only a conventional mode of operating, conducting research remote from the contexts of use, then disseminating the resulting 'knowledge' to audiences who have not been involved in its creation. These questions concern the discipline as a whole. In many Western countries, funding policies have been placing increasing emphasis on the impact of research beyond academe; public engagement has become the mechanism by which the humanities prove their worth.[1] This politically-inflected agenda should not deter us from the exploration of deeper questions of the purposes of scholarship.

I have here three main audiences in mind, who may be sceptical, to a greater or lesser degree, of the value of public history and of history in policy in particular. The first is historians themselves, for whom a number of concerns may arise about 'applying' history, particularly in a context where intellectual enquiry must encounter political judgement. I also hope that scholars of other disciplines, who have engaged with questions of 'public purpose' and the purchase of their distinctive forms of knowledge on policy problems, might find some basis for pursuing these endeavours with historians as allies and associates. There is, finally, some persuading to be done of politicians and their advisers, officials and other influential parties, such as think tanks and the media.

I do not underestimate any of these challenges, nor do I presume to do more than sketch out some ideas for how we might—together—approach them. At the same time, however, I recognise that 'neither detachment nor defiance will do' if historians are to become routine contributors to policy thinking.[2] By this I mean that they are embedded in policymaking processes, which I take to require a substantially different relationship with policymakers than is involved when offering historical perspectives from the 'outside'.

Negotiating a Public Purpose

History is not alone in grappling with fundamental questions about the nature and status of its knowledge claims. The parameters of an academic discipline, the purposes of and audiences for its intellectual labour, how the field operates as a community of enquiry, what constitutes valid, authoritative scholarship—and who is a legitimate scholar—are among the fundamental issues that are inevitably subject to challenge and debate. In a number of disciplines, such as philosophy, sociology, geography, anthropology and archaeology, as well as history, the concept of a public purpose (re)emerged and was advocated and contested over a period of twenty or so

years from the late 1960s.[3] In some cases, contributions to these debates are still being offered today.[4]

An adverse academic job market may be one 'push' factor. In the USA, certainly, the establishment of organisations for archaeology (1976) and history (1979) points to an emerging professional identity among practitioners outside the universities.[5] Yet it would be misleading simply to explain a new orientation towards public purpose in a number of fields in instrumental terms: the pursuit of alternative employment options for graduating PhD students. Trust, responsibility and integrity were major themes for the emerging public disciplines. In 1968, for example, Noam Chomsky saw the crisis of his time, in particular the Vietnam War, as a moral and intellectual one, in which 'public philosophy' must replace the collusion of the social sciences in 'American violence and repression'.[6] The perceived isolationism of academia—which rejected engagement with the problems of the present, preferring an introspective concern with questions of specialist interest—provided an impulse for redefining the responsibilities of scholarship. The image of an intellectual life with vitality, integrity and a self-conscious sense of its values could be set against one of self-referential and stultifying academic cultures: the 'tyranny of gratuitous erudition', as one trenchant characterisation had it.[7]

These new forms of public scholarship were, of course, not completely new but drew on longer intellectual histories and on ideas of disciplinary identity and purpose.[8] Eighteenth-century historical scholarship in the German states served public law and politics, providing evidence for legal disputes within the Empire.[9] So, the veneration of scholarly precision and erudition in German history, which have been invoked ever since as the 'authentic' model of scholarship, was informed by a context of application. The work of historians in recent decades as researchers and expert witnesses in public arenas, such as truth and reconciliation commissions and legal processes over land and natural resources, continues this lineage.[10] The case for exploring public history through engaging with its 'intellectual foundations' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been persuasively made but it is striking that this longer view has not become a prominent concern.[11]

The issue of lineage raises a number of questions. While they have emerged within different disciplinary conversations, these questions show a remarkable consonance. The first is identity. Is the 'public' field just one form that academic practice can take—no different, in essence, from a focus on eighteenth-century literature, the history of south-east Asia or

the philosophy of mind—or is it a discrete specialism, with its own theoretical and methodological frameworks? A second set of questions, on the nature of expertise, follows from this. How do public scholars 'ground' their claims to insight on matters of public concern? Does their authority derive from a foundational academic training, applied elsewhere, or does their work require a professionally-oriented education, culminating in a licence to practice? In turn, a third set of questions about credibility and accountability arises. On what basis do trust and confidence in public scholarship rest? To whom can public scholars be held accountable and by what standards can their work be judged? Ethical principles and standards were an early focus for professional bodies in the USA, reflecting concerns not only about the distinctive pressures of 'client-oriented' work but also about how such work was perceived within academe.[12] The esteem attached to public scholarship has proved to be a prevalent and persistent problem.

Placing the issue of history's public purpose in the broader context of public scholarship offers a fresh perspective. Rather than simply the rebellious offspring of a discipline under pressure, born in 1970s America, we can recognise 'public history'—in the many forms it has come to take globally—as attempts to grapple with fundamental questions about historians' roles, identities, purposes and responsibilities in, with and for the wider world. That similar public 'turns' occurred in a number of disciplines from around the same time is something worth further exploration. Here, I can only draw in a modest way from some of the literature that has emerged from them. By doing so, however, I hope to move away from simplistic debates that pitch 'pure' research against 'popular', 'public' or 'applied' work.

In raising the problem of intellectual prestige and esteem, we should acknowledge that gender, race, and other factors socio-economic and other factors may be involved.[13] A theme throughout this book is the importance of critical self-consciousness as a habit of mind that checks, challenges and enlarges our thinking and that therefore equips us to be actively engaged with our own historianship, as well as alert to how our work is enmeshed with many layers of social life. Indeed, the public disciplines have been characterised by a reflexive sensibility. Who 'we' are and what 'we' do are placed in the foreground, along with a recognition that our frameworks are provisional and subject to negotiation and conversation.[14] The theme of self-consciousness finds different expressions in each chapter. Here, it must encourage us to consider why the case for public history

as a legitimate, important and credible form of historical practice needs constant reiteration and reinforcement. Why, also, is it that defining public policy as a legitimate, important and credible articulation of history's public purpose remains problematic (including in contexts such as the USA, where government agencies employ historians)?

There are a number of arguments that can be made for historians taking a more prominent role in the 'world of affairs' and I will turn to these now. However persuasive these may or may not be, my sense is that without some self-conscious attention to disciplinary cultures—what we value; where we focus attention and funding; the assumptions encoded in the professional language we use; our approaches to entry, promotion and esteem in academic careers and so on—these arguments will have little effect on practices. Public purpose is not a peripheral issue to do with the communication or impact of otherwise 'pure' scholarship, nor can it simply be characterised as the domain for the 'subjective', shared work that is done in collaborative mode at the interface of the university and the wider world. Rather, it is something of fundamental concern if we are interested in what it means to be a historian.

The case for the public purpose of history can follow three principal lines of argument: methodological, moral and intellectual. These arguments are not solely about historianship and they have relevance for other fields. It is worth doing some thinking at a more general level—the alternative is to operate at the level of activities, to question whether a particular function of a public scholar can be defined as legitimate, according to an implicit 'academic' gold standard. Generating apparently limitless tasks of justification, such an approach would submerge any potential for an intellectually animating debate about the purposes and responsibilities of scholarship.

Methodological Merit

The methodological argument has two main facets. The first concerns itself with history as a valid, distinctive and important form of enquiry about the world, by exploring the affinities between historical method and post-positivist conceptions of science. Once irreversible processes in the natural world were revealed—starting in the nineteenth century with Fourier's work on the propagation of heat and Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection and, in the twentieth, Einstein's general relativity—time became a central dimension in the creation of knowledge.

Contingency challenged Newton's clockwork universe. Among those building on this foundation, Ilya Prigogine emphasised the time-bound context in which subject (the observer) and object interact, undermining purist interpretations of objectivity. He also embraced the role of human intelligence and interpretation in the creation of knowledge.[15] The analogies between history and science are not merely metaphorical. Many disciplines rely, as does history, on reconstructing 'past processes from surviving structures' through analytically-grounded thought experiments. The document, photograph or object serves a similar purpose for the historian as the fossil for the palaeontologist.[16] The astrophysicist can only understand planetary surfaces by assembling narratives: 'the particular history of each body as an individual object—the story of its collisions and catastrophes, more than its steady accumulations'.[17]

The proposition that history and science are methodologically analogous has an element of advocacy to it, which responds to a number of challenges to history's claims as a valuable, and valid, form of knowledge. Under the postmodernist critique, historians have no special access to the past; the texts on which historical analyses are based represent nothing but themselves. Instead, historians can only pay attention 'to the seemingly incongruous but surprising and hopefully even disturbing detail... in short, attention to everything which is meaningless and irrelevant precisely from the point of view of scientific historiography'.[18] Yet if historical contingency can abide with natural laws, chaos with order, dissipation with stability, such judgements about relevance become much less clear. Appealing to chaos theory, non-linear dynamics and other developments at the frontiers of science may only offer only 'an extremely loose heuristic', rather than a new model of historical explanation.[19] Yet, with physicists treating once 'meaningless noise' as 'meaningful data', our explorations of how historical insight can shape human knowledge have at least been given a new source of intellectual energy.[20]

Allying history with the natural sciences addresses another challenge: the marginalisation of the humanities as subjects with value only in 'cultural' terms, ornaments of a civilised society, rather than essential to its present and future functioning and flourishing. Emphasising the interdependence of different disciplines in addressing the needs of the modern world has been a recurring strategy of humanities and social science fields under political pressure to prove their worth.[21] The subtext is an assertion of methodological authority; history is *like* the sciences, bringing a

different but equally important contribution to 'a more universal science of inquiry'.[22]

However intellectually compelling and emotionally appealing such propositions may be to historians, other audiences are yet to be persuaded. While the currency of political decisions is (or is claimed to be) 'evidence', we remain in the policy equivalent of a Newtonian universe. There will be no room for the disorder of history—beyond the curious backward glance—until the 'physics' with which policymaking is conceived and described takes a quantum leap. Seeing policy differently, the focus of the next chapter, means accepting that 'evidence' does not speak a political language. In translating evidence into policy, judgements about eminently human issues will always need to be made (there are clear ethical dimensions, for example, to reforming welfare provision or introducing a new healthcare intervention).

Historians bring, I will later argue, a set of cognitive tools invaluable for negotiating the 'chaos' of policymaking, but whether we want to use them is another question. The current absence of a receptive policy audience may be one reason to defer exploring the implications of the methodological argument. Historians need not work alone, however. The line of argument emphasising the affinity of history and science requires development, but it does start to undermine powerful and prevalent distinctions between objective/hard and subjective/soft forms of knowledge. Can common cause be made between disciplines, drawing not only inspiration from unexpected methodological affinities but also energy from complementary differences? What policy problems could not be better tackled by a breadth of cognitive approaches?

Perhaps many historians prefer to leave policy relevance to the sciences, but are we willing to concede the underlying assumption: that they offer—distinctively—the 'highly authoritative knowledge forms' on which the modern world relies?[23] If not, then the validity of historical enquiry *with public purpose* must be examined: the second dimension of the methodological argument. The case here rests on the *integrity* of history, the idea that all forms of historical study call on and are defined by a common intellectual process, involving principles and standards of enquiry that confer legitimacy to the resulting products.[24] 'Diversity in unity' is not only a defence of public scholarship in methodological terms, but also an appeal to audiences inside and outside a discipline to make use of its assets with a greater sense of trust.[25] An 'organic solidarity' between different expressions of the same discipline is surely preferable to the scepticism, even

antagonism, that can emerge between subdivisions and specialisms, particularly when there are external pressures to be addressed.[26]

The integrity of history is, it should be acknowledged, a far from uncontentious concept. In the USA, debates about the relationship between 'public' and 'academic' history have been marked by an intensity that reflects sharp distinctions between universities and other institutional settings. For some, the work culture outside academe, 'framed by distinctive identity, values, perspectives, and mission', makes any commonality merely the legacy of a shared intellectual heritage.[27] For others, 'common ground' may not always be 'peaceful ground', but differences can be productive, pushing the field to develop in both theory and practice.[28] These divisions should, however, be understood in their American context. The institutionalisation of public history as a distinct field is a corollary of professionalisation, and the higher education system has structured the supply of credentialed practitioners into specialist roles.[29] The development of graduate pathways in historic preservation, archives and interpretation has underscored the distinction within university departments between public history scholars and programmes and their 'academic' counterparts. Professional associations inevitably, even if not designedly, encourage the definition and expression of collective identity and interest.

These tensions and divisions are less visible and less stable elsewhere. In Britain, for example, an emerging field of public history is drawing on disciplinary traditions that now have secure places in the academic framework, most notably social history. Commitments to sharing authority and to valuing diverse voices and perspectives are creating models of co-production with the public and transforming how history is made. Training in conservation, archive science and museum curation tends to lie outside the territory of history departments. Indeed, 'history' and 'heritage' seem to occupy different domains. The currency of the latter term in Britain reflects popular engagement with the tangible legacies of an elite-centred past: castles, cathedrals, stately homes and so on. This '"old", grand, monumental' definition of heritage as constitutive of national identity has been interrogated in the emerging scholarly domain of critical heritage studies.[30] By contrast, the discipline of history has been slow to bring sustained critical reflection to the uses of the past in the present.[31] Public history is only starting to realise its potential as an 'umbrella concept' by which a wide variety of historical work can be described and explored.[32]

In Germany, the field of historical didactics (*Geschichtsdidaktik*) has provided a bridge between historical learning in school and wider questions

about 'how the past is experienced and interpreted in order to understand the present and anticipate the future'.[33] It is a theoretical discipline, bringing together pedagogy with historical theory, psychology and social and cultural studies, and it has a developing concern with the uses of history in society.[34] In parallel, a movement for the history of everyday life (*Alltagsgeschichte*) emerged.[35] History workshops (*Geschichtswerkstätte*), based on the English model, brought together university historians with a commitment to democratising the making of historical knowledge and amateurs ('*barfuß*'—'barefoot'—historians, an appellation used both in celebration and derision).[36]

The American field of public history remains the most developed and influential globally. There is much from which others can learn, including how public historians there have exercised a political voice as advocates for history's importance to society. In shaping the future of public history, seeing it as a form of public scholarship, rather than in terms of its institutional systems and structures, may make discussions more productive—in whatever contexts they may be taking place. Yet there is one obstacle to such an approach that is of particular relevance here. Despite the emphasis on co-production and collaboration in public history, there are few signs—at least in Britain—that policy communities are expected to be more than passive recipients of historical evidence, as created, licenced and transferred by historians.

The integrity argument, therefore, has particular significance for history in policy. If collaborative approaches are recognised as valid expressions of the diversity in unity of history, then there is no *a priori* reason to exclude as invalid particular constituencies as potential collaborators. If a form of practice meets the core principles and standards of enquiry, then there is an issue of consistency if we wish to declare it invalid. Any scepticism we may hold may, indeed, be justified but it should first be carefully examined.

The corrosive cynicism about politics has an academic counterpart. Public scholarship, perhaps precisely because it has challenged the authority of elites, has tended to 'demonise' the state.[37] This is a pronounced inclination in the case of UK public history, influenced by trends in the wider discipline. The cultural turn of the 1970s and 1980s allowed historians to develop sophisticated conceptualisations of power, yet, it has been argued, the state and political institutions were thereby left to the social sciences (to refuse to speak of politics is, of course, itself a political act).[38] Further, the problem of the 'state' has been caught up with that of the

'nation'. Pressure has been put in recent decades—rightly and productively—on the idea of the nation as the natural unit of historical analysis. Historians are alive to the many other meaningful shapes human identity can take, as well as to the significance of the lives, experiences and decisions of people far from the corridors of power. Nonetheless, notions of nationhood, national interest and citizenship are inescapable in public debate, if unstable and contested, and the central state remains the locus for many of the most important decisions affecting people's lives. They merit our attention not only as historians, but also as public scholars.

Moral Meaning

To acknowledge the diversity of forms that scholarship may legitimately take is not, of course, to regard all as equally worthwhile. Methodological validity is only one of the criteria involved when appraisals are made; judgements of *value* take a number of forms. We ask why a piece of research is worth pursuing, not just as an investment of personal effort, but as a contribution to a collective endeavour. Where does this particular problem or puzzle fit in relation to others and within broader themes of enquiry? These questions can be answered in different ways—which need not be mutually exclusive—depending on what assumptions we have in mind about the purpose of the work. So, if we are concerned with the intellectual objectives of a project, we may articulate its value in terms of the originality of topic or approach, or by reference to the extent to which it will delineate a new field of enquiry or conceptual framework. Disciplinary communities make judgements all the time about the value of scholarly contributions within their purview.

Describing the value of the work for the purposes of securing funding brings in other forms of value, not least 'value for money'. Judgements made by public funding bodies are decisive interventions; they determine to a great extent what kind of research is conducted, by whom and in which institutions. Public engagement has emerged as a prominent policy narrative in the humanities. The UK Research Councils require applicants to describe their 'pathways to impact' and promote cross-cutting funding programmes, such as Connected Communities, which shift the emphasis from 'pure' research to co-production.[39] In the case of a trust or foundation, the research may also need to accord with the value*s*, ethos and interests of the funding organisation.

The value of academic work can also be thought of in terms of the responsibilities and accountabilities that being a scholar confers.[40] These may be quite specific; working to cure a prevalent medical condition, to aid a group experiencing discrimination or to capture the testimonies of a marginalised community, for example, can provide a powerful motivation to enter and pursue a field of study. Obligations may also have a general character, a belief that advancing human knowledge must also contribute to public life or societal good.

These impulses can be brought under the umbrella of a 'moral argument' for public scholarship. By using the term 'moral', I mean scholarship informed and animated by a principled commitment to fulfil wider responsibilities (and not 'moral' in the more limited sense of possessing inherent virtue or conforming to prescribed codes of behaviour).[41] If politics matter, then a historian could equally discharge these responsibilities in public policy as through work with museums or the media. The moral impetus for academic work can be seen as essentially interwoven with the scholarly impetus; public purpose both shapes and expresses disciplinary identity. This way of viewing public scholarship stands in marked contrast to 'bolt-on' approaches, in which the findings of 'pure' research programmes are disseminated to a range of audiences.

It is important to acknowledge that there is some common ground between the moral argument for public scholarship and the policy logic of public engagement as a return on investment, however tempting it may be to disassociate them. The 'tyranny of relevance' is at least as much an opportunity as it is a threat; there is scope for humanities scholars to exert some collective influence in shaping the 'impact agenda' in disciplinary images.[42] To do so, we can usefully draw on our own professional pasts and also look across the boundaries of field and method.[43] The key questions posed by public sociology—sociology for whom, for what?—surely hold a wider relevance.[44] To cast public history as simply plan B employment for history graduates, or dismiss it as the popularisation of the past, is to avoid the serious import of these questions. They require historians, as any scholars, to think about the fundamental character of their field and the audiences and purposes that it serves. Public history needs international conversations that encourage us to think more clearly about core concepts and practices; the catalysing potential of interdisciplinary dialogue has not yet been realised.

It is worth pausing at this point to ask if, within a framework of public scholarship, there are any responsibilities that historians in particular

should exercise as a corollary of the distinctive forms of knowledge they produce. Self-aware, critical observation of the present might be one such responsibility, another, to contribute to 'intercultural competence' and tolerance through developing wider understanding of the 'peculiarities' of all societies, including our own.[45] For these, and other tasks that help to provide understanding of, orientation in and responses to the present, the historian has a number of disciplinary ways of working. The 'conceptual tools' in the historian's toolkit and their value to public policy is the subject of Chap. 4. For now, it is the legitimacy of public history—in the sense of history as public scholarship—that is of interest.

One challenge to the moral argument for public history is the risk of distortion. Historical content outside the control of historians, so the objection goes, can be misrepresented or used selectively to advance a particular agenda. 'Client-oriented' historians may, themselves, be under pressure to do so: writing a corporate history, for example, that gives more space to moments of success than to periods of decline or to instances of poor management. Can public scholarship claim to be a moral endeavour if the principles that inspire it, such as trust, accountability and integrity, are liable to be lost on entering the public arena? In settings where such principles are perceived to have a weak hold, such as 'big business', the military and government, these concerns are likely to be acute. Yet surely this potential disjuncture between the values of public history as public scholarship and the ways history can be used *in* public reaffirms rather than removes the responsibilities of the historian. Indeed, '[t]he more a discipline *insists* on this responsibility, the more difficult it will be to pursue political tendencies within the context of science.'[46]

Insisting on our responsibilities is a significant step, and is not the same as being advocates for history's importance in public life. We cannot insist *both* that history is vital, in yielding valuable and distinctive insights for the present, *and* that it remains solely our preserve. A moral argument for public history involves thinking through the roles of other constituencies (the term 'audiences' seems inadequate) in historical work.

Intellectual Inspiration

To take seriously how our responsibilities intersect or interlock with those of others and to look for inspiration in other disciplines may seem to decentre the historian from the historical enterprise. An intellectual argument for public history as public scholarship can, however, be made that

proceeds from this basis, suggesting that nourishment can be gained from activities that push against the structures and organising principles of a specialist field. If the territory we can claim to 'own' as academic specialists is getting smaller and smaller, then we need to find new spaces to explore. The alternative is the retreat to the archive, to more specialised and discrete topics on which authority can be more surely built, and to addressing an audience of academic peers.[47] Creative new spaces will surely only be found where boundaries are made more porous, fresh collaborative configurations assembled and different constituencies engaged.

Public scholarship is one such space. There is real potential to discuss both fundamental principles and matters of professional practice across the various fields; our concerns, as well as our 'publics', overlap more than we may currently realise. So, for example, the work of an anthropologist on indigenous communities in a rainforest zone may intersect with that of a geographer concerned with environmental degradation or that of a sociologist interested in the interactions of local officials, NGOs and politicians. A public purpose for their collaboration can be imagined, such as a conservation plan or an economic development strategy, yet there are still relatively few contexts in which cross-disciplinary conversations are emphasised and incentivised. The emergence of journals that bring together different disciplinary perspectives on questions of common interest and the shift towards challenge-based funding are starting to redress this; how far they can shift established, usually discipline-oriented, patterns of academic communication and networking remains to be seen.[48]

'Doing history' outside academe has always had a strong interdisciplinary, interprofessional character. The historian cannot hold exclusive authority, but is necessarily in negotiation with a number of others. Decisions about representing the past, for example, involve cooperation with curators in museums, producers in the media, officials in government, managers in business and so on. These relationships animate history in public, bringing both challenge and reward, as well as experience that may help the wider discipline respond to the increasing pressure for interdisciplinary working. Whatever our views on the causes of these pressures, we can use them productively to develop new ways of working. Bringing different disciplines, professions and interests together can create a context in which innovative ways of engaging with the past are co-designed, co-created and co-curated. But that context is potentially powerful also in intellectual terms: as a new space in which we can think imaginatively about the roles, status, methods, purposes and intersections of our fields.

One problem for historians with this endeavour is the resilient issue of status. Following the American pattern, definitions of public history have tended to rely on a distinction 'between what happens—and belongs—inside … universities and the world beyond their walls'.[49] 'Public' is therefore, by default, 'non-academic' and the emphasis on the historian as practitioner rather than scholar has not tended to create parity of esteem. As a consequence, public history is qualitatively different from other sub-fields that emerged as pathbreaking new methods and perspectives and then gained recognition within the institutional mainstream (such as social, economic, Black or women's history). By nesting public history in public scholarship, there may be an opportunity to break down this unhelpful dichotomy—shifting the focus from job title, credentials and occupational setting to the quality and significance of the enquiry. It is also surely intellectually liberating to develop a more plural understanding of what it means to be an academic and to blur disciplinary boundaries in pursuit of a more creative exploration of public purpose.

The Advocacy Challenge

That there are serious arguments for the legitimacy and value of public scholarship does not mean it is without its thorny issues. The case for conceiving—or recovering—a sense of public purpose has tended to be made in radical terms, a reaction against academic insularity and a rallying call for engaged and critical intellectual work. 'Good history,' as Justin Champion has argued in compelling style, '… should expose tyranny, celebrate achievement, condemn crimes, explain prejudice, describe sacrifice, honour victims, commemorate the dead, but most importantly, provoke debate.'[50] The very imperatives for public scholarship, animated by the language of moral responsibility, social commitment and political agency, have drawn the sharpest criticism. By becoming involved in public scholarship, so the reasoning goes, the academic shifts from researcher to advocate. The credibility of a discipline is fatally undermined once it claims purchase on issues outside its intellectual domain.[51] Lines of accountability are less clearly drawn when it is no longer just an academic community involved, but also clients, audiences and associates of various kinds.[52]

Advocacy is most clearly evident in the courtroom. In North America and Australasia, historians have served as researchers and expert witnesses in legal proceedings concerning, for example, school segregation, sex discrimination, indigenous land title and control over natural resources.[53]

This is the context in which professional ethics and codes of conduct assumed such importance.[54] Historians and other scholars may, however, become involved in the work of courts, tribunals and public enquiries without seeing themselves—or, indeed, having undertaken specialist training—as public scholars. Primary allegiance may be owed to the discipline, rather than to its public purposes and expressions. For Richard Evans, it was 'the ability of historical scholarship to reach reasoned conclusions' that was on trial when David Irving sued Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books for libel in 1996. The successful defence showed that 'we *can* know, beyond reasonable doubt, even if explaining and understanding will always be a matter for debate'.[55] The Lipstadt-Irving case is useful here in that it illustrates that public arenas make demands—legitimate ones, I would suggest—of scholars, where they have an expert purchase on a matter of significance.[56] We cannot neatly demarcate a domain in which such demands are relevant only to a subgroup designated to public service.

Historians are, admittedly, on surer ground when they are providing testimony on historical practice, as was Evans, than on other matters.[57] Legal proceedings rarely turn, however, on the honesty and the precision with which historical enquiry is conducted; we need to look further for answers to the advocacy question. Efforts to counter the charge of advocacy have appealed to the same type of arguments as are used in defence of public scholarship in general. Drawing on the methodological case for the integrity of history, 'objectivity' is not easily sustained as the central distinction between historians in the courtroom and colleagues in the archive. At the same time, a moral obligation on the historian to testify arises, whether from the basic premise of equal access to counsel or from a commitment to secure as full an explanation as possible for a particular injustice.[58]

It is possible, however, to take a more radical approach: to acknowledge that 'in the public arena, scholarship will always have the appearance of interestedness and partiality, regardless of the reality' and to *appropriate* the advocacy label. If public historians are, indeed, advocates, can the principles of proper conduct in the legal process serve as a model for ethical public history?[59] Openly declaring any interests seems relatively uncontroversial today, as historians are becoming increasingly comfortable with acknowledging the 'commitments' they bring to their scholarly work.[60] Of greater importance here is the concept of procedural fairness as an equivalent to peer review.

Academic communities have a self-regulating dynamic, in that the quality control of research is conducted in a collective context. Controlling access to publication space, funding, academic posts, promotion, esteem and so on through peer review mechanisms is clearly a far more problematic enterprise than the term 'quality control'—an apparently innocuous and self-evident notion—suggests. The influence of biases, such as institutional prestige, has been established, yet peer review retains its status as the 'least worst' option for appraising academic work.[61] Peer review provides a principle not only for assessing the validity of such work, but also for explaining and defending its own status as a 'gold standard' marker. That the demonstrable flaws and distortions of peer review have not fundamentally challenged this status indicates the dominance of the argument in academic discourse. An important part of establishing the legitimacy and integrity of public scholarship will be developing an answer, or a series of answers, to the question of quality control.

Procedural fairness may help us do so. Rather than being tested only within a scholarly community through peer review, can evidence and interpretation also be contested in public? In a court case, both parties have access to the same materials and may challenge their validity and relevance. Lawyers may cross-examine witnesses and seek to establish the reliability of individuals and of their testimony. Does an open process of scrutiny and debate provide a form of fairness that can complement and enhance the 'closed' systems of academic peer review?[62] This question has a wider significance. Digital scholarship is already challenging conventions of peer review and it is often a collaborative and multi-disciplinary enterprise. It is likely to have a public presence from an early stage, draw in a diversity of participants and result in outputs that are, as a matter of principle, freely accessible.[63] Digital scholarship thus shares with public scholarship an ethos and an inclination towards cooperative working, although as yet the potential for making common cause—for example between digital history and public history—has not been fully explored.

The ability to revise entries, view earlier versions and access previous versions of pages makes *Wikipedia* an interesting model of 'commons-based peer production'.[64] The discussion pages of historical entries show editors engaging in historiographical debate, while authors seeking 'featured article' status must submit their work for a further process of review.[65] Experiments with open peer review processes (or partly open, with a final editorial decision) in the humanities as scholarly fields are relatively new but promising. Protocols vary, but submissions generally go through a

stage in which a community of self-identified reviewers post comments by paragraph on the draft text using a platform such as MediaCommons. Any visitor to the site can view text and comments both during the process and as archived content once it has closed.[66] *Shakespeare Quarterly* ran an experimental open review process, in response to the sometimes 'alienating' environment of new media and as an attempt to explore how 'older forms and values' can help scholars to navigate these new terrains. So, '[t]o refuse to reflect critically on, reformulate, and reaffirm the value of our discipline in an electronically networked world is to court irrelevance.'[67]

What emerges from the *Shakespeare Quarterly* experiment is a series of messages that help us think through the creative fusion, not only of 'old forms' and 'new media', but also of intellectual processes and public purposes more broadly. A community of enquiry was formed and its conversations—through which knowledge was shaped and negotiated—were conducted in public. The community gained an interdisciplinary breadth, albeit a modest shift, and thereby placed in the foreground the question of how expertise is defined. Reviewers engaged in 'collegial colloquy' rather than acting as individual adjudicators, a perspectival shift that called on a greater investment of time but yielded much richer critical insights for the authors and editors.[68] In essence, a collective sense of *procedural fairness* emerged, which gave structure and integrity to a process of knowledge production less bounded than conventional academic enquiries by the status and identity of the participants.

If we are interested in the legitimacy of public scholarship, there remain some issues to address. Retaining editorial oversight of an open-reviewed academic journal is an entirely appropriate decision; but what happens when the context of knowledge production is situated outside academe or it occupies a liminal space between professional communities? Divided or unclear accountability is a major issue for those concerned with public scholarship, whether as proponents or critics. The institutional historian or historical consultant, who are paid for their services (as opposed to drawing university salaries), are balancing their status as 'advocates' of their employers and as professionals with obligations to their craft. On the other hand, academic accountability is itself inevitably multi-linear: to universities as employers; to professional associations and institutions; to scholarly networks; to students; to collaborators and colleagues of various kinds.

As with quality control, 'having an answer' to the question of accountability can be seen as an important plank in the public scholar's platform.

Perhaps part of that response should be to reflect the question back out to the academic discipline: how might we — all — *manage* our multiple accountabilities and responsibilities in ways that fulfil and manifest principles of fairness and integrity? Procedural standards are, admittedly, more problematic in settings where the open transaction of materials is difficult, of which government is a prime example (I give some thought in the following chapter as to how a community of enquiry, involving a form of interdisciplinary collegial colloquy, might relate to government settings). For now, I return to history as public scholarship, concluding this chapter with some general comments that bear in mind the three audiences I outlined earlier.

Answering the 'So What?' Question: The Implications of a Public Scholarship Approach

It is unfortunate that adding the prefix 'public' to a discipline creates an apparent bifurcation from the academic mainstream. Detractors and proponents of public scholarship are often in effective collusion here, even if it is unconscious or unintentional. The former can suggest that there are too many compromises involved for such work to be characterised as scholarly at all; the latter may claim that the demands are so distinctive that academic training and conventions of professional practice are inadequate. Both positions have elements of validity and import but are far from constituting self-sufficient arguments. Their effect, however, is to draw public scholarship out of the solution in which the many purposes, values and identities of academic life are blended, to crystallise it as something visible, distinct and apart.

The impulse to create categories and subdivisions, to define and to label, is understandable, but it is not a neutral undertaking and nor is it without consequences. The 'advocate' and the 'academic' are not irreconcilable identities; the apparent choice between interested and disinterested enquiry is a false one. Can we, instead, see ourselves as holding *resources*, on which constituencies inside and outside the academy may usefully draw? In doing so, we are constructing 'value-engaged' as opposed to 'value-free' or, indeed, 'client-oriented' ways of being a historian, sociologist, philosopher and so on.[69]

It is also easy to become preoccupied with questions of esteem, asking, for example, how public scholarship can be given status and weight

within academe or how public history can become a valued practice within the discipline of history. I have myself followed this line of argument to an extent. Yet this approach is implicitly comparative, requiring points of equivalence between the 'public' and the 'academic' to be identified, thereby tending to reinforce a sense of their distinctiveness. Reframing the question as 'how can we make history a valued function of public life?' is a way of signalling that the discipline as whole is implicated in formulating a response: 'History should be part of public life; public life should not be thought of as a little corner of history.'[70] We can choose, as a disciplinary community, to imagine a collective project of mapping the future for ourselves.[71] Such a project has an essential reflexive dimension and involves us placing in the foreground questions that may otherwise only preface our intellectual labours: who are 'we' and what are the values with which we conduct our enquiries?; with whom are we in dialogue and to what ends do we converse?

In these efforts, I hope common cause can be made across disciplinary boundaries. Intellectual vitality can certainly come from exploring our own territories; we can emphasise different aspects of historianship at different points in a career, for example, and even seek new definitions of what it means to be a historian. There are, however, other sources of inspiration and much that we can learn from discussing how other fields have construed public purpose. In creating such transdisciplinary conversations, we refuse to be confined by specialism and can, instead, attempt to assemble new configurations of expertise. I am not convinced, however, that an expansive, boundary-spanning 'intellectual craft'—'challenging today's narrow professional segmentation of knowledge'—is necessarily '*anti*disciplinary' in character.[72] Effective interdisciplinary endeavour requires us to be highly conscious of our discipline-specific ways of working, aware of the kinds of questions we are well-placed to answer *and* of those where others bring relevant forms of knowledge. If we admit that 'the means of human cognition are limited', then surely we should 'exploit every opportunity to augment them'.[73] This means developing a sense of the complementarity of different disciplines in advancing our understanding of the world.

The appeal for complementarity should be considered, not only by academic communities, but by policymakers, funders, the media and so on. The constituency with the primary investment in how human knowledge exploited is the *public*—citizens at every level of association—to whom all others are accountable or responsible in some way. There is a legitimate

and fundamental public interest in seeing that the principles and practices, insights and approaches of academe are available as a collective resource for public good, whether that be in political debate and decision-making or for other purposes.

To divide STEM—science, technology, engineering and mathematics—from the arts and humanities subjects, the former as offering 'essential' knowledge, the latter 'elective' cultural enrichment, is to miss the powerful ways in which disciplines and methods can interlock to offer a far more complete and coherent picture of an issue than they could ever do alone.[74] It is also to miss the potential of the humanities to accommodate productively the particular challenges of government: the 'messiness' and ambiguity of policy development; the negotiation of uncertainty; the shifting parameters of action and power relationships inherent in exercising political judgement. In recovering and reconceptualising public scholarship, there is much to be done on all sides to assemble a compelling framework for how forms of public purpose are realised. I turn in the next chapter to how we might start to do so for history in policy.

NOTES

1. In the UK, 'impact' is defined as 'an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia'. See: http://www. hefce.ac.uk/rsrch/REFimpact/ [accessed 2/12/15]. In the USA, the National Endowment for the Humanities' 'Common Good' initiative is seeking to 'bring the humanities into the public square', see: http://www.neh.gov/commongood [accessed 17/12/15].
2. A. Offer, 'Using the Past in Britain: Retrospect and Prospect,' *The Public Historian* 6, no. 4 (1984), p. 36.
3. In addition to the literature discussed below, see: N. Scheper-Hughes, 'Making Anthropology Public,' *Anthropology Today* 25, no. 4 (2009); L. Lamphere, 'The Convergence of Applied, Practicing, and Public Anthropology in the 21st Century,' *Human Organization* 63, no. 4 (2004); J. Smith, 'Geography in Public and Public Geography: Past, Present and Future,' *The Geographical Journal* 179, no. 2 (2013); S. Eden, 'Green, Gold and Grey Geography: Legitimating Academic and Policy Expertise,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30, no. 3 (2005).

4. This includes contributions aimed specifically at public audiences, for example, the BBC Radio 4 series, *The Public Philosopher*, with Harvard professor Michael Sandel: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01nmlh2 [accessed 24/10/15].

5. The Society of Professional Archaeologists, the National Council on Public History and the Society for History in the Federal Government. See: L. J. Zimmerman, K. D. Vitelli, and J. J. Hollowell, *Ethical Issues in Archaeology* (Altamira Press, 2003), p. 21; R. Kelley, 'Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects,' *The Public Historian* 1, no. 1 (1978).

6. N. Chomsky, 'Philosophers and Public Philosophy,' *Ethics* 79, no. 1 (1968).

7. I take 'public scholarship' from Ivan Karp as a way of talking about academic work with public purpose at a general rather than a discipline-specific level: 'Public Scholarship as a Vocation,' *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 11, no. 3 (2012); the quoted phrase is from: H. Rousso, 'Applied History, or the Historian as Miracle-Worker,' *The Public Historian* 6, no. 4 (1984), p. 72. See also: 'First National Symposium on Public History: A Report,' *The Public Historian* 2, no. 1 (1979).

8. See, for example: J. Tully, *Public Philosophy in a New Key: Volume 1, Democracy and Civic Freedom* (Cambridge University Press, 2008); E. L. Boyer, 'The Scholarship of Engagement,' *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 49, no. 7 (1996).

9. B. Stuchtey and P. Wende, *British and German Historiography, 1750–1950: Traditions, Perceptions, and Transfers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 6.

10. H. Jones, K. Östberg, and N. Randeraad, eds., *Contemporary History on Trial: Europe since 1989 and the Role of the Expert Historian* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); M. Hickey, 'Negotiating History: Crown Apologies in New Zealand's Historical Treaty of Waitangi Settlements,' *Public History Review* 13 (2006).

11. R. Conard, *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002); J. Tosh, 'Public History, Civic Engagement and the Historical Profession in Britain,' *History* 99, no. 335 (2014); S. Vaughn, *The Vital Past: Writings on the Uses of History* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1985).

12. L. M. Raab et al., 'Clients, Contracts, and Profits: Conflicts in Public Archaeology,' *American Anthropologist* 82, no. 3 (1980); A. L. Hurtado, 'Historians and Their Employers: A Perspective on Professional Ethics,' *The Public Historian* 8, no. 1 (1986).

13. D. D. Meringolo, 'Capturing the Public Imagination: The Social and Professional Place of Public History,' *American Studies International* 42, no. 2/3 (2004).

14. A. S. Laden, 'The Key to/of Public Philosophy,' *Political Theory* 39, no. 1 (2011), pp. 114–5. Also:

15. See: P. K. Leffler and J. Brent, *Public and Academic History: A Philosophy and Paradigm*, Public History Series (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger, 1990), chapter 3; I. Prigogine and I. Stengers, *Order out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature* (New York: Bantam Books, 1984).

16. J. L. Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 40–1, 63–4.

17. M. Shermer, 'Exorcising Laplace's Demon: Chaos and Antichaos, History and Metahistory,' *History and Theory* 34, no. 1 (1995), pp. 69–70. See also: L. P. Masur, 'Stephen Jay Gould's Vision of History,' *The Massachusetts Review* 30, no. 3 (1989).

18. F. R. Ankersmit, 'Historiography and Postmodernism,' *History and Theory* 28, no. 2 (1989), pp. 149–50, 153. Stephen Jay Gould's comments on planetary surfaces were published the same year: S. J. Gould, 'The Horn of Triton,' *Natural History*, no. 12 (1989).

19. P. A. Roth and T. A. Ryckman, 'Chaos, Clio, and Scientific Illusions of Understanding,' *History and Theory* 34, no. 1 (1995).

20. M. Shermer, 'Chaos and Antichaos, History and Metahistory,' p. 62.

21. See for example: British Academy, 'Punching Our Weight: The Humanities and Social Sciences in Public Policy Making.' (London, 2008).

22. P. K. Leffler and J. Brent, *Public and Academic History*, p. 92.

23. L. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder Arnold, 2006), pp. 88–9.

24. Leffler and Brent talk of a 'reconciliation of academic and public history by means of their common methodology': *Public and Academic History*, p. 3.

25. M. Burawoy et al., 'Public Sociologies: A Symposium from Boston College,' *Social Problems* 51, no. 1 (2004), p. 127.

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Historians on the Inside: Thinking with History in Policy

Abstract This chapter traces the rise of politicised policy advice in the late twentieth century and increasingly limited, quantitative notions of relevance for evidence-based policymaking. Yet as a complex, uncertain and messy business, policy needs history's capacity for handling contingency, ambiguity and inconclusiveness. There is an affinity between history and policy that should encourage historians to focus less on briefing and informing policymakers and more on bringing their distinctive modes of thinking and reasoning into the policymaking process. The chapter then considers past examples and recent proposals for historical work in government, before outlining the case for mixed policy teams. With members from different specialisms serving on secondment as temporary 'insiders', historians cannot retain the privileges of 'speaking truth to power' but are necessarily involved in a collaborative enterprise.

In Chap. 2, I made the case for seeing policy as a legitimate, indeed necessary, dimension of historianship. But how can history influence the world of political decision-making, given the very different imperatives that shape academe and government? Historians have, of course, always been active in political affairs. The early social histories of the Webbs, the Hammonds and Tawney aimed to provide the evidential basis for social and economic progress.[1] Historians engaged in both propaganda and public education during the First World War and have served inside

government as specialists.[2] In the latter decades of the century, health, education and welfare have, notably, drawn the attention of historians, who have taken platforms outside the profession in attempts to influence policy.[3] Some issues have prompted not just historians but policymakers, think tanks and the media to turn to the past. For example, comparisons between 2008 and historical economic crises—particularly the crash of 1929—were prominent in the public discourse of the time and treated as significant material for informing policy, not least by the then Prime Minister (and history PhD) Gordon Brown.[4] Most recently, the prospect of a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union (EU) has led to the formation of opposing historians' collectives, showing the importance of history to political narratives.[5] This rich and varied work is part of a lineage of politically-oriented historianship that has been woven into the discipline since its nineteenth-century beginnings. I do not intend to review these efforts here, nor is there a need to rehearse the dangers of 'wrongly applying history'.[6] This chapter aims, instead, to move beyond these concerns and explore ways to bring history and policy into closer conversation.

Historians have been particularly alert to the ways in which political leaders ignore, distort, misconstrue and misrepresent the past. The case for bringing history into policymaking often rests on the premise that historical perspectives offer insights that would improve the quality of political judgements. 'Parallels in the past' reveal that policy problems that seem new rarely are, nor are the 'radical' or 'innovative' solutions proposed to address them.[7] Taking the long view expands our understanding of a country, issue or individual. Carefully inspecting the historical analogies invoked in policy debate should help avert injudicious and precipitous decisions.[8]

This is important work, but I have a different project in mind. The aim here is to explore the potential roles of historians and historical expertise inside policymaking. We cannot expect policymakers to use such expertise well unless we give serious attention to *how* history could work effectively with the processes of policy formulation and within the structures, realities and constraints of the political system. Similarly, we cannot advocate greater prominence for historical sensibility in the scholarship of policy formulation unless we are willing to engage more consistently and purposefully with relevant fields. These are both complex tasks and they require us to rethink our mental models, not only of the policy process but also of historical practice.

A History Gap?

History has struggled to position itself as a discipline that has distinctive and relevant contributions to make to public policy. The interventions of notable individuals and of collective endeavours such as *History and Policy* have enhanced the appreciation of historical insights among policymakers, yet historical expertise is not routinely sought as part of the policy process in Britain. Other fields, most clearly economics, have made effective claims to supply the rigorous evidential basis for informed policy decisions. Political scientists, sociologists and anthropologists, among others, have concerned themselves with defining the policymaking process and understanding the institutional systems and cultures that shape, reinterpret and divert it. History is implicit in many aspects of political scholarship, yet as a distinctive discipline it is conspicuous in its absence. The case study, for example, requires careful contextualisation to be meaningful; examining policy choices means asking how the issue emerged and was conceptualised by political actors; understanding how policy formulation and implementation happen calls for attention to institutional cultures and practices that have historical dimensions. That such efforts call on methodological insights from another discipline is rarely explored.[9]

Rationalist models that divide the policymaking process into stages, from problem definition to evaluation, are an obvious target for historians and other humanists as practitioners of an 'ecological approach to human affairs'.[10] We can criticise the 'largely ahistorical theories, models and projections' of more influential disciplines—and the failure of policymakers to learn from history—but surely we cannot stop there if we hope for more historically-informed approaches.[11] Often overlooked by historians are developments within other fields that offer the opportunity for productive dialogue. Political scientists have, for example, been subjecting rationalist models of policymaking to revision and challenge for some time, emphasising that it has a deterministic dynamic that cannot accommodate contigency (as agents have no meaningful choice when faced with 'rational' and 'irrational' options).[12] Description and narrative are being recognised as offering ways to capture vital considerations, such as culture and context, which cannot easily be integrated into prescriptive and mechanistic approaches.[13]

Historians tend to relish the debunking of myths, the disruption of neat narratives and the destabilisation of certainties. A notable target has been political conceptions of the 'family in crisis', which have been on the

political agenda since the 1970s, with symptoms including family break-down and absent fathers, welfare over work, poor discipline, juvenile deliquency and lack of care of the elderly.[14] We should, therefore, *also* be able to build cogent arguments to show that powerful beliefs about how policymaking works or what constitutes 'useful evidence' are just that: beliefs. They are not stable or inevitable realities, nor self-evident truths, but have a historical existence with which we can engage. The essential connection between history and politics in the nineteenth century as subjects 'which belong to each other', as J. R. Seeley put it, ensured that historians not only understood their function in terms of furnishing 'the empirical validation of experience' for practical politics, but also had their currency and credentials for the task widely acknowledged.[15] Recognising more recent beliefs about evidence and policy as historical phenomena is an important task in itself, but it also frees our intellectual imaginations to conceive of other, future, contexts, in which different beliefs are possible.

Attending to policy advice in historical perspective suggests two interlinked themes that help us account for the absence of history as a discipline in political thinking: the privatisation of politics and the emergence of a 'quantitative imperative' in evidence for policymaking.[16] The privatisation of politics over the course of the twentieth century can be understood as a bottom-up claiming of political space by emancipated citizens constructing 'their own personal manifestos of complaints, causes, and commitments'.[17] A top-down alternative may emphasise an ideological shift beginning with the Thatcher administrations that deprivileged professional judgement and made the individual, and his or her preferences and choices, the reference point for political arrangements.[18] Wherever we place the agency, policy advice became contestable.[19] The emergence of influential political actors outside government—think tanks, NGOs, advocacy groups, trade associations, lobbying agencies and so on—created new forms of expertise that mobilised knowledge with political acumen.

Governments also sought more politically-attuned forms of advice. The specialists brought into state service as 'irregular' officials during the Second World War—including economists, engineers, geographers and computer scientists—were invoked in support of technocratic principles in the debates from the late 1950s about administrative reform.[20] Yet the Churchillian dictum of experts 'on tap but not on top' was not destabilised, nor did government become more permeable to the specialist outsider. Rather, a more complex policy environment emerged, in which advice acquired a political edge. The appointment of ministerial Special

Advisers (SpAds), for example, became established practice during Harold Wilson's first premiership (1964–70).[21] It is a role that has come under increasing scrutiny, perhaps precisely because it seems to encapsulate a more divisive, factional form of politics, in which partisan advantage takes precedence over public accountability and spin over substance.[22]

My concern here is not, however, with these lines of argument, often based on the financial cost of the 'spadocracy' and errors of judgement on the part of individuals; nor is the criticism always justified.[23] More important is what the role reveals about influential forms of expertise in government. The Special Adviser is the definitive personal-political role. SpAds technically serve the administration as a whole, but they are usually appointed due to a close connection with their respective Minister, developed during backbench or Opposition duty (the post becomes redundant as soon as a Minister leaves office). The SpAd is as much part of the pluralised, privatised and politicised policy environment as the think tank or lobbyist.

The key problems for academics or professionals in such an environment are the status of their knowledge and the mode of its delivery. Specialist knowledge has no automatic primacy in political decision-making; any evidential claim or policy proposal represents one perspective among many—its influence is necessarily contingent. Multiple routes to shape a policy agenda make the environment hard to navigate for those without the new political expertise. Universities, for example, have joined mission groups (essentially trade associations), hired PR agencies and created specialist posts in executive offices to address this challenge.

Governments consider many factors when making decisions: how unified the administration is; the economic climate; the electoral cycle; what is happening in broader contexts and so on.[24] The likely reaction of the electorate (particularly those who tend to vote, such as older people), interest groups and the media is also a consideration. One of the striking features of the incoming New Labour government in 1997 was its conspicuous investment in operating in this environment—cultivating relations with the press, for example, or introducing mechanisms for people to input into public services—that co-existed with rhetorical emphasis on 'evidence-based policymaking'. There is an apparent tension here: what happens when evidence conflicts with political imperatives, public opinion or collective interests?

The appeal to 'evidence' is itself a highly political manoeuvre. For the Blair administrations, evidence-based policymaking was part of a pitch to establish Labour's credentials as a party of government: efficient, pragmatic,

inclined to modernise and suspicious of ideological agendas.[25] 'What counts is what works', like many apparently self-evident 'truths', conceals layers of difficulty and dispute. So, we can never know enough from research to remove doubt; we do not live in an ideal space in which knowledge 'translates' directly into policy; there will always be political judgements to be made in a democratic system, for example, on ethical grounds; implementation is complex and can defy universal prescriptions from the centre.[26] Methodological critiques have been made; no form of 'evidence' speaks for itself and 'changes in tense—from "worked" to "work" to "will work"—are not just a matter of grammatical detail'.[27]

Here, however, the important task is to unpack the implications of 'evidence-based policymaking' for the role of expertise of various forms in policymaking and for history as expertise in particular. Evidence-based policymaking does accord space to some forms of specialist knowledge: medical expertise on alcohol and drug harmfulness or the efficacy of new treatments, for example; social research on educational standards and the impact of welfare provision. But it does not necessarily give these forms of knowledge primacy in political decision-making; rather, evidence-based policymaking draws them into the political arena. The '"politics" of analysis' ensure there is no neutral evidence base for policy choice, nor can communities of expertise claim to be disinterested in the process of evidence selection and use.[28]

Hierarchies of method are created in the pursuit of clarity, yet here both 'hierarchy' and 'clarity' are fundamentally misleading and unstable in the complex contexts in which public policy must be made and implemented. In the standard guide for assessing evidence in healthcare, for example, Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) and Systematic Reviews appear at the top (level 1) down to expert opinion at the bottom (level 4); methods are cast as self-contained, rankable entities, rather than potentially complementary approaches to understanding the same phenomenon.[29] While the policymaker may claim 'what counts is what works', the medical researcher may actually be offering something much more tightly defined: 'what works here'. The 'cultural competence' of a programme tested in one location for application elsewhere, or with a different target population, may be limited.[30] The preference for quantitative forms of evidence is also marked.[31] Numbers appear definitive and authoritative, even though researchers may add careful caveats, for example, about causation, correlation and extrapolation. Engaging a plurality of methods to explore different dimensions of the same problem is one response, but pluralism

tends to be implicitly circumscribed and relevance to policy assumed not to extend beyond the social sciences.

In this context, humanities scholars are particularly disadvantaged. Our distinctive offerings bring to the surface and explore in human terms the caveats of other research methods and the questions about values, habits and beliefs that reductive approaches cannot ask. These insights 'mess up' the apparent clarity of numbers and destabilise claims for generalisability. They call for careful attention to, among other things, the assumptions that underlie the formulation of a policy, to the contexts in which it might be implemented, to the language in which it is presented and to the audiences on whose response success may depend. For historians, the political 'short-termism' and the lack of institutional memory in government have—rightly—been particular concerns.[32] These perspectives are vital, but how can they be made to matter in a policy environment where influence is dispersed and narrow interpretations of evidence prevail?

History has tended to be marginalised in policy discourse as lacking both relevance to contemporary issues and the apparent objectivity of numbers. The status of history is further complicated by the problem of the past; for politicians keen to emphasise modernising credentials or establish a reputation for efficacy and resolve, history is a burden. New Labour's pitch relied on setting a 'year zero' for not just the Party but for the country: 'Can Britain escape from its past?' asked Peter Mandelson and Roger Liddle in 1996, the year before Labour won a landslide general election victory.[33] How can we address this difficult, indeed demoralising, situation? Recognising that we are confronted by something more fundamental than a 'history gap'—which can be 'bridged' by making historical research more accessible to political scientists and policymakers or by judicious interventions into public debates—is an important step. Indeed, academe and policy are often conceived in such terms: two cultures separated by a 'relevance' or 'rigour-relevance' gap.[34]

THE AFFINITY OF HISTORY AND POLICY

The metaphor of 'bridging the gap' is revealing. Bridges allow access to and commerce between domains otherwise divided. Bridge-building is an attractive metaphor to reach for, as each side can commit to dialogue while retaining territorial integrity (a central concern for the founders of the *History and Policy* network).[35] We should be willing, however, to consider the constraints that this model places on our thinking and on the ability

of history to influence policy in fundamental ways—as opposed to providing informative background material. Advocacy for history is not enough. How can we frame the proposition for history in policy so that these qualities of mind articulate with policymaking, rather than just speak to policy issues?

We can start by recognising that it is an advantage for history, among the humanities, that historical thinking is embedded in the ways political scientists and policymakers make sense of the work of government. Influential recent work in political science has taken a resolutely historical turn, defending history's 'approach to meaning in which the state appears as a differentiated cultural practice composed of contigent and shifting beliefs and actions'.[36] In the political sphere itself, historical reasoning and explanation are everywhere, evident in discussions on constitutional reform and education, immigration and foreign policy. Indeed, 'what decisions do *not* flow to some extent from assumptions about what the past appears to teach? History is useful and utilized. It pervades the decision-making process of individuals and groups'.[37] Historical modes of thought are prevalent in, even essential to, political scholarship and practical politics, but they are not exercised within the disciplinary framework of history; it is 'historian free' history.[38]

Is there, however, an opportunity to claim an integrated—rather than anecdotal—role for (disciplinary-) history in policy? If history matters for policy thinking, how can historians and their disciplinary conventions, approaches and insights matter too? How can these be made to count as a valuable form of expertise inside the policymaking process? It is important here to emphasise the fundamental difference between integrating history as expertise into policymaking and sharing the results of historical scholarship with policy audiences. The latter is about creating bridges and transferring knowledge but retaining territorial sovereignty. By contrast, the former de-emphasises intellectual authority; the focus is, instead, on the practice of historianship and how it can 'discipline' historical modes of thought within government.

There is a further step we can take in reframing the proposition for history in policy, one that is important if it is to be persuasive. That is, to bring out the deeper affinities of history and policy. So, the historian is almost certainly right to observe, 'it's more complicated than that,' but it is in handling complexity that history comes into its own. Policy is multidimensional, messy, uncertain, ambigious, shifting and contested because so too are the human beliefs, commitments, decisions and interactions

at the core of the exercise of power. There may be rational aspects to it, but they are rational only insofar as *people* are pursuing what they, or others, define as 'rational' approaches. Policymakers are equipped, as we all are, with necessarily imperfect information and must operate within constraints that are necessarily imperfectly understood.[39] There is no 'view from nowhere'.[40]

History as a discipline is animated by, rather than confronted with, the context-dependent, contingent, subjective and often conflicting nature of human perspective. Historians are 'more comfortable with becoming' than those in other fields, as John R. Gillis puts it—that is, they can embrace instability, unpredictability and inconclusiveness.[41] Inconsistences are not anomalies to be eliminated or controlled, but opportunities for further exploration and richer understanding. History's embrace of the subjective and the reflexive can be viewed as an analytical strength for policymaking, rather than conceded as a weakness relative to other disciplines.[42] Historians are well-equipped to unpick and inspect the historically-conditioned assumptions and 'notions' that are part of a policymaker's 'world of ideas' and used, often unconsciously, to reach important decisions and judgements.[43] These notions draw on attitudes and beliefs, for example, about the reach of the state or the legitimacy of pre-emptive war; they have an essential 'valuative' dimension that cannot be examined using quantitative techniques. Indeed, all fields of policy—including science, medicine and 'technical' areas such as energy, environment or defence—involve 'valuative matters': ethics and dignity at the end of life, for example, fairness in the distribution of wealth or payment of taxes or the legitimacy of state surveillance of citizens.[44]

The case for affinities between history and policy may not, however, be welcome, nor working in government appeal to a more than a limited number of historians. To become a 'historian on the inside' might bring an uncomfortable sense of complicity, for those working to redress the dominance of a historical tradition that marginalised the many and for those concerned that the political system tends to do the same.[45] It is hard to believe, however, that society would benefit from a principled withdrawal of historians from engagement with policymakers. And, indeed, do we not have here a further opportunity to recast what may seem a hindrance to history in policy into a distinctive strength?

History shares with policymaking a fundamental concern with human action and agency in context(s). Regardless of their intellectual preferences and political convictions, power is a ubiquitous concern for historians and

we are attentive to evidential traces of the relationships within which it is exercised.[46] Can we use these qualities to become 'constructive sceptics' and '"punch our weight" with integrity' in the corridors of power?[47] Can we apply to policy the same critical sensibility that is central to our academic work: a 'duty of discontent' that does not accept the claims, conceptualisations or categorisations of historical actors or of scholars (including ourselves) without due attention?

One way to understand the role of constructive scepticism in policymaking is to see the latter as a learning process: a socially-embedded practice involving iteration and reiteration, in which 'the principal condition both of and for current decisions is previous policy'.[48] Constructive scepticism allows the historian to apply some pressure to conceptions of previous policy and current dilemmas, to inspect assumptions about target groups and possible interventions, in the context of a collective endeavour. 'Discontent' can play a vital role, but it cannot be an end in itself if the historian is to play a productive and routine part in policymaking: 'if we refuse to acknowledge any role other than criticism—if we are willing only to level down and never to build, [or] explain…—we are evading a responsibility only we can fulfil'.[49]

Seeing policy as a learning process also allows us to recognise a further affinity with history. In the description of policy learning as 'an act of imagination, invention, and persuasion as much as (or as well as) comprehension, deduction, assimilation', we can recognise the complex orchestration of historical interpretation.[50] This point of affinity—in the *process* of making meaning—is an important one for how we present the proposition for history in policy. We are talking here not about knowledge of the past in the sense of having access to a repository of potentially illuminating perspectives or an archive of analogies—although historians can offer that too. Policymaking as a reflexive, iterative learning process, which is framed and shaped by interpretations of the past, suggests the importance of the more self-conscious, enquiring approach characteristic of disciplinary-history. It means *thinking with history in policy*, rather than bringing historical perspectives to the notice of policymakers.

We must recognise here the centrality of collaboration, rather than competition, between different specialisms, using 'collective puzzling' to address complex policy problems.[51] The temptation to 'assert the importance of one's own discipline to the making of "better" policy' may be 'almost irresistable'.[52] We need, however, to be alert to 'explanatory imperialism' and actively cultivate a sense of the *complementarity* of different

forms of knowledge within the policy learning context.[53] Historians, no less than economists, political scientists and others, will surely need to be advocates not just for the merits of their own disciplines, but for a genuinely rich ecosystem of expert advice.[54]

Shared concerns and broad approaches have produced significant intellectual cross-fertilisation between the humanities and the social sciences, including the field of social science history.[55] Nonetheless, we tend to operate largely within the confines of our own disciplinary communities. Few will become equally adept in the methods of multiple disciplines but, as active participants within an ecosystem of policy advice, we should at least aim for a working familiarity with relevant adjoining specialisms and a sense of how complementary insights can be developed.

Working with a focus on complementarity in addressing policy problems calls not only on an appreciation of other disciplines' claims to knowledge, but also on a particular kind of *self*-awareness. Self-awareness here implies a understanding of the distinctive aspects of historianship along with an ability to identify and articulate how historical thinking relates to, informs and interlocks with other forms of knowledge to create an 'ecosystem of expertise'.[56] Other forms of knowledge would include disciplines such as economics or sociology, professions, notably public servants in different roles, but also what could be called the political expertise of advisers and think tanks.

For those historians engaged in the policy advice ecosystem, having a grasp of how the approaches, inclinations and insights of history align with policymaking as a process—or set of processes, loops, debates and negotiations—is surely of value. The alternative is to rely on establishing the relevance to policy of history as content, necessarily on a case-by-case basis. This shift in emphasis from 'content' to 'process', that is, from history as a product (whether historical perspectives or the more problematic 'lessons') to history as a distinctive way of thinking, is central to history in policy.

For policymakers, the shift draws historical thinking into policy in a productive way, one that works with the inherent complexities and ambiguities of political decision-making. The historian's contribution becomes more 'usable' than admonishments for 'bad history' or the insight that what seems novel has a much longer past. History as content is also problematic, in that raises the issue of differing interpretations. Historians disagree, a vital dynamic of the discipline. Differences of interpretation make 'good history' intellectually suspect; a single account of a past event,

however scholarly its credentials, necessarily excludes others and can only serve as a kind of counterpoint or backdrop to present considerations. Scholarly differences also present a significant practical challenge for policymakers. It is difficult for either side to identify a means to bring history as 'content' into an influential role in policy development.

The limitations of history as content are illustrated well in Tony Blair's address as recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal in 2003, just after the invasion of Iraq. In a phrase that has become for historians the definitive expression of political contempt for the past, he said: 'there has never been a time… when, except in the most general sense, a study of history provides so little instruction for our present day.'[57] History as 'instruction' has little traction on the policymaker, unless there is an inclination to seek it (Blair had been uninterested in expert opinions given four months before the invasion).[58] The policymaker is, however, 'specifically concerned with processes, the bread and butter of historians'.[59]

In essence, the proposition for history should, I suggest, be focused on re-valuing historianship: the disciplined analytical labour—the process—of 'doing history'. The case study from the past (history as content) is a valuable resource but it is inherently limited in its influence on policy in two ways: it relates to a particular issue or cluster of issues in the present and it is likely to be 'viewed as a preface, organizationally, and an afterthought conceptually to real policy work'.[60] By contrast, history as process offers a way of thinking through problems, opening up issues, putting pressure on assumptions and asking different kinds of questions as part of 'collective puzzling'.[61] Historians will always draw on the resources of the past—and I come next to doing exactly that—but we can be bolder in the claims we make for the distinctive and important purchase of our ways of working on contemporary political issues.

The 'History Office' and Other Models

Before developing the idea of collaborative, multi-perspectival policymaking further, it is worth looking at the resources of our own professional pasts. Both policymakers and historians in Britain have noted the absence of historical insights and institutional memory in government and have made proposals to remedy it. While the two sides have, unsurprisingly, had different views as to the importance of history to 'good' policymaking, the proposals reveal some interesting commonality. They have tended to affirm the historian's status as a specialist and to emphasise the provision

of perspective and context; so, history offers 'enlightenment' and a reliable record rather than implications or advice.

The Historical Section in the post-war British Treasury is the obvious place to start. The experiment in what was termed 'funding experience' began in 1957 and the Treasury Historical Section (THS) was formally established in 1965. An official history programme had been founded in 1908, focusing on naval and military history, and, indeed, the THS emerged from just such work during the Second World War.[62] The Section should also be understood, however, in the context of Britain's 'technocratic moment'.[63] The 'amateurism' of the policymaking class, so the narrative went, left the civil service unable to meet the demands of modern, interventionist government. The introduction of professional, technical and managerial skills would rationalise the system and help arrest national 'decline'.[64] In this context, the Treasury's objective should be—in the words of Under-Secretary Peter Vinter—to use the 'special expertise of the historians in the most productive way'; funding experience would help ensure decisions were made with efficiency and economy. The Treasury historians were involved in the drafting of historical memoranda—'a quick and accurate conspectus of all that has gone before'—and the compilation of chronological frameworks and historical narratives, to be appended to 'seeded files' (consisting of the most important documents relating to a particular policy situation, such as 'minutes of chief meetings, decisive analyses, correspondence and memoranda, and submissions to ministers').[65]

The 'funding experience' initiative had a number of senior champions at the Treasury, including, it is interesting to note, Sir Richard Clarke, father of the future Labour minister, Charles Clarke, who was to comment: 'I don't mind there being some medievalists around for ornamental purposes, but there is no reason for the state to pay for them'.[66] The Section never managed, however, to integrate historical work into the core business of the Treasury and was finally closed in 1976. Officials found little time to read the lengthy (often multi-volume) memoranda, let alone use them as working tools; senior staff criticised historians for offering 'value judgements', rather than contenting themselves with narrative. The historians expressed frustration with their marginal status and with the lack of interest and response from officials. The challenges of the 'History Office', far removed from the corridors of power and producing 'largely unread institutional histories' have not been confined to Britain.[67]

The 'gulf' separating the THS from its 'consumers' is a problem that resonates with present-day, university-based historians.[68] *History and*

Policy recently proposed in its evidence to a Select Committee inquiry on civil service skills that 'sustained bridge building' between government departments and 'policy-minded historians' was required.[69] Historians have become increasingly concerned about the abuse, distortion and neglect of history; it is surely no coincidence that the network was set up in 2002 during Blair's premiership. *History and Policy* now offers a portfolio of activities: coordinating seminars; running interactive workshops and responding to consultations; as well as its longer-standing work commissioning and making available an extensive library of policy papers. This is vital work but the 'gulf' remains; if we want to see history as an influential form of expertise in policymaking, then we need to consider other, complementary ways to pursue that aim. Whether the 'History Office' is in a School of Humanities, a university policy institute, a think tank or a government department, a model in which historians are remote from the 'business' of policymaking and focused on the provision of historical perspective seems unlikely to achieve this aim.

So what are the alternatives? A pilot 'hindsight project' to enrich existing foresight work in government is one proposal, highlighting history's 'ability to unpack assumptions, myths and the lost contexts'.[70] Pilot projects are part of proving the concept; connecting hindsight and foresight—a 'pitch' that has already been made in theoretical terms—could be a valuable way to establish the credibility of historical thinking in policy.[71] Projects are, however, bounded entities; the 'hindsight' label potentially creates a temporary 'History Office' and even a successful scheme could be set aside at its conclusion without any consideration given to ongoing arrangements.

The high-profile Government Chief Scientific Adviser, supported by a network of departmental advisers, is a model which has proved appealing and one that can also draw on a more successful precedent than the 'History Office'.[72] Rohan Butler (1917–96) was an Oxford historian who served in the Ministry of Information and then the Foreign Office during the Second World War. In 1962, he completed an official history of the Abadan Crisis of 1951–54 as part of the 'funding experience' initiative. His work 'fed into, guided, and influenced ongoing discussions and reviews within Whitehall by juxtaposing the lessons of history, contemporary realities, and possible new directions for both foreign policy and methods,' an appraisal that invites favourable comparison with the THS.[73] Butler went on to act as historical adviser to Foreign Secretaries of different political hues for the remarkable span of nineteen years.

The call for historical advisers is a form of advocacy for history, highlighting the need for historical perspective to inform policymaking and the lack of institutional memory in government departments. How such advisers would operate remains largely unexplored. The senior level of a Chief Historical Adviser (CHA) may ensure a hearing with Ministers and, indeed, with academic historians, placing the CHA in the role of broker or 'boundary spanner'. Brokers can be influential, in that they mediate between contexts and constituencies, carrying and interpreting messages and negotiating the terms of collaboration.[74] They are, however, 'marginal natives', their status always uncertain and unstable.[75] Accountability is divided, raising questions of trust and integrity and calling on significant skill to navigate between assimilation and separation.[76] Further, becoming isolated on one's professional terrain remains an issue for the CHA, particularly if historical advice is not embedded within the policymaking activities of the wider department.

Butler offers a promising exemplar, suggesting that historians can discharge their responsibilities to both Clio and client effectively and without intellectual and professional compromise.[77] We should acknowledge, however, that both political and academic cultures have changed since he was in post. As explored above, narrow definitions of relevance and value, as well as instrumental understandings of the relationship between 'evidence' and 'policy', now prevail. The 'What Works Network' exemplifies the simplistic, linear model of knowledge transfer, with its approach defined under the headings of 'generate', 'transmit' and 'adopt'.[78]

How influential either the historical adviser or 'histories' can be, given the politicisation of policy advice, is questionable. Nor does the 'fugal exchange between public service and university scholarship' performed by Butler attune with academic careers where scholarly productivity is a priority for recruitment and the impact of confidential outputs cannot easily be evaluated as part of research quality assessment (in the UK, currently the Research Excellence Framework).[79] The CHA model is far from unproblematic; we should be wary of reaching for it as the self-evident solution to a lack of historical advice in government.

Historians in the Mix

Any proposal to address the narrow instrumentalism of current policy discourse by bringing in historical advice runs the risk of making claims for 'what works' not too dissimilar from those on which its own critique is

based. Nonetheless, ideas have to be put forward and debated if we are not to repeat cycles in which policymakers and historians express concern at the gap dividing them and then call for more effective dialogue. The discussion that follows is not prescriptive in intent but aims to refresh the conversation about the role of history in policy as a vital dimension of public life.

Common to the 'History Office' and Chief Historical Adviser models is specialist status. Specialisms define themselves by fields of expertise—along with associated attributes such as credentials—so it should not be so surprising that specialists may find their domains of operation demarcated along similar lines.[80] Can historians work as experts without that expertise also excluding them from engagement with the general 'business' of policymaking?

Our assumptions about the nature of our expertise matter here; how the problem is defined inevitably shapes the solutions that are considered. If we hold 'expertise' to lie primarily in content knowledge, or observe that it is displayed in the insights that emerge from historical study, then the problem is one of transfer or translation: how do 'we' as historians ensure our insights reach and inform policymakers? It would be sensible to find ways to improve the channels of communication and ensure research is made accessible to policy, and thereby increase its influence. But can reframing the problem help us formulate other, complementary models?

Influence, like power, is 'neither a substantive entity, nor an institution, nor even a possession, but rather an attribute of the relationships within which it is exercised'.[81] This points us to some significant issues for history in policy to confront. Expertise may be 'inherently interactional' but it is at the same time 'inescapably ideological, implicated in the evolving hierarchies of value that legitimate particular ways of knowing as "expert."'[82] Expertise is, indeed, often perceived as a possession; over the course of a career in academe, it is the capital we accumulate and in which we trade. The 'pitch' for history, or for any discipline, has, in turn, tended to rest on the claim to specialist knowledge and the distinctive value of that knowledge to policymaking.

The authority of the expert is problematic, however, when it comes to collaborations outside academe, something public history has been alive to for some time. An imbalance of power arises if status within the project is defined by expertise; if one party possesses it, the other becomes the beneficiary, and a linear knowledge-transfer mechanism is set up. Perhaps we

have been too invested in the notion that historical expertise is something we own (and policymakers lack), preventing us forming the kind of collaborations that have developed with curators, archivists and broadcasters, for example. Thinking of expertise in terms of how it potentially relates to people, structures and activities inside government may help us get past this obstacle but I do not underestimate the scale of the challenge. If policy influence is relational, how do historians as experts establish their value and credibility in the first place? In what currencies or languages are relations with policymakers, advisers and other specialists negotiated and differences resolved?

Three implications of the discussion so far need to be taken into account. The first is that contemporary policy issues are multidimensional, requiring processes of learning and 'collective puzzling' that involve an array of perspectives and approaches. Secondly, 'experts' tend to be confined to tasks defined by their specialism, which undermines their ability to bring distinctive insights and thinking styles to bear on wider policy practice. Thirdly, being 'on the inside' matters: being not just located inside government but integrated into the 'business' of the department.

These three implications suggest that we need a model that mixes or blends the expertise of different people to allow them to collaborate effectively and one that can fit within departmental structures and ways of working. Again, there is a historical precedent on which we can draw. Although never fully realised, a recommendation of the Fulton report of 1968—which examined the 'structure, recruitment and management, including training, of the Home Civil Service'—points us to a further property of the mixed policy unit: dynamism.[83] Membership of the unit was designed to be temporary, with civil servants and 'outsiders' on secondment and fixed-term contracts expected to move on or back to their former areas of employment after a period of service.[84]

The 'policy-planning unit', as it was termed in the report, can no more be lifted from its historical context than can Butler's role as historical adviser. It was a product of its time, when the state was extending its reach and planning was regarded as essential for an efficient modern government. Aspects of the recommendation now seem dated, as indeed they are—that the unit should be staffed by 'comparatively young men and women', for example—as does the confidence in, and the language of, 'planning' itself. Yet the core idea remains persuasive: that a mix of specialisms, and of 'outsiders' and 'insiders', is needed to respond to policy issues, and that movement in and out of the unit would help bring into

policymaking imagination, drive and connectivity to new thinking in a variety of fields.

The dynamic character of the policy unit seems particularly important when thinking about the role of academic disciplines. Misunderstanding, if not mistrust, between university-based historians and those working in government, business, the military and other organisational settings has been an issue in North America, reinforced by different associations, conferences and journals. Public history in the USA developed as field by training and credentialling students as specialist practitioners, explicitly prepared for 'a *public* rather than an *academic* career'.[85] While the plurality of history as 'one discipline, many professions' is sometimes emphasised to convey parity of esteem, we do need to consider the effect of subdivisions within disciplines on the vitality of the whole.[86] Demarcating a new specialist domain can generate a wave of intellectual energy but does it also apply a label to such work that then makes transitions between specialisms more difficult? This is a particular concern where not only field but institutional boundaries are involved.

The historian on the inside appointed on a permanent basis becomes an institutional historian. Retaining the mindset of constructive scepticism and avoiding the marginalisation of the 'History Office' model would be a challenge. By contrast, a 'portfolio' academic career offers a promising, if not unproblematic, prospect. Historians may work primarily in higher education but be able to move between settings—and have such experiences recognised through promotion and other forms of reward. For historians, secondment into the policy unit offers the opportunity to apply, test and develop historical thinking in an interdisciplinary and interprofessional context at the heart of political decision-making. On return to the classroom, their students can gain a richer sense of the value of historianship and the traction of history on present-day issues (a theme I pick up in Chap. 5). New avenues for scholarly work could also be opened up, enriching our understanding of government and offering insights into the ethical, theoretical and methodological dimensions of history as a discipline.

From the perspective of government, departments would secure access to fresh perspectives from across a discipline but also, over time, to a wider network of 'alumni' historians with direct experience of policy. The key, I suggest, is that the insider or outsider status of a historian does not solidify but that the two frames of reference inform each other. Greater exchange between academe and policymaking should bring new and productive

dimensions to roles in both settings and help build a broad a community of policy enquiry—rather than just better bridges between separate domains.

Becoming, at least on a temporary basis, an insider involves more than a shift in location. The government department and the mixed team offer very different contexts, habits, practices and constraints from university equivalents. It is worth focusing here not on the operational adaptations the historian would make—secondments will always involve a degree of acculturation—but instead on what could be termed 'mindset'. A common theme in literature on academic involvement in policy is 'speaking truth to power'.[87] This language has an immediate appeal for the constituences that use it but it conceals attitudes and assumptions that should be examined critically.

Both 'truth' and 'power' are too monolithic to be acceptable. Historians now handle the term 'truth' with a due sense of provisionality, at least in our scholarly work, but the truth/power discourse affirms an authority and an entitlement that are far from provisional. Of course, historians *are* likely to have a richer and more intellectually sophisticated understanding of the past than policymakers. The issue is not the expertise itself but, again, the relational contexts in which it is understood and exercised. 'Power' here is also problematic, invoking an illusory world of omnipotent elites.[88] The authority to speak claimed by the historian may be intellectual, yet there is an implicit *moral* charge to the truth/power discourse (indeed, this is suggested by the Quaker origins of the phrase). The discourse creates, rather than merely reflects, a fundamental opposition between academe and policy that makes collaboration problematic (a bridge too far?).

'Authority' gets us to the core of the mind-set problem, one that public history has been confronting for some time. Public history projects can affirm identity and agency in communities but they also *con*firm the authority and the social utility of the historian as professional.[89] So, activities designed around co-production can, at the same time, draw attention to the difference between the authority of the historian and that of the participants. In Britain, public engagement by historians has been nourished primarily by social history. The History Workshop impulse to democratise ownership of the past and to reveal histories and historical voices that had been concealed, silenced or marginalised by elite narratives, has an enduring influence. The commitment to history against the gradient of power has ensured that the authority of the historian has been confronted and problematised. Public history of this lineage has opened up new forms of

academic practice as well as creating frameworks for communities to make their own histories through co-production and co-curation.[90]

However productive this lineage has been for histories from below, it has had serious implications for the relationship between history and policy. A desire to correct the balance of power can render elites as anonymous and faceless as once subaltern actors were.[91] The 'making' of history has not been shared with policymakers as it has with communities of various kinds but remains in the historian's domain. The moral charge of 'speaking truth to power' can acquire an unacknowledged edge that entitles the historian to instruct, correct or even admonish the policymaker, rather than to explore, share and collaborate. The impulse from historians to shape the public understanding of the past and to influence policymaking may come from the same desire to prove our authority and social utility.[92] Yet the latter is caught up with other impulses, values and beliefs that have not been fully disentangled and debated. It has proved more comfortable for historians to retain the authority and the privilege of the external critic, commentator or instructor, rather than to give serious attention to how co-production might apply to and within policy contexts.

The historian on the inside is necessarily involved in co-production (collective puzzling has a similarly collaborative character). But can we articulate what historians bring to the policymaking process that complements and coheres with the contributions of other parties? The next chapter considers the 'tools' that historians have at their disposal and how we might explain the value of them in the context of the mixed policymaking team.

NOTES

1. K. Vernon, *Universities and the State in England, 1850–1939* (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004), p. 88.
2. J. Tosh, 'Public History, Civic Engagement and the Historical Profession in Britain,' *History* 99, no. 335 (2014).
3. R. Porter, 'History Says No to the Policeman's Response to Aids,' *British Medical Journal* 293, no. 6562 (1986); V. Berridge and P. Strong, 'Aids and the Relevance of History,' *Social History of Medicine* 4, no. 1 (1991); P. Thane, 'History and Policy,' *History Workshop Journal* 67, no. 1 (2009).
4. See: G. Brown, *Beyond the Crash: Overcoming the First Crisis of Globalisation* (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2010). A cursory

Google search reveals how pervasive the analogy of 1930s was in pub-lic debate.

5. See: http://historiansforbritain.org/ and, formed in response, https://historiansforhistory.wordpress.com/ [accessed 5/12/15].

6. Y. Dror, 'Training for Policymakers,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, ed. M. Moran, M. Rein, and R. E. Goodin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 87.

7. P. Thane, 'History and Policy.' 'Parallels in the past' comes from: J. Tosh, *Why History Matters* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 61.

8. On the Iraq War, for example: *Why History Matters*, pp. 1–4, 65–6.

9. See, for example, the articles within a special edition of the journal *Politics* on 'Bridging the relevance gap in political science', vol. 34, no. 3 (2014).

10. J. L. Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 62.On rational choice theory: pp. 112–113.

11. S. Szretzer, 'History and Public Policy,' in *The Public Value of the Humanities*, ed. J. Bate (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).

12. See, for example: C. Hay, *Political Analysis* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 53.

13. E. Kiser, 'The Revival of Narrative in Historical Sociology: What Rational Choice Theory Can Contribute,' *Politics & Society* 24, no. 3 (1996); C. H. Weiss and M. J. Bucuvalas, *Social Science Research and Decision-Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); P. Kerr and S. Kettell, 'In Defence of British Politics: The Past, Present and Future of the Discipline,' *British Politics* 1, no. 1 (2006).

14. See: J. Tosh, *Why History Matters*, chapter 5; P. Thane, 'Happy Families?: History and Family Policy.' (London: British Academy, 2011).

15. J. R. Seeley was the first Regius Professor of History at the University of Cambridge. Quotation is from: *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1895). See also: D. Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the Uses of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). On the function of history: D. Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), cited passage p. 211. Also: J. W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge University Press, 1983);

O. Anderson, 'The Political Uses of History in Mid Nineteenth-Century England,' *Past & Present*, no. 36 (1967).

16. I have explored these previously in: 'History as Expertise and the Influence of Political Culture on Advice for Policy since Fulton,' *Contemporary British History* 29, no. 1 (2014).

17. M. Hilton et al., *The Politics of Expertise: How NGOs Shaped Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 1.

18. See: C. Skelcher, 'Changing Images of the State: Overloaded, Hollowed-out, Congested,' *Public Policy and Administration* 15, no. 3 (2000). Also: C. Hood, " 'Deprivileging'the UK Civil Service in the 1980s: Dream or Reality?," in *Bureaucracy in the Modern State: An Introduction to Comparative Public Administration*, ed. J. Pierre (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1995).

19. M. Bevir and R. A. W. Rhodes, *The State as Cultural Practice* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 161.

20. The idea of 'knowledge in the service of Power' was well established in Britain by 1920s, with specialists classes in the permanent Civil Service: R. M. MacLeod, ed. *Government and Expertise: Specialists, Administrators, and Professionals, 1860–1919* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 1. It was not until the debates of the 1950s and 60s, however, that the role of experts as influential figures in the administration of policy was advocated.

21. A. Blick, *People Who Live in the Dark* (London: Politico's, 2004); 'Harold Wilson, Labour and the Machinery of Government,' *Contemporary British History* 20, no. 3 (2006).

22. See, for example: Public Administration Select Committee, 'Special Advisers: Boon or Bane?'. (London: House of Commons, 2001); Committee on Standards in Public Life, 'Defining the Boundaries within the Executive: Ministers, Special Advisers and the Permanent Civil Service.' (London: HMSO, 2003); L. Maer and E. Faulker, 'Special Advisers.' (London: House of Commons Library, 2015). Scrutiny has led to efforts to to regulate the role: A Code of Conduct was brought in 2001 (revised 2009), and a model contract in 2010.

23. N. Hillman, 'In Defence of Special Advisers: Lessons from Personal Experience.' (London: Institute for Government, 2014). On the centrality of SpAds and the complementarity of their skills with those of civil servants: M. Bevir and R. A. W. Rhodes, *The State as Cultural Practice*, pp. 131–2.

24. G. Bennett, *Six Moments of Crisis: Inside British Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 4.

25. P. Wells, 'New Labour and Evidence Based Policy Making: 1997–2007,' *People, Place & Policy Online* 1, no. 1 (2007); D. Rubinstein, 'A New Look at New Labour,' *Politics* 20, no. 3 (2000).

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28. M. J. Hill, *New Agendas in the Study of the Policy Process* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), pp. 18–19.

29. M. Kelly et al., 'Evidence Based Public Health: A Review of the Experience of the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence of Developing Public Health Guidance in England,' *Social Science & Medicine* 71, no. 6 (2010). On RCTs, see also: M. Bulmer, E. Coates, and L. Dominian, 'Evidence-Based Policy Making,' in *Making Policy in Theory and Practice*, ed. H. M. Bochel and S. Duncan (Bristol: Policy, 2007), p. 89.

30. N. Cartwright and J. Hardie, *Evidence-Based Policy: A Practical Guide to Doing It Better*, pp. 140–3.

31. P. Wells, 'New Labour and Evidence Based Policy Making: 1997–2007.'

32. P. Cox, 'The Future Uses of History,' p. 128. Also, from a US perspective: R. Neustadt, 'Uses of History in Public Policy,' *The History Teacher* 15, no. 4 (1982).

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35. S. Szretzer, 'History and Public Policy.'

36. M. Bevir and R. A. W. Rhodes, *The State as Cultural Practice*, p. 79.

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40. M. Bevir and R. A. W. Rhodes, *The State as Cultural Practice*, pp. 74–5; T. Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

41. J. R. Gillis, 'Detours,' in *Becoming Historians*, ed. J. M. Banner and J. R. Gillis (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 172–3.

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43. D. B. Bobrow, 'Social and Cultural Factors: Constraining and Enabling,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, ed. M. Moran, M. Rein, and R. E. Goodin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 573. The policymaker's 'world of ideas' is, of course, itself a product of history: 'Reflections on Policy Analysis: Putting It Together Again,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, ed. M. Moran, M. Rein, and R. E. Goodin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 903.

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46. See: C. Clark, 'Power,' in *A Concise Companion to History*, ed. U. Rublack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

47. The term is Pamela Cox's: 'The Future Uses of History.'

48. R. Freeman, 'Learning in Public Policy,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, ed. M. Moran, M. Rein, and R. E. Goodin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 373.

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The Historian's Toolkit

Abstract This chapter focuses on a selection of five conceptual 'tools' particularly relevant for historians in government: patterning time; weaving context; analysing relations; integrating evidence; and persuading audiences. The chapter draws on a wide range of literature, including political science, cognitive psychology, sociology and law, as well as history and historical theory, and seeks to explain the value and importance of historians' habits of mind to addressing the issues and dilemmas of the present. In focusing on the historian's toolkit, the chapter is relevant not just to policymaking but also to other complex settings, such as businesses, charities and educational and cultural institutions.

The idea that historians have a toolkit or box for interpreting the past is a common one.[1] The 'tools' with which they are filled tend to vary—concepts, skills, sources, methods—reflecting the breadth and eclecticism of practices and priorities that fall under the umbrella of disciplinary-history. I have tended here to use the term 'conceptual tool' to suggest that they are both essential to historical enquiry—they 'provide understandings about the nature and status of history's body of knowledge'—and can be put to productive use.[2] This chapter focuses on a selection of tools particu-

larly relevant for historians in government and seeks to explain their value to the complex tasks of policy development.

PATTERNING TIME

Many disciplines are concerned with time, from astrophysics to archaeology. History does, however, have a distinctive concern with 'patterning, organising and imagining the past'.[3] Discerning the sequence of happenings is a fundamental task that allows historians to trace, explain and define continuities, transitions and ruptures in the topic of study. The recognition that concepts, beliefs, social and political structures, economic systems, power relationships, alliances (and enmities) and so on are devices of human creation gives these phenomena anchors in time, 'intrinsic relations' that render them amenable to interpretation.[4] Historians' attention to the particular instance means that our accounts tend to emphasise contingency and to avoid claims about necessary causal relationships between factors and outcomes.

The rejection of history as encapsulated in Blair's speech to Congress, discussed in Chap. 3, proceeds from this 'attention to the particular'. What 'instruction' can the past have for the present if contexts are unique and formulae elusive? There are a number of responses to this challenge. Perhaps the most obvious is that the present is connected to, and is a product of, the past; it is therefore unintelligible without having recourse to historical explanation. So, if we want to offer anything more than the most simplistic statements about, for example, the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union or the 2015 multilateral agreement on Iran's nuclear programme, we need to draw on an understanding of how these issues emerged.[5] The historian can offer a 'long view' that counters the short-termism of political thinking, uncovering deeper histories of present-day issues or recovering lost alternatives. Here, history illuminates; the 'long view' is a beam that extends our field of vision.

To recognise the historical narratives that condition a present situation is not necessarily to concede any role for historical thinking in formulating policy responses to it. History as illumination may serve as a preface but how it can inform the business of policymaking remains unclear. Historians can certainly trace a policy issue over time in a disciplined way. Neustadt and May's guide to using history in decision-making offers a detailed explanation of how this may be done and they show how 'issue history' can have a more profound influence on policy thinking than the

illuminating preface. For them, issue history consists of three devices: pursuing the right story (reflecting the concerns of the policymaker, derived from the presumptions in the face of 'knowns' and 'uncertainties' about the situation); plotting the time-lines of the story, including trends and events; and asking journalists' questions (where, who, how and why, as well as the usual when and what) to 'illuminate … potential incongruities in favorite courses of action'.[6] These devices make the historian an integral part of the policy conversation as the (historical) nature of the situation is explored and the options for action are arrayed.

So, issue history is not an end in itself here. It serves to clarify objectives: to 'help define the desired future'. The historian needs to be mindful of the stream of time; it will continue after the policy decision has been taken and the implications, and effects of the decision will in turn condition other policy choices. Working within the stream of time, the historian is involved in a practice of 'continuous comparison, an almost constant oscillation from present to future to past and back, heedful of prospective change, concerned to expedite, limit, guide, counter, or accept it as the fruits of such comparison suggest'. Historians are, therefore, able to offer a distinctive approach to policy choices by using a 'mental quality that readily connects discrete phenomena over time and repeatedly checks connections'.[7] Here, then, is a compelling case for the historian's place in the mixed policy unit. We can, however, expand our understanding of how the discipline's facility with time connects and contributes to the business of policymaking.

Neustadt and May are not alone in focusing on 'policy choice', a concept that directs attention to the actions taken (or not), usually by those with executive or administrative authority. The idea of policy choice suggests a rather unproblematic exercise of agency, in which decision-makers select freely from an array of implementable options. History as illumination cannot challenge this model; it prefaces but has no further involvement in the policymaking moment. Yet most historians would expect to weave more complex accounts of agency and change, in which prominent individuals were carefully contextualised and the influence assessed of intellectual, social, cultural, political and economic factors, among others.

An important use of the historian's engagement with time is the historicisation of the broader policy context. One task would be to locate and explain in time the language, concepts and assumptions embedded in the policymaking moment. This includes, importantly, the 'notions' that are part of policymakers' 'worlds of ideas'. These notions have an essential

valuative dimension which shapes political inclinations—the characteristics of a 'good life', individually and collectively, or the parameters of the state, for example. Other disciplines, such as philosophy and anthropology, can claim to offer alternative ways of examining these notions and, indeed, to provide the official with a sense of how they relate to political and administrative feasibility. In the context of the mixed policy unit discussed in the previous chapter, historians can give policy 'notions' historical existence and meaning as human constructs, not simply to criticise them but to understand their purchase on present-day thinking.

Historical understanding may be an intermediate goal for the historian assembling a chronological account of the issues and ideas associated with a particular policy area. The backward look must ultimately, however, contribute to an endeavour—the formulation of policy—that inevitably faces forward in time. Historians may approach a present policy problem by disassembling the apparent configuration of historical building blocks but they must then suggest fresh ways of re-patterning them. Periodisation is a therefore an important idea. By examining and questioning the inherent or received periodisations of the policy past, the historian can hope to refresh current thinking on an issue. Here, historians must deal critically with their own, as well as the policymaker's, world of ideas. Periods are part of our 'mental furniture' and notions about power, significance, progress, justice, identity and so on are enmeshed in how we conceive and describe them.[8] Critical scrutiny may not, therefore, be easy for the historian but it can be productive, and not only in policy terms. The 'formulation of fresh chronological frameworks for understanding political development' through the applied work of 'policy history' holds an intellectual promise that will surely extend beyond political history.[9]

By reassembling the historical building blocks of a policy issue, the historian also exposes the contingencies of past decision situations. Once it is recognised that a course taken was not inevitable—other routes were considered, imagined or even intended—then the future may be similarly open. The historian enlarges the options for policy action in the present by showing the array of alternatives that were plausible and feasible in the past. Those imagined futures—sometimes lost, sometimes suppressed—are themselves a rich resource for historians. They are 'archives of the otherwise', giving us access to a wider range of human responses to the problems of society that enhance historical understanding but can also nourish policy thinking. As Sarah Lloyd points out in her work on 'wild and visionary schemes' to address poverty: 'where eighteenth-

century women and men combined systematic argument with compelling imaginative commitments, twenty-first-century policy makers and publics follow'.[10]

The skill in describing coherent, plausible alternatives can be applied in the development of scenarios, a central technique in strategic planning, not just in government but also in business and military contexts.[11] My concern here is not so much with the scenarios themselves—I will turn to those in the next section on contextual thinking—but with the chronological organisation, the patterning of time, that the historian offers to policy development. Historians have insights to offer on the scale, nature and pace of different kinds of change. The tracing of *trends*—and the associated tasks of identifying turning-, starting- and end-points—are obvious contributions' given we have 'trends AND associated tasks. Knowing where you are in the uptake of a particular technology (say, electric cars) or in social attitudes (for example, to gay marriage) may help determine the timing of a policy intervention and thus maximise cost effectiveness or minimise the risk to political capital.[12] Historians are, further, able to categorise change and 'give it coherence', to assess 'differential speeds' of change, to distinguish 'fundamental from superficial change' and to recognise the continuities 'even in an apparently evolving environment'.[13]

As policy issues are almost invariably complex, relevant data will take diverse forms (history's inclination to 'see matters whole' is another of the tools in the toolkit) and are likely to contain contradictions and ambiguities. Given the centrality of valuative matters in policy, there is a substantial risk of confirmation bias in looking at evidence of continuity and change. Confirmation bias is a human propensity and developing habits of detecting and countering it is part of the training in many fields of scholarship and professional practice. For history, change is an essential disciplinary concept. Evaluating change—including matters of timing, speed, direction and extent—calls for historians to be alert to evidence that potentially challenges a working hypothesis. This would include recognition of conflicting but co-existing perspectives. Most historians would now hesitate, for example, to label a period one of 'progress' or 'decline' without the careful qualification of terms. We would want to be clear about who the historical subjects were who benefitted or suffered from a particular trend and, indeed, gain what insights we could into their own experience and apprehension of change. 'Progress' and 'decline' may be valid interpretations of the same broad phenomenon, as recent debates on the effects of government 'austerity' in Britain

have illustrated well.[14] Similarly, cyclical patterns may be perceived by some, while others see incoherent turbulence.

For the historian on the inside, this sophisticated ability to define and pattern change is a valuable tool. Revisiting and testing assumptions is, of course, a useful practice if we are not to make avoidable errors of judgement (or at least to try not to). Historians are well-equipped to examine powerful conceptions of period, transition and direction of travel (9/11 and 1989 as markers; British decline or the rise of online learning as trends) and to propose fresh themes and frameworks. As soon as we emphasise the human dimension of policy—the inescapable role of 'valuative matters', the 'messiness' of negotiating multiple agendas and so on—we can identify a further advantage to the historian's grasp of change. If we need to balance 'objective' evidence with 'subjective' interests and preferences to make policy, then recognising different groups' experience of change is an important part of the puzzle. The success of the UK Independence Party in the 2015 general election in terms of vote share suggests, for example, that there are some pervasive conceptions of change among the electorate that the other parties will need to understand. Beliefs, perceptions and interests matter in policymaking but they are difficult to handle in a systematic way. Here, the historian's ability to integrate very different forms of evidence—including the subjective, the contradictory and the ambiguous—into temporal frameworks is a valuable asset.

It may be assumed that longer time spans must be preferable, as they offer more data to inform patterning; the opposition set up in *The History Manifesto* between what the authors termed 'micro-history' (which seems to embrace almost the entire field of current academic practice) and '*longue durée*' relies on this premise. Long time spans can, I would counter, only be seen as inevitably better if we accept a conventional model of evidence for policy, that is, history as content, assembled and evaluated by historians and transferred to policymakers to inform decision-making. Even then, the quality of the analysis and its traction on the policy issue in question is probably more important than the length of the time span alone. Micro-, and indeed local, histories tend to seek big issues and are able to assemble a fuller, richer picture of the past—integrating the social, economic, political, cultural and so on—than can specialist historians working on larger scales. For this reason, micro-histories as commonly understood (as opposed to the *Manifesto*'s more extensive, and pejorative, definition) should be *complementary* to *longue-durée* and big data approaches—in the same way that RCTs and expert judgements in drug licensing, or techni-

cal and behavioural insights on climate adaptation, have the potential to enhance our understanding, and therefore our decisions.

If, however, we recognise that policymaking cannot proceed purely in mechanistic ways—evidence in, policy out—then bigger and longer lose any presumed pre-eminence.[15] Long time spans, of decades, centuries, even millennia, may indeed allow us to 'explain and understand the genesis of contemporary global discontents' but the policymaker's world of ideas will have its own temporal horizons. The concepts and reference points that are the basic stuff of political debate are unlikely to retain significant traces of meaning over hundreds or thousands of years. As many historians recognise, generations *are* units that have relevance and significance for people, even if we were to decide, following the *Manifesto*, that they are too short for useful analysis.

Rather than focus on defining and providing evidence *for* policy, we need, I suggest, to proceed from a basis of history's affinity *with* policy. This calls on us to acknowledge and work with—although not necessarily simply to accept—the chronological scales and patterns that seem meaningful in a particular policymaking context and to particular policymakers. History's pragmatism, pluralism and capaciousness are strengths in this respect. It is an eclectic and untidy discipline that can handle the long run, the short term and the transitory, all of which may be in play in one policy issue.

Weaving Context

'Context' is derived from the Latin, *contextere*, meaning to weave together. Weaving is an act of composition, in which threads are interlaced in a pattern to create the final woven product. From this original meaning we can grasp the importance of context to different disciplines. Context allows meaning-making; we 'place' or 'locate' the individual thread or pattern within the fabric as a whole in order to interpret and understand it. Thus, context has an important explanatory function. Anthropologists, given credit for leading an intellectually substantial contextualist turn in the 1960s and 70s, take care not to isolate the text or the practice under observation—a ritual, musical form or narrative, for example—from the original site of production.[16] In policy science, context is 'a conceptual device to compensate for the lack of behavioral rules and methods to compare behavior across time, space, organizations, and functions'.[17] More recently and more positively, attention has been given to the complex cul-

tural practices embedded in policy contexts, a recognition that explanations of political activity are enriched by contextual understanding.[18]

For historians, the weaving of context is essential to the historical account. If our accounts are to be more than chronicles, we must rely on contextual analysis to interpret sources, assess their significance, identify continuity and change, make valid distinctions or comparisons and so on. Contextual analysis also serves to authenticate our accounts and we provide a guide to our intellectual labour in the scholarly apparatus. 'Context' is therefore much more than its usual synonyms, such as setting, environment, milieu and background, suggest.[19] In terms of history in government, however, 'context' tends to be understood in these more limited senses: preface rather than policy. Articulating the power of contextual thinking for policymaking is therefore an important task.

The weaving of context involves asking questions that create connections between 'present knowledge' and the 'circumstances of the past'. The process is a form of oscillation between past and present, which incrementally builds up a map or image representing the historian's understanding of the past in the present. Questioning allows the historian to 'get a fix on' what is not known; once gaps are identified, a new focus for the enquiry is gained.[20] The value of such skilled questioning to the collective puzzling of policy learning is clear. The historian on the inside can, of course, acquire 'knowledge of historical specifics' relevant to a task pursued in the mixed unit but such 'content' cannot substitute for contextual thinking.[21]

History's ability to inspect assumptions critically is a recurring theme; here we can focus on how the weaving of context helps the policy team to understand the people and organisations on whose attitude or conduct an intervention may depend. Attention should be given not only to political allies and agencies involved as collaborating or delivery partners, but also, and perhaps more importantly, potential sceptics and adversaries, interest groups with a stake in the policy agenda and influential observers (such as the domestic media and international audiences). 'Placement' would involve the historian reviewing 'discernible items of individual experience or of internal organizational development' related to the subject of study with the aim of refining working hypotheses: the likely positions and behaviour of other parties, and the other parties' likely interpretation of yours. A more nuanced understanding of context should help avert a 'plunge towards action' and also open up a wider array of options.[22]

To attend carefully to context should not be seen as inevitably imposing constraints on political action. Work on punctuated equilibria in the sciences concerns the conditions for both stability and change and has implications for many fields, including history: 'understanding the mechanisms that perpetuate order ultimately helps us to understand how it is that orders are transformed.'[23] So historians adept at contextual thinking should also be able to explore the circumstances in which structural features may be tending towards stability or poised for transformation. Questions of agency are not precluded. Historians can collaborate with political scientists to ask, for example, when situations are 'open for movement and innovation' (and so leadership can make a difference) or, conversely, when they are 'jelled and stalemated against change'?[24] The coining of the term 'contextual intelligence'—a leadership capacity to recognise potential for change within an environment and to exert influence at the appropriate time—suggests contextual thinking can be valued as an applied technique. The historian's contribution to such exercises as an expert 'contextualiser' remains, however, underexplored.[25]

In discussing the potential of contextual thinking, it is worth switching metaphors and considering the merits of mapping. 'Mapping' is a metaphor for historical representation that is particularly helpful for understanding the process and the uses of contextualisation in policy development.[26] Further, the product—the map itself—is a device of potential value as a visualisation of contextual relationships and interactions. To map something is not to reproduce but to represent it; mapping, like weaving, is a meaningful, purposeful act of composition. The type of map—geological, political, economic and so on—and the intended function will inform important considerations, including scale and the selection of features. Apparently incidental matters such as colouring can be highly significant.[27] Maps are designed to be used; they are 'read', as, indeed, are scholarly texts, but the reading is clearly instrumental as well as illuminative. If we see them as tools to guide decision-making, we can grasp the value of the map for policymaking. Here, we should understand 'map' as 'map-like device', a visualisation of the relevant policy context that represents the connections between 'parts' and 'wholes' and that provides orientation to the user (mind maps and matrices can serve these purposes). As the policy terrains are complex, so map creation would call on different forms of expertise. The case has been made that their 'organising mind' makes historians well-placed to convene such tasks.[28]

In the policymaking setting, the map can serve as a representation of structures and relationships.[29] Using the information gained from placement, the map can give the policymaker an 'image of controllable systemic relationships': both the more stable structural features and the 'broad variety of behaviour' that may occur within the overall framework.[30] The map thus suggests parameters for action; the German word *Handlungsspielraum*—translatable as 'room for manoeuvre' and 'sphere of influence'—captures this function of the policy map well.[31]

As the product of historical thinking processes, the map can be adapted and redrawn in response to new information from the policy environment that calls into question the current configuration: 'Preserving the historicity of the image allows the policy maker to treat a new set of observations as part of a larger pool.' In ahistorical social science models, it has been argued, the 'old' information is a 'mistake' that compromises the integrity of the whole.[32] History, by contrast, is sedimented; 'old' ideas may come under challenge but we can recognise the process by which that has happened over time and also appreciate how aspects of the old persist under the surface.[33] Historians' 'maps' are in this sense pragmatic: they negotiate between the necessarily provisional nature of knowledge and the need to put that knowledge to use. Indeed, it is this quality that makes maps a good metaphor for the historical enterprise in general.

Maps can be drawn to describe not only the terrain of the past, but also to imagine the contours of potential future landscapes. The development of scenarios, common in foresight projects, draws on contextual mapping skills of the kind practised by historians. Scenarios describe possible futures, which should be both internally coherent and plausible as outcomes of the present.[34] They therefore require the scenarist to map out the significant structural arrangements and relationships in effect, that is, future contexts. Scenarios cannot, of course, predict, but they help narrow the field by generating sets of *parameters* within which events are likely to happen. Each scenario in a set provides an opportunity for thought experiments to test a policy proposal through the process of placement. How influential would a particular group or organisation be? What attitudes and behaviours might we expect from different parties in relation to the policy agenda? Who are the potential advocates, allies, opponents and sceptics of the proposal?

Historians are well-placed to engage in scenario-based futures work because the fundamental conceptual moves are the same (so we focus once more on history as process rather than content). Accepting now that his-

torians cannot recover or fully 'know' the past, we can engage more easily with the imagination as a core component of historical thinking. So, it is the historian's disciplined imagination that works with the necessarily incomplete evidential traces of the past in the present to weave an account of that past.[35] Aware of the need to 'place' people, events, ideas and so on in order to explain them, historians actively seek threads of contextual information to help form the fabric. The project of patterning time should ensure evidence of change, continuity and transition are attended to. The traces of the future in the present may, in some respects, be more elusive than those of the past. They are also unlikely to be gathered together or arranged in ways that accord with intellectual enquiry (even if libraries and archives are sometimes organised in ways problematic for historians, they do, at least, follow patterns and protocols). If historians can attune themselves to detecting and interpreting these traces, however, the same conceptual moves that address the 'problem of recovery' can help address the 'problem of anticipation'.[36]

ANALYSING RELATIONS

History is impossible without comparison, unless historians 'restrict themselves to listing dates and events'.[37] We define and shape our enquiries using comparative thinking. Something becomes worth studying when there is an apparent anomaly, a tension or disjuncture that is not yet fully explained. We must have a backdrop of the expected, of patterns or trends, against which to 'see' the historical problem.[38] Alongside the 'heuristic' purpose of comparison—to identify questions and problems—Jürgen Kocka has distinguished three further aims of comparative thinking in history.[39] Analytically, comparison helps historians to ask and answer questions about causation, while the paradigmatic function asks us to compare the familiar (often the history of our own country) with the less familiar to produce a 'de-provincializing, a liberating, an eye-opening effect'. Descriptively, comparison is a tool of clarification. Part of comprehending the life and work of an individual, the significance of an event, the influence of an idea and so on is placing it in relationship to other things of the same class or to a 'typical' example (and so comparison is also involved contextualisation).[40]

As soon as we employ descriptive language, we are alluding to a process of conceptualisation and categorisation in which we have engaged, a process that has an implicit comparative dimension. Labelling a political actor

a moderate or radical reformer, or a popular phenomenon distinctive or part of a wider movement ('Occupy' or the 'Arab Spring', for example), involves reasoning; the individual or the movement must have defining properties that inform our decision. A historian allocating the term 'moderate' would consider, among other things, contemporary understandings of reform and would locate sources within the relevant historiography. Both of these processes of interpretation involve comparative thinking. The centrality of comparison to academic history is an important starting point here. It provides a constructive basis to review the most controversial form of history in policy: the analogy. It should further suggest that historians' facility with analysing relations extends beyond providing parallels in the past.

Analogies share all the methodological difficulties of comparison: the selection of cases and criteria for analysis, for example, or the balance between the fixed moment of comparison and the stream of time in which each case is embedded. They are contentious, however, not so much for these problems of design, but because they contain a political subtext—a potentially dangerous way to 'make history pay a dividend'.[41] Understood as applied history, the analogy is constructed to be put to use—to guide decision-making, to explain and to persuade—and not by historians but by others, politicians and policymakers being among the most high-profile of such users. 'Misanalogising' by political leaders is a favoured target for historians, not just for the public display of historical 'unreasoning', but, I suspect, because it also involves an appropriation of intellectual authority.

Analogies have certainly proved both powerful and problematical in political hands. Confronting aggression with pre-emptive force has been taken by a number of political leaders as the 'lesson' of the 1938 Munich Agreement. In invoking the appeasement of Hitler—in the case of Suez, Korea, Cuba and Vietnam, for example—leaders from Anthony Eden to Lyndon Johnson have, through their decisions, generated new analogies, to which their successors have then appealed.[42] Do such prominent examples of misanalogising mean that historians have little to offer in the way of comparative thinking in policy?

Analogies are indeed problematic but they are a pervasive and powerful tool of human understanding, reasoning and problem-solving, as an extensive literature from a wide range of academic fields indicates.[43] In addition to their use in international relations and at the intersection of politics and psychology, analogies have allowed scholarship to engage with present-day problems: extending legal and ethical frameworks into new

territories, such as space or artificial intelligence, and enabling more effective responses to disasters.[44] So, rather than simply dismissing analogies as 'nothing to do with the proper working of the historical mind,' what might history bring to analogical thinking to aid policy formulation?[45]

The concept of analogy implies the existence of similarity amid disparity, so, by definition, not exact correspondence. Instead, the analogy offers a productive comparability that can bring insights, explain or clarify. Working well with the historical analogy as a tool for policy learning and decision-making means arraying carefully both likeness and difference to avoid confirmation bias, a task calling on a sophisticated and disciplined approach.[46] Multiple analogues may be needed to give useful comparisons for different aspects of an issue, given the complexity of contemporary policymaking.[47] The aim is to allow an analogy to work by analysis rather than by 'allure'.[48] A subsequent decision may appear to set the results of an analogical exercise aside but at least they have been viewed and considered. Once we accept that the relationship between evidence and policy is not linear, we must also recognise that expertise and political judgement will interact in complex ways. Appraising the impact of historical work may only be possible in retrospect, as it was with Rohan Butler's, but his influence on foreign policy thinking was no less substantial for being difficult to isolate.

The most dominant analogies, such as Munich, are an obvious focus for historians' attention; they may play a particularly prominent role in policy debate and they are also hard to resist intellectually. Analogies do not have a stable, independent existence but are constructed by human beings. There may be an extent to which conceptions of dominant analogies become shared—a form of received wisdom—but others are likely to be functions of an individual's 'psychological environment'.[49] One analogy is more compelling than others at least in part because it appears significant to the policy actor(s). Significance is not a given, nor self-evident, but involves the application of valuing criteria, even if these have not been acknowledged or articulated (as the different United Nations responses to genocide in Rwanda and Kosovo indicate).[50] So we can return here to the notion of the policymaker's 'world of ideas' and how historians may be well-equipped, alongside other specialists, to unpack the underlying assumptions and open out the decision-making process.

Historical comparison 'helps to clarify the profiles of single cases', including those where a claim for particularity is being made.[51] Historians consider the possible classes to which the phenomenon being studied could

belong and the criteria by which membership of the class might be judged. The position that the Holocaust, perhaps the best example, is an *incomparable* phenomenon depends on establishing that it cannot legitimately be allocated to any other classes, such as mass killing, ethnic cleansing, war crimes or state-sponsored violence. Comparative thinking is necessary to define the parameters and the organising principles of a historical enquiry—political objectives can be clarified using analogical thinking in a similar way. In terms of Korea, for example, President Truman had three potential analogies in mind, which pointed to 'a use of force to repel aggression', but more careful comparative thinking 'would have emphasized that the purpose was "to repel". It was not "to punish"…'[52]

Comparative *methods* can be exacting, requiring an abstract analytical framework so that hypotheses can be tested using cases from different historical contexts.[53] They have their place in the historian's toolkit but there is also space for comparative *perspectives*, by which historians broaden the context in which an issue is viewed, seeking out new reference points with the aim of enriching understanding.[54] Evidence of how humans conceived of and responded to problems such as crime, conflict, disease and so on in the past is a resource for comparative perspective in policymaking, on which historians can draw to help think through ideas for the present. At the time of writing, both government foresight projects—on the futures of ageing and of cities—seem amenable to such efforts.[55] The historian's attention to the contours and features of context allow both affinities and differences to offer insight: elder care in Japan or 'self-help housing' movements, to take examples from *History and Policy* papers potentially relevant to those foresight projects.[56] We can see that historians' conceptual tools are not discrete techniques, practised in sequence, but complement and combine with each other; in these examples, both contextual and comparative 'moves' are involved. To develop this idea further, we can return to a point discussed in the previous chapter: 'what works' from empirical research is more appropriately described as 'what works here'. If we can understand—if we can map—'here' (or 'then') as a context, in which certain sets of structural arrangements and relationships prevail, we are better placed to make comparative judgements about the options for 'there' (or 'now').

In a discipline increasingly attuned to a multiplicity of perspectives—both among our historical subjects and within historiographical practice—more fluid, shifting and contingent forms of interaction are being considered. In contrast to models of comparison or transfer, thinking in terms of 'intercrossings' offers 'a multidimensional approach that

acknowledges plurality and the complex configurations that result from it'.[57] So what are the implications of *histoire croisée* for history in policy? It suggests that there are many ways of thinking in relational terms. While the inspection of analogies is certainly an important task, and an alluring one—a form of 'speaking truth to power' perhaps?—historians have a more extensive and sophisticated facility with connection and confluence to offer policymaking, itself a complex and multi-vocal arena. The principle of 'pragmatic induction' accommodates and responds to plurality. It takes seriously the 'manner in which individuals actually connect themselves to the world, the specific construction of the world and… the uses arising from such construction' and allows for the 'principles and the logic of the inquiry' to be readjusted while it is underway. If we return to the idea of mapping a policy terrain, we can recognise the value of this approach. As new insights into or evidence on a topic emerge, circumstances in the wider environment change or actors respond, the relationships and intersections alter and the policy map can be redrawn.[58]

INTEGRATING EVIDENCE

All disciplines make meaning from information (which may, of course, take many forms), using approaches from within the parameters of their discourses. The information may not be specific to a discipline—the letters of John Stuart Mill or Virginia Woolf are not owned by history any more than by philosophy or by literary studies—but what scholars *do* with their materials is an important aspect of disciplinary distinctiveness.[59] History is an eclectic field; historians actively seek out a plurality of data from which to derive evidence and develop interpretations. There is no form of information that could not, potentially, fall within the historian's purview—from the more conventional letters, diaries and official papers to sketchbooks and statistics, films and field notes—nor is any form of human knowledge without a historical dimension. History is inevitably 'history of…' and so its practitioners have always drawn on and engaged with evidence from other scholarly domains as an integral part of their pursuit of historical meaning. The absence of a 'canon' equivalent to those found in the social sciences perhaps aids these creative appropriations.[60] Trained through exposure to competing approaches to a topic, historians are generally accustomed to crossing, challenging and revising paradigms and work with a relatively open interplay between theories, concepts and evidence.[61]

Given the complexity of policy issues and the multiple perspectives involved, history's ability to make sense of a wide variety of often incompatible and conflicting data should be a strength. The need to integrate evidence, to bring coherence to the 'mess' of information, is an important affinity between history and policy. So, '[i]t is precisely the ability to embrace complexities while making sense of them, and to think flexibly about diverse phenomena at distinct analytical levels, that characterises the historian's purchase on the past.'[62] The policymaker must assess different forms of external evidence and integrate the conclusions with a multiplicity of other factors, such as feasibility and public opinion, as well as the mechanisms available within the political system. There is an inherent pragmatism to both historians' and policymakers' endeavours, which seeks to reconcile disparate data into a coherent account in the absence (and impossibility) of perfect knowledge. Both begin with issues that require explanation. Historians do not start from a blank sheet but turn to the sources with 'questions about problematic aspects of the past within pre-existing collective frameworks of assumed knowledge, theories, and moot points or dark spots for further investigation'.[63] Similarly, policy commitments and initiatives proceed from problems that are enmeshed in prior understandings: of the functions of the state, for example, the nature of a 'good society' or the priorities for government action.

A number of scholars have suggested that their fellow historians are more able than those from other fields to convene efforts to address policy problems, due to the ability to weigh and draw together incompatible data, perspectives and ideas.[64] History can blend in a meaningful way 'economic, political, intellectual, cultural, climatic, geographic, demographic, scientific, technological, organizational, and psychological factors and concepts' in order to 'see matters whole'.[65] This practice of synthesis and integration is particularly valuable for policy thinking, as the problems with which governments are concerned inevitably cross the boundaries that have been constructed around academic disciplines.

Central to this role is a self-conscious approach to the interpretive process, in which all data are viewed with a critical eye, attentive to the contexts in which a piece of information was produced, by whom and for what purpose. The answers to these questions carry implications for how the information should be handled as evidence—not just the weight that can be laid on it but more subtle judgements about agendas and interests, points of tension and accord or avenues for further enquiry. While assessing and integrating data cogently is recognised as important in poli-

cymaking, there is little acknowledgement of historians' credentials for such exercises outside the discipline. Powerful conceptions of evidence for policy—in which 'useful' and 'relevant' are strongly associated with quantitative data, classified by hierarchies of method—ensure that the case for history as 'the evidence-based discipline par excellence' has not taken hold in policy discourse.[66]

History's eclecticism is an asset for policymaking, I have proposed, yet it can be viewed a source of apparent weakness. Eclecticism is too easily rendered not in positive terms—as pragmatic, flexible and amenable to complexity—but rather as indicative of 'untidiness' and imprecision, and hence an unstable basis for developing policy. There are no universally agreed basic elements or methods by which to combine them. Approaching sources with a gap or problem in mind, interpreting the findings, redefining the problem and going back to the sources with fresh questions may seem to lack rigour to a policymaker in search of 'hard' evidence (although it is akin to the processes by which some scientific disciplines proceed).[67] There is a good deal of experience, professional judgement, informed surmise and disciplined imagination involved in identifying the traces of the past in the present as evidence and integrating them into a plausible account. 'Ampliative inferences' generate from these traces the 'extra content' needed to produce a coherent whole.[68] The cognitive moves may be the same but the historian is present in the formulation of a problem, the concepts employed, sources chosen and themes discerned to an extent that does not accord well with notions of useful evidence for policy.

This discussion points us to a further problem for history in policy: managing engagement with the end user, the policymaker. It is not enough to present the 'case for history', however compelling it may be. We must also consider the contexts and the relationships in which a greater influence for history in policy might be exercised. Admitting the presence of ambiguity or the need for informed inferences in an account of a policy issue can be damaging in an adversarial political environment. Clarity and confidence are sought by policymakers from analysts and advisers, reflecting the demands made on them by the media, by political opponents and by other interested parties.[69]

We can turn again to academic history for ideas about how to address this problem. Historians tend not to present for readers' inspection the 'steps and missteps' involved in the preceding research.[70] We do not generally show the 'ductwork' of our studies, the cognitive 'moves' by which we produce plausible inferences from an incomplete evidential record.

The scholarly conventions of citation are therefore of great importance. We signpost the route taken, providing a 'guide as to how the bridges [between past and present] were constructed and the types of materials from which they were built, so that others can retrace the steps, check for adequacy, and look at alternative routes'.[71] Disciplines are communities of enquiry and contributions to knowledge are subject to inspection and critique, reducing the risk of self-confirmation. Our interpretations can be affirmed, extended, revised, appropriated and refuted; peer review is only one form such scrutiny can take.

The policymaker, as the end-user for our work in government, need not see the ductwork but we surely do need mechanisms by which it is checked—equivalent to academic peer review. Working outside the boundaries of academe and in a setting that demands a high level of confidentiality presents a challenge, which is further complicated by the plural nature of the evidence involved. If historians are to convene, or participate in, a process of assessing and integrating information from a wide range of sources, produced using very different approaches and concepts of validity, then they must be confident operating within a much broader community of enquiry than is conventionally the case in academe. The mixed policy unit described in the previous chapter is necessarily much more compact than scholarly communities. In sharing, albeit on a temporary basis, an institutional affiliation, its members may not benefit from the insights that come from networks connecting people across specialisms and locations. Being compact does, however, bring some assurance of confidentiality and, importantly, the unit is also multi-disciplinary and multi-professional. The briefing note, report or memorandum may not show the analytical ductwork, nor contain the apparatus appropriate for scholarly outputs, but behind that final product should lie processes of evidence-gathering, evaluation, interpretation, presentation and inspection as in any community of enquiry.

Government is, of course, a very different context from academe and policy teams must operate within a political framework and under time constraints, both of which constrain debate in ways university-based scholars would not accept. It must surely be preferable, however, to introduce some form of community of enquiry, whereby experts exchange, test and refine their ideas collectively, than simply to criticise the extent to which policymaking falls short of academic principles. The 'organising mind of the historian' should come into its own in a policy setting and may offer the best means of making sense of multiple perspectives when they are in conflict.

Engaging Audiences

Presenting the results of historical research to be read and otherwise assimilated into a body of knowledge about the past is, in many respects, the final stage of a long process of enquiry. Yet for historians, as for other scholars in the humanities, writing—we still, mostly, present our arguments in written forms, albeit increasingly diverse—is more than reporting findings. It is 'the foremost act of interpretation' and the means by which others can apprehend the formulation and conduct, the conclusions and implications of the enquiry.[72] Through the written word we define our problems, concepts and puzzles; we situate our work relative to others'; we explain, explore and illustrate; we hope to engage and to convince; and so on. As we realise the purpose of our study through presenting its results, decisions about how to do so are not incidental: 'logistics are… of the essence'.[73] Historians must make judgements, for example, about how texts are organised, the style and linguistic register adopted, the format of publication, the use of visual material and the types of explanatory apparatus (such as glossaries) included.

We cannot, therefore, see writing only as a generic skill applied to a specific task. Of course, an ability to write and to speak in a fluent, lucid and expressive way is valuable for historians, as it is for many people, whether for professional practice or personal interest. Yet historical writing involves more than simply putting scholarship on view. The expertise gained from historical enquiry 'must be displayed by deploying it in a new impression that meets standards of vividness and coherence.'[74] The creation of a plausible, persuasive impression is inseparable from production of knowledge—and both acts are situated within a collective context. Even the lone scholar is involved in multiple conversations: with other historians, past and present, and with their interpretations; with historical subjects and sources; with envisaged audiences. Indeed, without an audience, do our efforts even constitute disciplinary-history? Can a scholarly field be said to exist as such without a community, or communities, of enquiry actively engaged in argument and response, evaluation and exchange?

Once we recognise that the presentation of historical accounts is integral to the process of enquiry, we can appreciate more fully the significance of crafting our texts. They do not simply carry our arguments but represent and realise the purpose of the enquiry itself. Funding streams in Britain have started to incentivise scholars to foreground an overtly integrated approach, involving communities as active participants in the

research process from the outset and thus as co-producers of, as well as audiences for, the final outputs. The common use of the term, 'dissemination', however, suggests that any sharing of research is widely understood as belonging to a phase subsequent to historical enquiry itself.[75] In the case of policymakers as an audience, the separation of enquiry and dissemination phases becomes a powerful and moral construct, speaking to notions of integrity and independence at the core of academic identity—genuine co-production with policy becomes unconscionable.

The reluctance to involve policymakers in historical enquiry cannot just be seen as an extension of the so-called 'Haldane principle', which places research funding decisions with academics rather than politicians. Historians have been keenly aware of the allure of history as a political instrument: to claim legitimacy, marginalise perceived enemies, justify aggressive and punitive actions, deny abuses and so on. These are valid and important concerns. But they conceal other attitudes and beliefs, explored in the previous chapter, about the relationships between historians as producers and policymakers as recipients of knowledge about the past. Speaking truth to power preserves the divide between enquiry and dissemination.

If historians wish to be influential voices in policymaking, this demarcation is problematic. Can we produce persuasive historical interpretations if our chosen audience remains a remote recipient of our work, an audience whose concerns and priorities may not intrude on our enquiries? 'What counts as an "answer"?' is a question that turns on addressing the interest of *both* the 'producer' *and* the 'consumer' of history.[76] An overlap in those interests—some sense of a shared purpose for the intellectual project—should provide a platform conducive to crafting a satisfactory answer. For writing aimed solely at other scholars, such an overlap can be assumed (with most validity within specialist subfields); for other audiences, it may need some negotiation. What I am suggesting is that the persuading an audience—particularly one, such as policymakers, that has not conventionally been familiar to or accessed by historians—is a task that cannot simply be bolted onto the end of an enquiry. The policymaker as the commissioner and consumer of historical enquiry has legitimate interests in its purpose and focus, to ensure articulation with policy agendas. The historian as an expert producer has commensurate professional interests in critically examining the 'initial framework of concerns' presented and developing a credible approach.[77]

The dialogue between these two sets of interests aims to determine the most appropriate course of action. It is this dialogic approach that

seems to have been absent in the operation of the Treasury Historical Section; officials were often unclear about what they wanted, or to what end, and historians did not prove responsive to requirements for timeliness and usability. Reaching a working consensus on both the purpose of the historical task and the form in which the output will be presented would seem to be essential for a new model of history in policy to work. To use the term 'working consensus' is to recognise that complete correspondence between historian and policymaker is unlikely—although its absence may be productive—and also that arrangements are never static, but the subject of ongoing negotiation and review, much like the maps discussed above. Codes of practice can provide a framework for conducting such processes ethically.[78]

It is possible to see the dialogue between 'producer' and 'consumer' not as a departure from an established historical practice, but as an extension of existing inclinations: 'Historians, like everyone else, respond to wider public and political concerns and these shape our research questions, the places we look for evidence and the kind of explanations that we find appealing.'[79] Both author and reader have a presence in history writing today. The former may be open about commitments held and perspectives and approaches taken, inviting the latter not simply to accept authoritative judgements but to join a discussion and to reflect on the interpretations offered.[80] All historians write with intended audiences in mind and seek to engage and to convince them. The extent to which historians allow the 'reality of interested questioner' to shape the enquiry itself is the salient issue, one that is likely to reflect attitudes and assumptions about our imagined questioners: their capacity to join the discussion, for example, but perhaps also about the legitimacy of their interests in our work. Some self-conscious attention to these beliefs should help historians produce an answer that 'counts'.[81] The interests of policymakers, or other audiences, cannot feed into historical interpretations without reshaping them, yet we undermine our own intellectual projects if we do not engage with those interests in a serious way.

Notes

1. See, for example: R. C. Williams, *The Historian's Toolbox: A Student's Guide to the Theory and Craft of History* (New York: ME Sharpe, 2011); D. Cohen and M. O'Connor, *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2004); G. Lind, 'A Toolbox for Historical Computing,' *History and Computing* 10, no. 1–3 (1998).

2. R. Ashby and C. Edwards, 'Challenges Facing the Disciplinary Tradition: Reflections on the History Curriculum in England,' in *Contemporary Public Debates over History Education*, ed. E. n. Nakou and I. Barca (Greenwich, Conn.: Information Age, 2010), pp. 34–5.

3. L. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder Arnold, 2006), p. 112.

4. L. O. Mink, 'The Autonomy of Historical Understanding,' *History and Theory* 5, no. 1 (1966), p. 32.

5. For the commitment to hold a referendum on Britain's membership of the EU, see: The Conservative Party, 'The Conservative Party Manifesto.' (2015). The agreement between the P5+1 group (US, UK, France, China and Russia, plus Germany) with Iran on limiting its nuclear activities in return for the lifting of sanctions was reached in July 2015. See: K. Katzmann, 'Iran Nuclear Agreement.' (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2015). This is, interestingly, an example of the legislative reference work discussed in chapter 2.

6. R. E. Neustadt and E. R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (New York: Free Press, 1986), pp. 235–6.

7. Thinking in Time, pp. 236, 51. The idea of oscillation echoes the 'dialogue between past and present', the 'reciprocal questioning' that Bédarida argues has pedigree back to the liberal historians of the nineteenth century: F. Bédarida, 'The Modern Historian's Dilemma: Conflicting Pressures from Science and Society,' *The Economic History Review* 40, no. 3 (1987), p. 346.

8. L. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, pp. 105–25.

9. J. E. Zelizer, 'Introduction: New Directions in Policy History,' *Journal of Policy History* 17, no. 1 (2005), p. 3.

10. S. Lloyd, *Charity and Poverty in England, C.1680–1820: Wild and Visionary Schemes* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 2. 'Archives of the otherwise' is also Lloyd's.

11. D. J. Staley, *History and Future: Using Historical Thinking to Imagine the Future* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2006).

12. On trends: R. G. Stakenas and P. Soifer, 'Models and Historical Data in Public Policy Analysis,' in *History and Public Policy*, ed. D. B. Mock (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger, 1991).

13. P. N. Stearns, 'History and Policy Analysis: Toward Maturity,' *The Public Historian* 4, no. 3 (1982), pp. 19–20.

14. On the evaluation of the direction of change as a 'procedural concept' in the education of history students: S. Levesque, *Thinking Historically: Educating Students for the Twenty-First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), chapter 4.

15. Similarly, in discussions concerning the relevance of political science methodologies, scepticism has been expressed about 'why large *n* studies would have any intrinsic tendency to focus on questions either less or more interesting than those examined in other kinds of studies': P. J. Steinberger, 'Reforming the Discipline: Some Doubts,' in *Perestroika!: The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, ed. K. R. Monroe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

16. M. Hufford, 'Context,' *The Journal of American Folklore* 108, no. 430 (1995).

17. D. E. Ashford, ed. *History and Context in Comparative Public Policy* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992), p. 13.

18. M. Bevir and R. A. W. Rhodes, *The State as Cultural Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

19. B. A. Scharfstein, *The Dilemma of Context* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), p. 1.

20. S. S. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), p. 21.

21. R. E. Neustadt and E. R. May, *Thinking in Time*, pp. 252, 45.

22. 'Placement' is Neustadt and May's term: Thinking in Time, pp. 238–9, 48.

23. L. P. Masur, 'Stephen Jay Gould's Vision of History,' *The Massachusetts Review* 30, no. 3 (1989), p. 472.

24. O. L. Graham, Jnr., 'The Uses and Misuses of History: Roles in Policymaking,' *The Public Historian* 5, no. 2 (1983), p. 11. See also: E. C. Hargrove, 'History, Political Science and the Study of Leadership,' *Polity* 36, no. 4 (2004), pp. 593, 82.

25. M. Kutz, *Contextual Intelligence* (Perrysbury, Oh.: RTG Publishing, 2013), pp. 11–12. Also: R. M. Jarvis, P. G. Coleman, and G. L. Richmond, 'Contextual Thinking: Why Law Students (and Lawyers) Need to Know History,' *Wayne Law Review* 42 (1995).

26. J. L. Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

27. R. Scully, *British Images of Germany: Admiration, Antagonism & Ambivalence, 1860–1914* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

28. 'Organising mind of the historian' is from M. Fulbrook, *Historical Theory* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), p. 117; On history's ability to oversee and to integrate disparate forms of knowledge, see: V. Berridge and P. Strong, 'Aids and the Relevance of History,' *Social History of Medicine* 4, no. 1 (1991). J. Guldi and D. Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

29. Connecting contextual thinking and structural thinking: D. J. Staley, *History and Future*, pp. 72–3.

30. S. Mandelbaum, 'The Past in Service to the Future,' in *History and Public Policy*, ed. D. B. Mock (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger, 1991), p. 48.

31. M. Fulbrook, *Historical Theory*, p. 130.

32. S. Mandelbaum, 'The Past in Service to the Future,' p. 50.

33. I take 'sedimentation' from S. Lloyd and J. Moore, 'Sedimented Histories: Connections, Collaborations and Co-Production in Regional History,' *History Workshop Journal* 80, no. 1 (2015).

34. On scenario-planning, see: K. Van der Heijden, *Scenarios: The Art of Strategic Conversation*, 2nd ed. (Chichester: Wiley, 2005).

35. D. J. Staley, *History and Future*, p. 50–2.

36. On connecting history and future through imagination, see: W. W. Wagar, 'Past and Future,' in *Advancing Futures: Futures Studies in Higher Education*, ed. J. A. Dator (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), p. 83.

37. S. Berger, 'Comparative History,' in *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, ed. S. Berger, H. Feldner, and K. Passmore (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), p. 187.

38. L. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, p. 152.

39. J. Kocka, 'Comparison and Beyond,' *History and Theory* 42, no. 1 (2003).

40. J. L. Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*, p. 25; C. Lemon, *The Discipline of History and the History of Thought* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 26.

41. V. H. Galbraith, An Introduction to the Study of History (London: C. A. Watts & Co., 1964), p. 59.

42. See: G. McGovern, 'The Historian as Policy Analyst,' *The Public Historian* 11, no. 2 (1989).

43. See for example: M. B. Hesse, *Models and Analogies in Science* (Note Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966); D. Hofstadter, *Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies: Computer Models of the Fundamental Mechanisms of Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 2008);

E. T. Penrose, 'Biological Analogies in the Theory of the Firm,' *The American Economic Review* (1952).

44. On international relations and politics, see, for example: M. Breuning, 'The Role of Analogies and Abstract Reasoning in Decision-Making: Evidence from the Debate over Truman's Proposal for Development Assistance,' *International Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (2003); S. B. Dyson and T. Preston, 'Individual Characteristics of Political Leaders and the Use of Analogy in Foreign Policy Decision Making,' *Political Psychology* 27, no. 2 (2006). On analogies for present-day problems, see: M. J. Peterson, 'The Use of Analogies in Developing Outer Space Law,' *International Organization* 51, no. 2 (1997); Diane Vaughan, 'NASA Revisited: Theory, Analogy, and Public Sociology,' *American Journal of Sociology* 112, no. 2 (2006).

45. F. Bédarida, 'The Modern Historian's Dilemma,' pp. 342–3.

46. R. E. Neustadt and E. R. May, *Thinking in Time*, p. 235; P. N. Stearns and J. A. Tarr, 'Applied History: A New-Old Departure,' *The History Teacher* 14, no. 4 (1981), p. 522.

47. W. A. Achenbaum, 'The Making of an Applied Historian: Stage Two,' *The Public Historian* 5, no. 2 (1983), p. 34.

48. R. E. Neustadt and E. R. May, *Thinking in Time*, p. 48.

49. J. A. Rosati, 'The Power of Human Cognition in the Study of World Politics,' *International Studies Review* 2, no. 3 (2000), p. 50.

50. S. Levesque, *Thinking Historically*, pp. 40–1.

51. J. Kocka, 'Comparison and Beyond,' p. 40.

52. R. E. Neustadt and E. R. May, *Thinking in Time*, pp. 39–43. Truman's three analogies were: Japan's seizure of Manchuria in 1931–2; Italy's aggression against Ethiopia in 1935; Hitler's annexation of Austria in 1938. The authors add the Rhineland crisis of 1936, the Czech crisis of 1938 and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9.

53. L. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, p. 72; M. Fulbrook, *Historical Theory*, p. 116.

54. The comparative method/perspective distinction is made by: W. H. Sewell, Jr., 'Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History,' *History and Theory* 6, no. 2 (1967), p. 218. See also: M. Rahikainen and S. Fellman, 'On Historical Writing and Evidence,' in *Historical Knowledge: In Quest of Theory, Method and Evidence*, ed. M. Rahikainen and S. Fellman (2012), pp. 27–8.

55. See: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/foresight-projects [accessed 7th August 2015].

56. M. Hayashi, 'The Care of Older People in Japan: Myths and Realities of Family 'Care'.' (History and Policy, 2011); C. Ward, 'The Hidden History of Housing.' (History and Policy, 2004).

57. M. Werner and B. Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity,' *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (2006), p. 9.

58. 'Beyond Comparison,' pp. 21–23.

59. C. Lemon, *Discipline of History*, p. 37.

60. J. Guldi and D. Armitage, *The History Manifesto*, p. 110; L. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, 3rd ed. (London: Hodder Arnold, forthcoming).

61. M. Fulbrook, *Historical Theory*, pp. 68, 109.

62. L. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, p. 171.

63. M. Fulbrook, *Historical Theory*, p. 67.

64. J. Guldi and D. Armitage, *The History Manifesto*, p. 110; J. Tosh, *Why History Matters* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 39.

65. O. L. Graham, Jnr., 'The Uses and Misuses of History,' p. 11. See also: J. L. Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*, p. 69.

66. V. Berridge, 'Thinking in Time: Does Health Policy Need History as Evidence?,' *The Lancet* 375, no. 9717 (2010), p. 798.

67. Gaddis relates an anecdote about William H. McNeill that makes exactly this point about historical and scientific methods: J. L. Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*, p. 48.

68. On identifying remnants/traces as evidence: D. J. Staley, *History and Future*, pp. 47–50, also pp. 50–2 on ampliative inferences; J. Kalela, *Making History: The Historians and the Uses of the Past* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 28–33.

69. D. MacRae and D. Whittington, *Expert Advice for Policy Choice: Analysis and Discourse* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1997), p. 342.

70. S. S. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, xi, p. 52.

71. M. Fulbrook, *Historical Theory*, p. 108. On the same theme of openness to evaluation: D. J. Staley, *History and Future*, p. 65; J. Kalela, *Making History*, p. 41.

72. L. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, p. 161.

73. A. Offer, 'Using the Past in Britain: Retrospect and Prospect,' *The Public Historian* 6, no. 4 (1984), p. 34.

74. A. R. Louch, 'History as Narrative,' *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969), p. 63; M. Fulbrook, *Historical Theory*, p. 192.
75. Matthew Flinders' concept of 'triple writing' of research—in academic, then practitioner and finally public forms—extends, but does not challenge the basic model separating enquiry from dissemination: 'The Tyranny of Relevance and the Art of Translation,' *Political Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (2013), p. 162.
76. *Historical Theory*, pp. 134–5.
77. Mandelbaum uses the metaphor of a medical consultation: S. Mandelbaum, 'The Past in Service to the Future,' pp. 51–2.
78. See 'Principles and Standards for Federal Historical Programs' of the Society for History in the Federal Government: http://shfg.org/shfg/programs/professional-standards/ [accessed 5/9/2015].
79. D. Paton, 'Interpreting the Bicentenary in Britain,' *Slavery and Abolition* 30, no. 2 (2009), p. 278.
80. M. Rahikainen and S. Fellman, 'On Historical Writing and Evidence.' In Britain, this is being incentivised in the assessment of the impact of scholarship in the REF: the idea that research can change people's views and understandings of the world.
81. S. Mandelbaum, 'The Past in Service to the Future,' pp. 50–1.

Disciplinary Training and Public Purpose in University History Teaching

Abstract Green considers here the implications of history with public purpose for teaching in universities. She argues for placing analysis—the processes of historical reasoning—in the foreground, focusing on developing students' critical self-consciousness, their skills in handling messiness and ambiguity and their ability to solve problems in groups. The cognitive moves historians practise provide a model for pedagogy in the classroom, which can cultivate students' sense of the efficacy and value of their own historianship. The chapter discusses ways to encourage and assess analytical history, emphasising the value of such training regardless of students' future careers. Green finally outlines the limitations of seeing public history as a separate field requiring specialist training and reflects on the importance of applied thinking for the discipline as a whole.

In the previous chapters, I have proposed that public scholarship offers historians a way to conceptualise a purpose for their work in the world and that involvement in policy development can be a legitimate expression of such a purpose. I have sought to develop the arguments that have been made concerning the qualities of history as an eclectic, synthetic, integrative discipline and the power of historians' conceptual tools—they offer something distinctive to the complex business of policymaking. The

centre of gravity throughout this book is historianship and hence there is a need to reflect on the implications of these discussions for the practice of academic history.

There is an enduring asymmetry in the attention and esteem given to teaching and research in history, even though the former is an activity to which most university-based historians are deeply committed and devote the majority of their time and energy.[1] It therefore seems important give the teaching of history extended consideration here. Students are, after all, one of our potential 'publics', both during their academic training and as lifelong members of society (and with just under half of 17–30-year-olds now entering higher education in England, they are a significant one). How can students be prepared for thinking historically—including, but not certainly not limited to, work on the inside of government?[2]

THE PURPOSES OF TEACHING

The purposes of studying history—I focus here on university education—have been articulated many times: on the websites of professional associations; in student guides; in pedagogical literature; in texts aimed at political and public audiences, among others.[3] While there are differences of language and emphasis, common themes can be identified. Knowledge about the past is understood to be one component of a rounded education, engagement with history one element of a vital society. History can also be valued in intellectual terms, cultivating the mind and judgement. Sometimes this cultivation is conceived in the context of democratic agency, a 'citizen's resource', fostering students' critical faculties and ability to challenge unsubstantiated assertions and fixed ideas.[4] Historical training clearly also develops skills that can be usefully applied in many careers—the analysis of evidence, the formulation of coherent arguments and effective, accurate writing, among others. Personal and collective identities are shaped by historical understanding, which therefore also plays a role in how people and polities interact.

These arguments have all been drawn into efforts to defend history as a university discipline in recent decades. Establishing the credentials of history, particularly in terms of transferable skills and economic returns, has been a concern in a political culture shaped by neoliberal assumptions.[5] These assumptions involve the instrumental aims of education but also,

more broadly, the obligations of service providers, such as universities, to their funders. The increase in 2013–14 of the university tuition fee cap for English universities to £9000—transferring, at least ideologically speaking, the burden from the state to the individual—and the 20% weighting for impact applied in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework assessment reflect this culture.

In such a context, a focus in university teaching on the application of history seems highly problematic, reducing a rich interplay of purposes to one central, instrumental aim and marginalising the distinctive disciplinary value of history in favour of its capacity for generic trainability. The idea that the study of history has a 'practical object', that it refined the judgement in ways highly relevant, indeed essential, to contemporary life, is by no means a product of this relatively recent political culture.[6] It has a history that connects us to the early stages of academic history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and hence offers an opportunity to re-appropriate the concept of applying history and to recast its meaning and its role in university teaching.

One alternative, which may seem attractive to some historians, is effectively to 'outsource' the whole agenda of relevance and application to public history. So, exploring with students the practical and intellectual uses of history, as well as developing their skills to secure employment, whether in professional historical roles or elsewhere, would be delegated to a new class of colleague. To them could also fall the responsibility for public engagement increasingly emphasised by research funders. Such a specialist role may appear to offer much to the public historian but the risks of marginalisation are considerable. The outsourcing approach is not conducive to the vitality of the historical discipline but nor is it productive in educational terms. Locating the relevance agenda within a specialist subfield, or casting it as employability, suggests at the very least that questions of history's wider application do not constitute 'proper' history and that therefore they do not merit any substantial attention. J. R. Seeley expressed a concern with 'indirectness' in education, that it 'conceals from the student the end of his [sic] studies'. For 'end' we might substitute 'value' and say that students' academic development would actually be enhanced by opportunities throughout the curriculum to explore the value and the scope of their emerging historianship.[7]

Outsourcing also reinforces the false but persistent and alluring divide between 'knowledge' and 'skills'. It is a divide most prominent in debates

about school history and Britain is not alone in experiencing repeated political attempts to prioritise coverage of essential 'facts'. Historians have been vocal in their criticism of such proposals, yet the academy has itself tended to privilege the accumulation and display of knowledge. The 'cult of the archive' celebrates the effort of research and its end product—the monograph or journal article—but elides the intellectual processes and application of cognitive skills that connect the two.[8]

Historical skills are, of course, only practised in the context of historical content and content only approached through the use of skills. The interwovenness of skills and knowledge is reflected in effective teaching of history. Skills are '*embedded* in the content of the subject: both the generic skills, such as analysis, argument and presentation, and the subject-specific skills which draw on the training of historians as time specialists, such as the command of continuity, change and context'.[9] Historical training—as with historical practice more broadly—involves finding and exploring a space in which meaningful connections between disciplinary knowledge and application are made and remade. By embedding relevant skills in the subject content, the tutor teaches through modelling the processes of historical work. Students are given sense of 'the discovery aspects of the discipline', driven by an 'analytical purpose', rather than the politically conditioned demands for content coverage.[10]

None of my comments on teaching so far has related directly to history in policy, and deliberately so. They relate to the development of historianship and, in this sense, we return again to the early discipline and the insistence that historical study had an 'end', a purpose and value, for all those adhering to it: a 'training which is best for the education of the historian is also the best for the politician, the journalist or the ordinary cultivated member of society', as Tout would have it.[11] I want to emphasise through this discussion the embeddedness of skills in the development of historical understanding. Historians, like all scholars, are in the business of applied thinking. We envisage a purpose to our efforts, even if that is an abstract concern with the advancement of human understanding. We conduct our business with a range of motivations, interests and approaches, as well as, increasingly, in different settings. By centring historical training on analysis, we can hope to develop in students a sense of disciplinary efficacy and identity, a recognition that the resources they hold as historians have value—including for helping to formulate responses to pressing societal and political questions.

Foregrounding Analysis

Early on in an undergraduate career, students are introduced to the idea that the past is never found, preserved and presented intact, but always viewed from particular perspectives. That history is made by people working in a disciplined way with the traces of the past is an insight on which all further analytical exercises depend. I wish to draw attention to three facets of an analytical approach to university history in this chapter—all three are integral to historical practice in general, yet they also hold significance for 'history in policy' in specific senses: the development of a self-conscious critical capacity; the negotiation of 'messiness' and ambiguity; and collective thinking. There are, of course, other aspects to disciplinary-history relevant to practice in policy—an ability to work in a systematic way with comparison, for example—and also skills, such as numeracy and an associated confidence in interpreting and manipulating statistical data. The three I have chosen to focus on here are capacious enough, I hope, to embrace a wide range of specific competencies valuable to the prospective historian on the inside.

History's **self-consciousness** is often cited as a distinctive quality of the discipline. This involves, for me, a critical, sceptical approach to enquiry—alert to differences of perspective, to gaps, ambiguities and agendas—and also an awareness of the influences on our own practice. It is a quality highlighted by scholars advocating history's importance in contemporary life, the case being that critical historical thinking is a valuable resource for the informed exercise of agency, whether as a decision-maker at the highest levels or as an individual citizen.[12] Historians interested in pedagogy have made the case for greater emphasis in teaching on self-consciousness over the self-assurance that is built on accumulated knowledge.[13] The potential of connecting these agendas has not yet, however, been realised.

Developing greater self-consciousness as a distinctive quality of historical practice is an opportunity to encourage an appreciation of the traction of historical thinking on present-day issues. The skilled reading described by the historian and educational psychologist, Sam Weinburg, for example, is an essential, discipline-specific form of comprehension.[14] The historian reads like a prosecuting attorney, Wineburg contends, looking for subtexts and connotations and delving into the author's motives and intentions. Historical thinking as a resource for contemporary life and for informed policymaking relies on this same capacity for skilled, critical reading. The benefits to policymaking include a necessary scepticism of received wisdom and familiar narratives. Presumptions are powerful and

alluring things. Identifying and testing them using historical thinking can help us analyse a present situation, understand the positions and motivations of other parties and arrive at a more informed response.[15] The historian on the inside questions the origins and the diagnosis of a policy problem and inspects the assumptions and the analogies involved.

What history in policy requires is only what should be expected from history teaching in the interests of cultivating in students habits of self-conscious enquiry. One challenge we face is how to make self-conscious practices more clearly visible to them. The 'thinking aloud' technique used by Wineburg, which involved historians and students being trained to articulate their thought processes as they read and interpreted texts, could be powerful in the classroom.[16] Thinking aloud makes visible—or, rather, audible—the steps and missteps of interpretation, the hypotheses tentatively proposed then pursued, revised or rejected and the attempts to connect text, subtext and context. It foregrounds analysis over accumulation of knowledge, as does the 'history laboratory' approach, where a case-study format moves students from handling primary sources to interpretive issues 'such as analyzing official value structures and their interaction with subcultures, or determining the relationship between causes and effects… of policy'. Conceptual training, managing data and the use of comparative frameworks can all be included in the process.[17]

Both the thinking aloud technique and the history laboratory work by opening up the black box. The focus of the session is the process of 'doing history', an approach can be located in efforts over the last thirty or so years to focus attention on the distinctive disciplinary contexts for learning. Here, the work of Lee Shulman on signature pedagogies—'ways of being taught that require them to do, think, and value what practitioners in the field are doing, thinking, and valuing'—has been seminal.[18] Tutors can 'decode the discipline', working through how an 'expert' would tackle a task that was causing students problems and breaking down injunctions (such as to think critically) into component cognitive 'moves' or 'mental operations'.[19] Modelling core disciplinary tasks would seem particularly important in the case of history as the making of historical interpretation is usually hidden from the viewer. The scholarly apparatus provides an indication as to how the final product was constructed but historians do not generally show their 'workings' in detail. Finding ways for students—from the start of their degrees—to see and follow those processes must surely be to the benefit of the few who become academic historians, as well as the many who can go on to apply historical habits of mind elsewhere.[20]

For the historian on the inside, this practice of making historical thinking visible is of particular importance. In the context of a government department and the mix of expertise that will inevitably be involved in policymaking teams, historians need to be able to articulate what the discipline brings to the conversation. The reflexive qualities of a more analytically driven approach to teaching have further important benefits. If students recognise that what they bring with them—the preconceptions, misconceptions and assumptions about the past and its significance for the present—conditions their interpretation, they are likely to be alert to the extant influences on colleagues, managers, Ministers and other political agents.[21] The history classroom can operate as a model of the workplace, a space in which ideas, experiences and beliefs are continuously re-evaluated.

History certainly has credentials as a 'destructive' or 'disruptive' discipline; the debunking of myths is one contribution historians can make to public debate. The historian on the inside cannot, however, share the privileges of the external critic, for whom the destabilising of established narratives and apparent certainties can be an end in itself. Developing self-consciousness and reflexive thinking in students is therefore just one dimension of academic study to be emphasised in relation to history in policy. The **messiness** of policymaking reflects its human character; there may be elements of (bounded) rationality but there are also, inevitably, interests, values and agendas involved. What counts as 'evidence' may be ambiguous or conflict with what appears to be politically feasible. The 'organising mind of the historian' is a valuable asset in the policymaking context, able to integrate ambiguous, eclectic and incomplete evidence into an informed understanding of a topic.[22]

Developing this facility in students turns, again, on placing analysis in the foreground. Asking students to respond to a question by integrating different types of sources—formal communications, diary entries, statistics, visual material and so on—is a common form of assessment. It prompts students to answer the 'so what?' question: to consider the *implications* of the sources, taken as a set, for their understanding of the topic and to make plausible inferences where clarity remains elusive. Such exercises are a signature pedagogy, asking the students to practise a series of moves—close reading, critical appraisal, contextualisation, integration, interpretation—resembling the routine an expert would follow. The 'so what?' question can be taken a stage further, to enable the students to address wider societal and political issues. The signature pedagogy is given an extended reach: so what is the significance of your historical understanding for an

issue in the present? This is the question behind the papers produced by the *History and Policy* network, a useful model for student assignments, to which I turn later.

The classroom offers further opportunities to extend the signature pedagogy in ways valuable for history in policy and historical work in other settings. The element of performance—of demonstrating proficiency under pressure—is one that features prominently in training for fields such as medicine but it is relatively under-explored in history. A 'clinical round' exercise focusing on the text of a recent policy announcement or political speech, for example, can ask students to unpick an analogy or untested assumption, or to propose a historical angle on the issue for further exploration. Students are pushed into 'moments of uncertainty comparable to the ambiguous situations they will face outside class, when historical judgment may be all that separates the discerning from the deceived.'[23] The messiness of policy and the significant time constraints involved in policy work are not conducive to the provision of considered advice. Yet the potential impact of decisions made by political leaders places a premium on the ability of the historian on the inside to exercise judgement in the context of uncertainty, to point them away from deceptions and towards a more discerning grasp of the issue. Performance-based exercises in the history classroom can use the discipline's own signature pedagogies to train students' ability to think with history in agile and imaginative ways, to make active and productive connections between disciplinary-history and issues of contemporary social and political importance and to articulate their ideas under challenge.

The role of peers is an important one for all of the approaches discussed so far. Working analytically on a problem or task calls for students' ideas to be shared and critiqued, and differences of interpretation explained and negotiated. The audience for these ideas is each other as much as, if not more than, the tutor; the classroom shifts from lecture theatre to community of enquiry.[24] The role of the group in history teaching has often been presented in terms of transferable skills, such as communication, teamwork, negotiation and presentation.[25] Yet the group is also—as the concept of a 'community of enquiry' suggests—a context for **collective thinking**, reflecting the social processes by which expertise is acquired and maintained, and the conventions by which disciplines operate.[26] A rationale for group work that presents these two sets of skills—the transferable and the disciplinary—as closely interwoven and essential for the conduct

of historical enquiry may offer students a source of motivation, commitment and disciplinary identity.

The disciplinary skills developed through collective thinking are at a premium for the historian outside the academy, operating in contexts where a mix of various forms of expertise is the norm. Whether working on a public history project or in a policymaking team, the primary requirement is to bring disciplinary-history to bear on the collective endeavour. Transferable skills are, as in any setting, *enabling* skills and their value lies in allowing other capacities to be expressed and effectively applied. In the government department, the collective endeavour is unlikely to be historical in nature, so the historian on the inside must not only be a practitioner, but also a proponent of historical thinking, alongside and in collaboration with those who have very different disciplinary and professional ways of working.

This points us to the need to consider a further development of group work into cross-disciplinary terrain. The foregrounding of analysis in the field of history teaching and learning has primarily been a challenge to demands of content coverage, hence *un*covering or *dis*covering history. Emphasising analysis is also political, in that it aims to develop active, critical citizens and to defend history as a distinct form of knowledge with value to society.[27] The potential for creating a cross-disciplinary terrain in which to explore and expand students' analytical capabilities has not therefore not emerged as a priority. If we are claiming that the value of history to society lies in the habits of mind inculcated by study, then surely one task of academic training is to develop the facility for bringing these qualities to bear on questions and issues with which students may later be faced. Such questions and issues are more likely to arise in settings where history is not the only, or not the dominant, form of knowledge.

Departmental structures, curriculum design and timetabling systems, as well as hesitancy on the part of lecturers themselves, can be confounding factors to cross-disciplinary modules, but it is surely a task worth pursuing. The creation of modules 'badged' to more than one discipline is probably easier when administrative structures bring staff and students from different fields together, such as in a School of Humanities and Social Sciences. At a more granular level, shared assessment can drive collaboration. Policy provides an ideal terrain for such explorations, as all major issues cut across domains of expertise. Developing sustainable cities is clearly not just about urban design, energy and transportation, but also has vital cultural

dimensions; human well-being is not solely the province of medicine but also calls on philosophy, psychology and law, among other fields.

The laboratory as a problem-based technique is well suited to mixed teams. An alternative is to focus the lab on concepts that cut across the boundaries of academic fields, even if they are handled, and labelled, differently. The reach and remit of the state, the operation of markets, continuities and changes in individual and group behaviour, as well as bigger ideas such as power and culture, all call on insights from a wide range of fields, including law, sociology, political science, economics, psychology and philosophy, as well as history.

Lab work would still develop transferable skills but these would be—certainly valuable—by-products of a more important process of developing disciplinary-history capacities. An ability to articulate and demonstrate what historians bring *as historians* to the problem in hand would be an asset in policy contexts, as would a sense of how history works with other forms of knowledge. This implies developing an appreciation of other disciplines, among them the social sciences, including quantitative methods. To this end, student assignments for lab activities could include a final piece of reflective writing, which would also offer valuable preparation for placement or project work with external clients.

Assessing Historical Thinking

Assessment is an important consideration if any of the tasks explored here are to have a meaningful role within the curriculum. Innovations in assessment over the last two decades or so have recast the traditional history essay into a wide range of writing tasks, such as portfolios, reflective logs, editorials, posters, book and film reviews and, indeed, policy briefing notes. Such tasks provide students with opportunities to 'demonstrate their learning more fully' than with essays and exams alone.[28] A complementary aim for this diversification could be to raise students' awareness of the connections between historical study and its application. Alongside the briefing note, the policy review or annotated file of documents would serve both aims well, while also providing an insight into history in policy. To do so, assessment criteria should be carefully considered; they signal to the student what is possible, valuable and worth the effort invested. The effective synthesis of evidence, the presentation of a plausible, coherent argument and the composition of fluent, accurate writing are essential for the briefing note as for the traditional essay. In the former, however, these

qualities may be reflected—and assessed—in the use of policy documents, parliamentary debates and committee reports as source material, the consideration of comparative insights across time or space, the production of a cogent executive summary and attention to the implications of the analysis assembled. Applying the model of 'triple writing' mentioned in the previous chapter would encourage students to take the intended audiences as a serious consideration, preparing two or more products from the same research.

Assessment in the University of Hertfordshire's undergraduate module 'Thinking with history: applying historical insight to real-life issues' reflects this approach. The module is part of the minor pathway in public history, a field that tends to give students early exposure to the challenges of historical practice, often first encountered at postgraduate level.[29] The module is organised around four case studies chosen for their topicality and students write short critical commentaries on two of them. In addressing the crisis in the Crimea that began in February 2014, for example, students evaluated the appeals to history made by Russian separatists and by Ukrainians emphasising national unity, as well as the parallels in the past presented by commentators: Kosovo; Panama; Georgia; Nazi Germany, among others. Students also produce their own *History and Policy* paper on a current topic of their choice and a reflection on the validity of thinking with history.

These types of assessment can be very challenging for students. They disrupt a process of knowledge acquisition, interpretation and presentation within parameters that are usually well defined. Students must work outside the conventions, and comfort-zones, of period and geography, and make connections between past and present. In the first year the module ran, some students certainly relished these opportunities; others, particularly those who had not taken the other pathway modules, expressed concern about the departure from established practice. The progression from observation and description to explanation and critique is a challenging stage in any historical training, but the problem-based approach adopted in this module demands perhaps more in the way of intellectual independence. The second time it ran, however, students appeared more confident, perhaps indicating the success of previous pathway modules in preparing them for new ways of working. Topics for *History and Policy-style* papers have shown the ambition students have for thinking with history, including gay marriage, abortion and gun laws.

Assessments can be developed to model the products historically trained professionals may later create, such as academic articles, journalism, museum guides, oral histories, digital resources and briefing notes. In identifying the relevance of these outputs to future uses of history, we are not necessarily departing from academic principles. Historians identify gaps all the time; they access new and reinterpret existing sources, draw attention to unrecognised or marginalised perspectives and take moments in the present, such as anniversaries, as occasions to reopen debates. Supervisors encourage students to locate their dissertations, in particular, in terms of such opportunities. The ministerial briefing note, focused on a contemporary issue, is relevant in a similar way—addressing a topic or problem of interest to its intended audience. If carefully designed, an assessment can demonstrate the acquisition of understanding, while also cultivating a sense of the value of historical thinking and of the traction of historical skills on tasks and issues important inside and outside the academy.

This insight points us to the potential for assessment to become a vehicle for exploring and expressing the workings of self-conscious critical enquiry. The historian in the mixed policy team will need to be able to articulate the process of historical thinking as part of collective puzzling. Any advisory materials the team produces are negotiated, even if the ministers only sees the outputs of that process in the final briefing note. A disciplinary-history approach to teaching foregrounds historical enquiry—history in policy may be one domain where an emphasis on process can be productively pursued. In the Hertfordshire module, for example, the assessments aim to capture the process of thinking with history; students are 'showing the ductwork' in a way academic historians rarely do. There may be potential here for a truly reciprocal relationship between scholarship and teaching.[30] The classroom becomes a context in which we can investigate the cognitive moves of historical thinking and refine our understandings of how historical knowledge is formed—including how missteps can happen and apparent dead ends be reached. Such attention should yield insights of value not only in a pedagogical sense but also for the theory and practice of historianship and for exploring the intersections between history and other domains.

The audience, whether real or presumed, for an assessment is an important design consideration. An academic essay presumes an academic audience and students are expected to adopt an appropriate tone and language, and show due regard for professional conventions such

as the acknowledgment of scholarly debts. In marking essays, tutors are primarily acting as educators but they are also, importantly, representatives of the intended audience. What about assessments that address different audiences, whether other disciplines or wider communities, both professional and public? 'Clients' can be involved in assessing the outputs of public history modules—commissioned projects or work placements, for example—although concerns about consistency and alignment with academic regulations and module aims tend to exclude the allocation of formal grades.[31] Policy outputs present a particular challenge, however. Could students gain the kind of access to documentation and to staff in the relevant government department that is possible when working for other client organisations, such as museums? What would be the status of the resulting work? Conversely, how would student work be assessed that *cannot* draw on insider information, yet nonetheless aims at policymaking audiences?

One way of approaching this set of issues is to revisit the role of tutors. If they have practised not only within academic history but also in other settings, then their credentials can be read rather differently. The 'consultant in the classroom' draws on experiences of historical practice inside and outside academe to fulfil the dual role of '*advising* [students] as preprofessionals as well as *instructing* them as pupils'. The proposal that secondments into policy—or, indeed, into any organisation relevant to a historian's interests—become a routine part of a 'portfolio' academic career clearly raises a number of questions and issues. In the context of teaching, the portfolio historian is a model of rich and multidimensional historical practice and a proponent of the wide applicability of historical thinking.

The tutor as consultant guides the students but also models in active and purposeful ways how historians define and approach 'audience-driven' historical enquiry.[32] In the UK at least, direct experience of such enquiry is far more likely to have come through work in or engagement with museums, heritage organisations and groups, history broadcasting and publishing, and so on than policy and government. One of the key characteristics of the Fulton policy-planning units mentioned in Chap. 3 was that members would serve for a limited period of time. They brought particular forms of expertise into the unit but they also took back new insights and experiences at the end of the posting. The historian on the inside can become a consultant in the classroom, an informed intermediary between students and policymakers in the definition, conduct and assessment of projects and placements.

With this role in place, there may also be greater confidence in allowing policymakers as clients and placement providers to contribute formally to grading, helping to address issues of confidentiality pertaining to the materials students were accessing. Presenting findings and insights to a mixed audience of fellow students, academic staff and policy representatives may also be effective: a public performance that signals the importance not only of accountability to the client, but also of the placement itself within the curriculum. Reflective pieces of writing would be useful exercises for the staff member returning from secondment, as for the student following a placement or project. Such essays can consider how historical thinking interacted with other forms of expertise and the ways in which 'evidence' was drawn into negotiations and trade-offs between different interests and agendas, as well as the political constraints and imperatives with which a historian on the inside must work.

The Limits of Specialisation

The development of Masters programmes to accredit public history professionals has been one of the most striking and distinctive features of the field in the USA. Public policy is just one of many concentrations open to graduate students, alongside administration, historic preservation, museum studies and publishing.[33] That policy is recognised as one domain of practice in public history reflects not only the existence of employment structures for historians in government, but also a lineage of engagement between state historical societies and legislatures that goes back to the early twentieth century. In Britain, there are no equivalent employment routes into central government and a different narrative has been crafted for public history, in which political decision-making is not easily accommodated.

Public history MA degrees in the UK, pioneered by Ruskin College (beginning in 1996), reflect this context. A new generation of provision is emerging in Britain and Europe, with programmes in public history at the Freie Universität, Berlin (beginning in 2008), Royal Holloway (2009), Trinity College, Dublin (2011), York (2012) and, most recently, at St Mary's University, Twickenham and the Université de Paris Est, Créteil (2015). There are also public history modules or pathways within History MAs at UK universities such as Manchester, Kingston, Essex and Queen's University, Belfast. It remains to be seen whether policy will become an emphasis or concentration within such programmes, beyond addressing issues clearly related to public history, such as advising governments on

commemoration. In the absence of routes to professional practice, this seems doubtful in the short to medium term, as does the extension of the practicum or placement to government settings.

The relationship between graduate programmes and professional practice is, moreover, far more complex than the straightforward and linear one implied by the term 'training'. Students can be highly conscious of apprentice status and therefore tend towards risk aversion and passivity, hesitant to take the initiative with project partners. On entering the workplace, they are then faced with the challenge of swiftly acquiring a facility for pragmatism, creativity and adaptability to enable the university 'training' to be effectively applied. The moral commitment that inspires further study—to uncover hidden histories, to animate people's interest in the past and so on—can be repressed by the structures and mechanisms of the graduate programme.[34] As programmes in public history and related fields proliferate in Europe and elsewhere, we would do well to think carefully about they are designed and why. In what ways can they encourage a history with public purpose that is able to bring together intellectual vitality with a practical and collaborative spirit? The implications extend beyond specialist courses; those who go on to become historians in academe will need a similar combination of qualities if their research and professional activities are to have an influence or impact in the wider world.

I would stress at this point that advocating a more historically informed policymaking system does not necessarily put either professional training or the creation of specialist posts ('a historical adviser in every department') on the agenda. Specialisation can mean marginalisation for the public historian on the faculty as for the institutional historian in government. If we want history to play an integral role in policy formulation, my sense is that adaptation—modifying educational programmes, editing academic outputs into accessible summaries and so on—will not be enough. The approaches discussed above are most powerful when seen not as individual initiatives, but as part of a new relationship between academe and policy, in which movement between settings is an established and recognised practice. Disciplinary and institutional cultures must surely be involved in such a change, so that policy becomes one domain in a broad landscape of historianship and historians valued members of policymaking teams on the inside of government.

To use the word 'culture' is not to neglect the role that structures and systems play in setting the terms of academic endeavour. A period on secondment does not fit easily with promotion arrangements in universities

and may not be regarded as an asset by appointment committees able to select from large pools of applicants. The Research Excellence Framework accommodates, in theory, a wide range of outputs and rewards impact outside the academy but assessing policy products is not straightforward.[35] Innovations such as university policy institutes may indeed play a valuable role in terms of coordinating research in an interdisciplinary and policy-oriented way but the structure itself could constrain what is achieved. Such centres may, effectively, demarcate policy-relevant work from the core academic business of the university, much as happened to the Historical Section in the Treasury. My emphasis on culture arises from a recognition that remodelling structures and processes cannot alone change values and practices, either in government or academe. If we hesitate to see policy as one of the communities with which to engage, should we not ask ourselves some searching questions as to why?

In this chapter, I have emphasised that tasks valuable for history in policy can be accommodated within a disciplinary-history approach to teaching, and in ways that should serve all history students well. I have done so quite deliberately. My overarching aim is not to ask history to pay a dividend in V. H. Galbraith's sense: the distortion of historical interpretation to serve ideological agendas. Rather, I wish to draw attention to the potential dividends to be drawn from bringing historical thinking—as developed through academic study—into the policymaking process.

Notes

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11. T. F. Tout, *The Collected Papers of Thomas Frederick Tout, with a Memoir and Bibliography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1932), p. 100.

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14. S. S. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), p. 69.

15. R. E. Neustadt and E. R. May, *Thinking in Time*.

16. S. S. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, chapter 4.

17. P. N. Stearns, 'The Challenge of "Historical Literacy",' p. 16.

18. L. Calder, 'Uncoverage: Toward a Signature Pedagogy for the History Survey,' *Journal of American History* 92, no. 4 (2006), p. 1361. Following: L. S. Shulman, 'Signature Pedagogies in the Professions,' *Daedalus* 134, no. 3 (2005).

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21. On working with what students bring with them: P. Seixas, 'Collective Memory, History Education, and Historical Consciousness,' *Historically Speaking* 7, no. 2 (2005).

22. See 'the historian's skills and qualities of mind': The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 'Subject Benchmark Statement: History.' (2014), p. 9.

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27. 'The teacher is a classroom politician': J. Cannon, 'Teaching History at University,' p. 247 ff.

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32. P. Knupfer, 'Consultants in the Classroom: Student/Teacher Collaborations in Community History,' *Journal of American History* 99, no. 4 (2013), p. 1166.
33. See the National Council on Public History's guide to programmes: http://ncph.org/program-guide/[accessed 13/12/15].
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35. Interestingly, for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework process, Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory was the only Unit of Assessment in Panel D (which covers much of the arts and humanities disciplines) in which confidential reports for external bodies were submitted as outputs, see: REF Panel D, 'Overview Report by Main Panel D.' (HEFCE, 2014), p. 87.

Conclusions: Towards a History with Public Purpose

Abstract In the concluding chapter, Green considers the forms that historical work in government might take, reflecting in particular on the annotated files produced by Treasury historians in post-Second World War Britain and the research done by historians in legislative arenas. She provides a succinct account of six principles on which to base a programme for history in policy, which emphasise the need for historians to work in collaboration with other experts as insiders and advisers, rather than remain external critics of policy. The chapter concludes with comments on the collective nature of any effort to reimagine the the future of history as a discipline. All those who have a stake in historical understanding have a legitimate role in the debate, including elected politicians and the public.

In this conclusion, I come back to where I started. This is a book about historianship, about what it means to be a practitioner of history and how the practice of history might relate to public life—in particular, the policy decisions and strategies that affect our lives as individuals who are members of society. Whether we place commitments to public life in the foreground of our professional identities or not, our discipline has a public purpose, which may be expressed in a variety of ways—how teaching is approached, research questions shaped, expertise offered and so on. It is a notion with which all historians can usefully, creatively engage.

I have appropriated the term public history as a way of capturing the idea of disciplinary-history with public purpose. It has tended to be an elusive concept; its meaning is unstable and contested within national fields and it has not yet given rise to a shared analytical vocabulary with which to shape a international community of enquiry. These deficiencies do not preclude its use. Conceptualisation is never complete; we devise and refine concepts as we process intellectual problems, organising the raw materials, trying to understand how examples relate to one another, or how anolmalies can be accounted for, and so on. Concepts are therefore always open to reinterpretation and repurposing. In a sense, this book has attempted to do just that: to use public history as a way of talking about the relationships between history, historians, society and government.

So, public history is here rather different from established understandings in the USA centred on professional practice outside academe and from collaborative, often community-based, activities emphasising the democratisation of history-making in Britain. It is also not 'history in public' to the extent that the historian on the inside is operating within a system largely closed to external view—indeed, much of what the curator or archivist does is also hidden from public sight. Public history has the capacity, however, to accommodate more complex and fluid notions of public and private. 'The public' often engage with and make sense of the past in private and in highly personal ways, genealogy being a good example. There is also a rich ethnology of our encounters with history on display in our homes, including those of people who do not tend to visit museums or heritage sites: dressing-up clothes in the child's bedroom; books, films and souvenirs on living room shelves; photos on mantelpieces and crockery in the kitchen.[1]

Self-consciousness and plurality have characterised public scholarship across the various disciplines; if it cannot offer a context for engaging with questions of public/private identity and meaning, then it is difficult to imagine where else it could happen. I am suggesting that public history need not be defined by the specific frames in which it has so far been put. The emphasis here on 'public purpose' has, I hope, given a sense of the forms of historianship worth exploring further.

Past Experiments and Present Challenges

Before identifying a series of general proposals from which we might develop a programme for history in policy, it is worth giving some space to tentative thinking about the forms historical work in government might

take. Historians tend to be associated with an 'end product'—conventionally, historical accounts are published in article or book form—rather than with the processes involved in production. Picturing the historian at work evokes the scholar alone in the archives. An image search on google.com for 'historian' yields a predictable array of these solitary types, including Helen Allison's well-known 1879 portrait of Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), held by National Galleries Scotland, along with books and documents, appropriately dusty and 'authentic'. The historian is also a figure of fun, as shown by a still of 'A Famous Historian' from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975). A search for 'scientist' brings up clipart of the 'mad' variety but the dominant theme is the laboratory. Unlike the historian in the archive, the scientist in the lab is an immediately available and compelling visualisation of the labour of science, as well as standing in for the advances in human knowledge made there. But the lab can also serve as a potentially powerful metaphor, a space for collective puzzling among a team, for conducting 'experiments' and discussing their results. Any context in which a group is collaborating in tackling a common problem can work like a lab, from the classroom to the policy unit.

Recognised only for writing accounts of the past, they—we—are relatively easily dismissed as irrelevant to policy development in the present. In the lab, however, the historian's role opens up. Historical thinking contributes towards, and is integrated into, the collective effort. Anticipating what the historian will actually produce in the policy unit is therefore difficult. The imagination is somewhat constrained by a model of academic knowledge production, in which the publication of peer-reviewed outputs remains the primary measure of achievement. The memoranda produced by the Treasury historians, which often ran to multiple volumes, indicate the dominance of this model. That is not to undermine the value of substantial pieces of scholarly writing; they will continue to have a central role in how historians present their work, even if they are increasingly complemented by other forms of communication for a wider range of audiences. The Treasury experiment showed, however, the limitations of such outputs in the context of government. It is also difficult to predict how historians' expertise may come into collaborative intersection with that of other specialists, the insights that may emerge from the process or in what form they may be communicated. To fix on the tangible products of historical work is to limit the potential reach and influence of the historian on the inside. Nonetheless, there are some resources that may help us imagine the work of historian on the inside.

Past experiments in using history for policy must be approached carefully, as should any historical parallels. They do, however, give some sense of what has been valued about historical perspective, amid the, admittedly more extensive, indications of what did not work. The clearest insight that emerges is that history aids judgement, particularly through selecting and collating relevant information and making assessments of significance. 'Seeded' (or 'selected') files, produced as part of the 'funding experience' initiative discussed in Chap. 3, were regarded by one of the influential advocates of history at the Treasury as a higher priority than historical memoranda. Seeded files had two primary purposes: briefing for officials new to a post, given the frequent movement of staff within the Treasury; and a policy resource 'invaluable when the same or similar problems recur'. As Sir Richard Clarke noted, 'having this kind of material organised in usable form' was so valuable that 'the preparation of seeded files is really a prerequisite for any major review of policy'.[2]

The seeded file shows the connection between policy review and policy development, and so also neatly makes the case for the value of historical perspective in government. Without it, officials can only assess an issue as it appears in the present and draw on the resources of present-day thinking. It is on this argument that advocacy for history in policy tends to rely. Yet the effective seeded file also calls on historical *thinking* and requires all of the tools in the historian's toolkit. Identifying the important moments and points of transition for a policy involves the patterning of time, for example; the weaving of context locates it within broader government concerns and explains the factors constraining, shaping and directing decisions at particular points.

The emphasis on historical perspective may be attractive as it preserves the boundary between academic insight and government decision. The historical memorandum or policy paper is self-contained, presented as a product—a form of historical account—to its audiences of officials, politicians, journalists, think tanks and others. Historical thinking, by contrast, is not so easily defined and offers the prospect of 'maybe the most significant boundary transgression… from scientific skills to judgement'.[3] Of course, a transgression can only occur where there are laws, rules or conventions in place to be breached or challenged. Part of the problem with the relationship between academics and policymakers may be the tacit (although not necessarily shared or stable) understandings about the borders between the two constituencies. As soon as the rationalism of 'evidence in, policy out' is abandoned, it is much less clear where academic judgement ends and policy judgement takes over.

The seeded file, in its manilla folder, is not a model for history in policy today; rather, it serves a heuristic purpose here. It suggests that academic and political judgement can blend to produce useful and readily available briefing for policymaking. Indeed, the role of the historian on the inside is essentially one of integration, bringing historical thinking into the policy mix, whether through producing something akin to seeded files, brokering rapid access to institutional memory in a crisis, mapping an issue history or convening a scenario-planning process. There may sometimes be no output to record, much less publicise, the historian's involvement. The 'dialogic exchange' between public scholar and policymaker is often invisible and its influence certainly difficult to evaluate.[4] The well-judged, well-timed 'word in the ear' of the lead official or special adviser may be the most effective form of communication but this can only be delivered by insiders. What is reported in public 'can often be merely a formality… the real message has been delivered and an impact has already been achieved'.[5]

That this work is not open to scrutiny may be hard to accept for public scholars motivated by a sense of moral obligation and a commitment to democratising knowledge (even though much of what we understand by public history is not 'in public'). Even more challenging for the historian on the inside, however, is that established routes to publication may no longer be open. Authorship is central to academic life; the name on the journal article or book claims intellectual property over the content and also recognition for the labour involved in its production. Beyond historical notes and memoranda, which extend but do not challenge the knowledge production and dissemination model, historians in policy are unlikely to see work appear in their name.[6] The anonymity of policy unit work may be a major concern for historians and other scholars, as the return from secondment brings with it expectations to demonstrate productivity through publication.

The work of historians in legislative arenas also points to the potential for historical practice on the inside. New York State set up a legislative reference department in 1890 and similar outfits proliferated from the early twentieth century in the USA. They were often located in state libraries and funded by appropriations from state budgets; the federally funded Library of Congress followed in 1915.[7] These institutions did not simply place materials at the disposal of elected representatives but also came to undertake applied research. Staff were to 'make the search, to assemble the data and to digest, compare and apply these to the subject of the inquiry'.[8] Bill drafting was a common function and continues to this day in some states.[9] What was happening in other states, or other countries,

provided valuable comparative insights and an aid to more consistent legislative programmes. The '*historical development* of current state legislative issues' was an important dimension of these investigations.[10]

Legislative initiative may be more limited in Britain and elsewhere than in the USA but the costs of poorly drafted bills—in terms of Parliamentary time and redrafting at the debate stages and then in implementation and enforcement—suggest the value of sound preparatory work. The British system requires departmental lawyers to commission the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) when legislation is required to deliver a policy agenda.[11] It is possible to glimpse from the US model the potential benefits of a historically informed legislative reference process, with its stages of search, assemble, digest, compare and apply. Drafting of bills may, rightly, remain the province of lawyers but could historians on the inside claim a role in departmental commissioning? Comparative perspectives, for example, are an aid to consistency, important within devolved settlements such as the UK as in federal systems, as well as in the context of treaty-based unions such as the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Appraising strategies adopted elsewhere in the world also requires careful comparative attention. Surfacing and inspecting the underlying assumptions and presumptions of proposed legislation should be valuable for examining its likely efficacy as an instrument of policy.

Towards Some Principles for History in Policy

The examples above are illustrative, suggesting how historical thinking may be applied in the business of government. Anticipating the work of the historian on the inside is difficult but from the discussions so far we can perhaps bring together some tentative principles for a potential history in policy programme:

1. Policymaking is complex. It must engage with both 'technical' and 'valuative' matters, and it involves social and political choices; 'evidence' never speaks for itself. No single academic discipline or profession can provide all the data or insights required to inform decision-making in any one policy area, nor can they, collectively, displace political judgement in democratic systems.
2. There is a long history of scholarship with public purpose. Public purpose may be expressed in a number of ways but not all of them are

compatible with an academic sphere of operation or the standpoint of the critic. Intermediary organisations such as think tanks or university-based policy institutes can broker connections and distil, digest and commission academic research but they cannot integrate expertise into policymaking in the way 'insiders' can. A historian on the inside has access to the formal and informal processes of policymaking hidden from the external commentator.

3. There can be no normative model for the 'mix' of expertise in policy-making but complementarity is a central concept. Specialist expertise cannot be held or claimed as an absolute property but is necessarily negotiated in specific contexts. To treat professional expertise, such as that held by civil servants, as secondary to academic forms of knowledge is to undervalue a vital constituent of the policymaking mix.

4. Historians may be able to convene the task of gathering, appraising and integrating multiple, often incompatible, types of data into a usable synthesis and assessment of implications for policymaking. The affinities between history and policy draw attention to how historians handle complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty, to how they think rather than the 'content' they produce. To convene is not necessarily to arbitrate, however; the aim of history in policy should not be to replace one 'explanatory imperialism' with another. Rather, there is scope for common cause to be made across disciplinary boundaries, with specialists resisting the temptation to advocate only for their own disciplines and instead making the case for expanding the means by which we attempt to understand the world. Hierarchies of knowledge are unhelpful, even pernicious, whether they rest on perceptions of methodological value or those of institutional prestige (particularly those based on university league tables and mission group advocacy).

5. The historian on the inside cannot operate simply on the basis of 'knowledge transfer', translating academic research to policymakers deemed as passive recipients. Specialists of all kinds must bring their different perspectives into dialogue as part of a collective project. 'Knowledge exchange', or, preferably, 'co-production', captures the value of these perspectives and the importance of their interaction.

6. A system of exchange suggests that more movement between higher education and government is needed, using, for example, secondments and project-based contracts on a systematic basis. The integration of historical thinking into policymaking cannot be achieved by the ad hoc secondee. The permanent institutional historian is an equally impor-

tant but qualitatively different role from the portfolio historian spending periods of time as an insider (the former being more likely to be allocated to roles demarcated as historical and therefore less likely to be embedded in mixed policymaking teams).

These proposals do not constitute a blueprint for history in policy and they raise further questions, not least practical ones of training, recruitment, promotion, recognition and esteem for historians on the inside. Other minds are needed to debate, interrogate and expand these initial ideas and I welcome the conversation.

The Collective Endeavour

The historian on the inside is not a lone scholar but operates in a laboratory-type setting. Of course, all disciplines have a collective dimension, vital to their existence and identity as scholarly fields—the colloquy that turns over important issues in the field and through which new contributions to knowledge are examined, their implications considered. The labs of the history classroom allow students to experience the process of discovery, analysis and debate—the intellectual labour of history—as opposed to receiving, as an audience, the products of others' work. The lab I am invoking here takes the same idea of collective endeavour but gives it a focus outside discipline-specific questions and concerns: that is, a public purpose. Indeed, perhaps this is the essence of public scholarship, linking the historian in the mixed policy unit to those contributing to community history projects, historical film productions, museum exhibitions and so on.

The lab model suggests that it is possible to belong to other collectivities alongside our disciplinary communities of enquiry, that we might move between them over the course of a career and create productive intersections. Generally, more capacious and porous collectivities would seem preferable; an inclination to be receptive to, and inclusive of, new perspectives and approaches should reduce the likelihood of self-confirmation. Conversations within such capacious collectivities are not always easy, particularly where the parties do not possess a shared analytical vocabulary. A relatively open and—as far as possible—cross-paradigm conceptual apparatus would seem essential for any dialogues to lead to meaningful collaboration.[12] But here lies one of the major challenges to public history, if, indeed, we can enlarge and appropriate the term to capture all history with public purpose.

Attempts to grapple with the nature of historical imagination and the historian's knowledge claims, with representing the moral complexities of

the past and with mediating between present concerns and past 'realities' have characterised and conditioned the work of both public historians and scholars of historiography and historical theory over the same period of time.[13] There is an unfortunate irony in this correlation. These two examples demonstrate the tendency of history to fragment into specialisms and, in doing so, to create powerful perceptions of relative merit, even while many of the same fundamental intellectual imperatives are in play.

There have been few incentives to prioritise questions of a conceptual nature in public history, despite the field's dependence on notions such as identity, authority, agency, authenticity and audience. I suspect that the reasons for this disinclination are elusive and shaded by context. The North American pitch for specialist status places the skilled practitioner in the foreground; a British lineage identifying history as 'the work… of a thousand different hands' brings an animating sense of solidarity and communal labour to the emphasis on practice.[14] The German-language field of *Geschichtsdidaktik* is perhaps closest to bringing theory, public purpose and practical application together, as it reaches beyond the school to explore historical culture and consciousness.[15] Whether it will be able to join a more capacious community of enquiry with the historical 'mainstream' remains to be seen. Memory and the processing of traumatic pasts have received some attention from theoretically oriented historians, although public history as a domain of practice and as a form of public scholarship have generally remained remote from their concerns.[16] Without wider recognition that public history raises some of the most important matters of historical practice—such as who we are, what we do, on what basis we do so and to what end—the discipline of history, in its parts and as a whole, will be the poorer.

One way in which public history may help us shape and manage more open and permeable collective identities (and, through them, more active and engaged relationships with other fields, professions and constituencies) is by expecting a self-conscious attention to our choices. The claiming of an academic identity may seem unproblematical, emerging naturally from graduate training and progression into a university post. This route is under ever greater pressure, with unstable funding being one factor making institutions hesitant to offer new, particularly permanent, positions. This reality makes revisiting how we organise and explain academic life and the diverse forms of value it creates an even more significant undertaking.

The future of the discipline, both in terms of its intellectual flourishing and its existence within higher education as a public good, depends on the involvement of aspiring, early-career and established historians in debates about what we want that future to look like. These debates need not be

solely defensive or introspective in character. Seeing collective identities and practices as plural, and as self-conscious and considered choices rather than self-evident truths, may give us a promising basis for the project of reconceptualising historianship.

It is a perspective and a project in which constituencies outside 'academic' history are clearly central. I have here in mind other disciplines, 'clients' and collaborators of various kinds—including politicians, officials, think tanks, NGOs and other policy-oriented organisations—and also wider audiences and interested parties (categories that may, of course, overlap). If historical thinking matters, and we must act as if it does, then so too do philosophical, sociological, linguistic and literary (and so on) ways of making meaning. Bringing together in labs different forms of expertise, different approaches to understanding the world, is one way to open up new intellectual and practical possibilities.

Whether the lab is in a government department, a charity, a university or a business, historians can have some confidence in the toolkit they bring with them. That confidence can be understood as relational, emerging from the cooperative interaction of the techniques and insights of different academic fields but also those of professional partners to the enterprise, such as civil servants. 'It's the mix that matters': an insight that applies both to discipline-based communities of enquiry and to those configured around topics, themes or problems. A self-conscious approach to creating communities of enquiry means, I suggest, involving those who may currently sit outside the conventional boundaries of the discipline and those who interpret, make use of or have a stake in the knowledge being produced. Redefining our public obligations as historians can be a task taken on, not as a reaction to external pressures, but as a powerful act of reimagination.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Christoph Kühberger of the Pedagogical University of Salzburg for his insights, offered in a conference paper, on the private uses of the past and the potential for ethnological understanding of children's real-world encounters with history.
2. P. Beck, *Using History, Making British Policy: The Treasury and the Foreign Office, 1950–76* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 62, 73. Communications to Cabinet Secretary and Joint Permanent Secretary of the Treasury and Head of the Civil Service,

Sir Norman Brook, who had instigated the 'funding experience' initiative, 9th July 1958 and 30th July 1959.

3. S. Eden, 'Green, Gold and Grey Geography: Legitimating Academic and Policy Expertise,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30, no. 3 (2005), p. 285.

4. D. Vaughan, 'NASA Revisited: Theory, Analogy, and Public Sociology,' *American Journal of Sociology* 112, no. 2 (2006).

5. B. L. R. Smith, *The Advisers: Scientists in the Policy Process* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1992), p. 205. This reflects the 'complex, fluid environment' behind the 'observable reality' of politics: see M. Flinders and A. Kelso, 'Mind the Gap: Political Analysis, Public Expectations and the Parliamentary Decline Thesis,' *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 13, no. 2 (2011).

6. Selected publications of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office historians can be read here: https://issuu.com/fcohistorians [accessed 2/11/15]. Treasury Historical Memoranda are open to the public at the National Archives, reference T267.

7. E. A. Fisher, 'Legislative Reference,' *The American Political Science Review* 3, no. 2 (1909); J. McKirdy, 'The Legislative Reference Bureau of Pennsylvania,' *University of Pennsylvania Law Review and American Law Register* 59, no. 3 (1910).

8. H. Putnam, 'Legislative Reference for Congress,' *The American Political Science Review* 9, no. 3 (1915).

9. See, for example: http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lrb [accessed 2/11/15]. Wisconsin was an early pioneer of legislative reference work.

10. R. Conard, *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002), p. 33. Emphasis mine.

11. The OPC was founded as Office of the Parliamentary Counsel to the Treasury in 1869, transferred to the new Civil Service Department post-Fulton, then to the Cabinet Office in 1980.

12. M. Fulbrook, *Historical Theory* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), pp. 95–6.

13. L. Jordanova, 'Public History: A Provocation,' (2015).

14. R. Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 15. Also: 'History Workshop Journal,' *History Workshop*, no. 1 (1976), pp. 1–3. One treatment that does deal explicitly with conceptual matters: L. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder Arnold, 2006), chapter 6.

15. J. Rüsen, 'The Didactics of History in West Germany: Towards a New Self-Awareness of Historical Studies,' *History and Theory* 26, no. 3 (1987).

16. In the journal, *History and Theory*, see for example: M. I. Finley, 'Myth, Memory, and History,' *History and Theory* 4, no. 3 (1965); P. Rabinowitz, 'Wreckage Upon Wreckage: History, Documentary and the Ruins of Memory,' *History and Theory* 32, no. 2 (1993); E. Runia, ' "Forget About It":"Parallel Processing" in the Srebrenica Report,' *History and Theory* 43, no. 3 (2004); A. Giorgos, 'The Lost Atlantis of Objectivity: The Revisionist Struggles between the Academic and Public Spheres,' *History and Theory* 46, no. 4 (2007).

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