

The personal and the political in educational policy research and practice - some reflections from Austria

Lorenz Lassnigg
 (lassnigg@ihs.ac.at; www.equ.at)
 Presentation at the Seminar

“The Personal and Political in Cross-cultural Comparisons”
 Tampere 15.-17. 3. 2012

| Institute for Advanced Studies | Stumpergasse 56 | 1060 Vienna | Tel: +43 1 59991-0 | www.ihs.ac.at | www.equ.at |

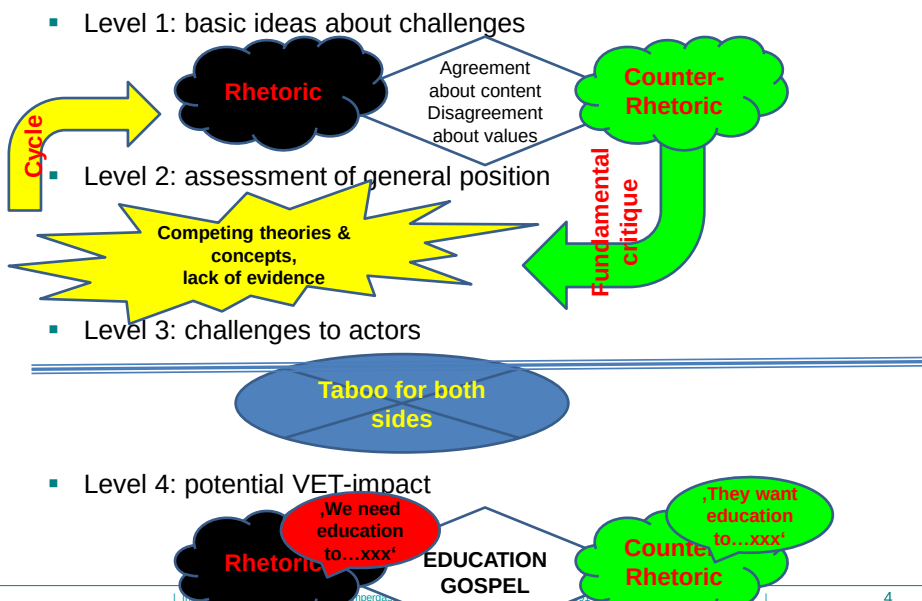
Agenda (a deliberately non-hermetical presentaion)

- Personal: some confessions of an education policy researcher
- Political: some much neglected issues in education policy research
- Culture: what difference does it make?

Confession 1: September 2010

- Questioning ‚Neoliberalism‘ and ‚Anti-Neoliberalism‘ by conceptual and empirical research
 - ECER Helsinki about the coordination of education and the economy

Problem for assessment



Confession 2: May 2011

- Learning about lifelong learning policy, qualifications frameworks, etc.
 - Preliminary remark to a presentation to Austrian guidance practitioners about Lifelong Learning, Guidance and Qualifications frameworks

Vorbemerkung: Kritische Reflexion über LLL-Politik-Elemente

- Möglichkeiten und Grenzen angesichts der Erfahrungen der letzten Jahre zwischen ‚Pragmatismus‘ und ‚Volks-Begehren‘
 - ‚Reformdynamik‘ und/oder ‚Stillstand‘...
 - ...und: ist da was dazwischen?
- Persönliches:



Vorbemerkung: Kritische Reflexion über LLL-Politik-Elemente

- Möglichkeiten und Grenzen angesichts der Erfahrungen der letzten Jahre zwischen ‚Pragmatismus‘ und ‚Volks-Begehren‘
 - ‚Reformdynamik‘ und/oder ‚Stillstand‘...
 - ...und: ist da was dazwischen?
- Persönliches:
 - vom Paulus zum Saulus...



Vorbemerkung: Kritische Reflexion über LLL-Politik-Elemente

- Möglichkeiten und Grenzen angesichts der Erfahrungen der letzten Jahre zwischen ‚Pragmatismus‘ und ‚Volks-Begehren‘
 - ‚Reformdynamik‘ und/oder ‚Stillstand‘...
 - ...und: ist da was dazwischen?
- Persönliches:
 - vom Paulus zum Saulus...
 - ...und **Indiana Jones**...



Vorbemerkung: Kritische Reflexion über LLL-Politik-Elemente

- Möglichkeiten und Grenzen angesichts der Erfahrungen der letzten Jahre zwischen ‚Pragmatismus‘ und ‚Volks-Begehren‘
 - ‚Reformdynamik‘ und/oder ‚Stillstand‘...
 - ...und: ist da was dazwischen?
- Persönliches:
 - vom Paulus zum Saulus...
 - ...und Indiana Jones...
- ...oder: was kann man von der Politik erwarten? ...und was nicht?



Confession 3: August 2001

- What finally remains, if you try seriously to perform ‚evidence-based policy‘
 - Presentation about EBPP in Torino ETF and VET-Culture

...if there are no solutions, what can we do?

...if there are no solutions, what can we do?

- ...search for solutions anyway



- ...search for solutions anyway



- ...set priorities, take decisions



*to put one's own
house in order...*



What do these 'confessions' tell us?

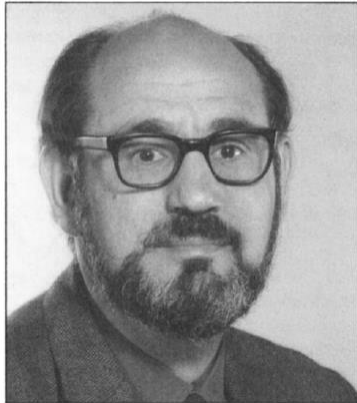
- There is 'personal knowledge' and 'experiential learning' even among (policy) researchers...
- ...which is difficult to reconcile with the traditional research ideals...
 - theory > methodology > hypotheses > research > results > communication
- ...therefore 'policy based evidence'
 - SERIOUSLY: the logic of policy making gives the frame for influential evidence
- If I perform policy research, I am somehow at the interface of research and policy, I may want it or not...
- ...how to deal with this?

Sources of 'personal knowledge: policy projects since early 1980s

- **Evaluation**, review LMP (2009), BK (2010), pre-copenhagen, since early 1980s
- NQR (2006), **Labour market** forecasting, monitoring, long term project, Vienna (2009)
- NBB I (actual), **Monitoring, Indicators**, long term project, since late 1980s
- **Polytechnic**-FH-Sektor Aufbau/Evaluierung; 1990s, 2003
- **Governance**, social dialogue (2000, 2004), school governance (2007, actual) , long term project
- Eu 2010, **Investment**, Ec.of edu, NBB II, Financing AE , HE (2004,05), VET (2001, 2005)
- **LLL-strategy**, ESF 2005, development group 2008/09, actual NVAE,
- High level group **sec.education** 2008

**...how do you deal
with this?**

...how do you deal
with this?



- 1979, 1987, 2007 12th printing

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

THE ART AND
CRAFT OF
POLICY ANALYSIS

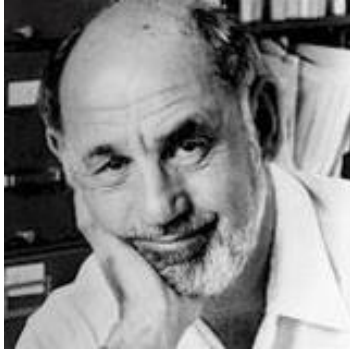
AARON
WILDAVSKY

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR

Sounds good, but...

Sounds good, but...

- “Policy analysis must create problems that decision-makers are able to handle with the variables under their control and in the time available.” p.16



...and, more important...

- “Guidelines for the organization of advisory committees and the behavior of advisers **can in principle lead to the production of sound policy advice**, but even an expansion of the scant present guidelines for the behavior of **those seeking advice** could not assure that advice is used as intended. **The effectiveness of policy advice is compromised by the inseparability of Policy and Politics.**”

- *Renate Mayntz*
(2009)

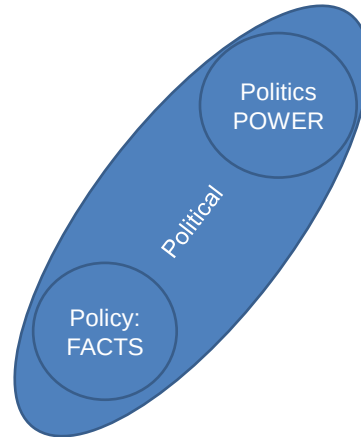
- **Speaking Truth to Power:**
Leitlinien für die Regelung
wissenschaftlicher Politik-
beratung

*dms – der moderne staat –
Zeitschrift für Public Policy,
Recht und Management
Heft 1/2009, S. 5-16*



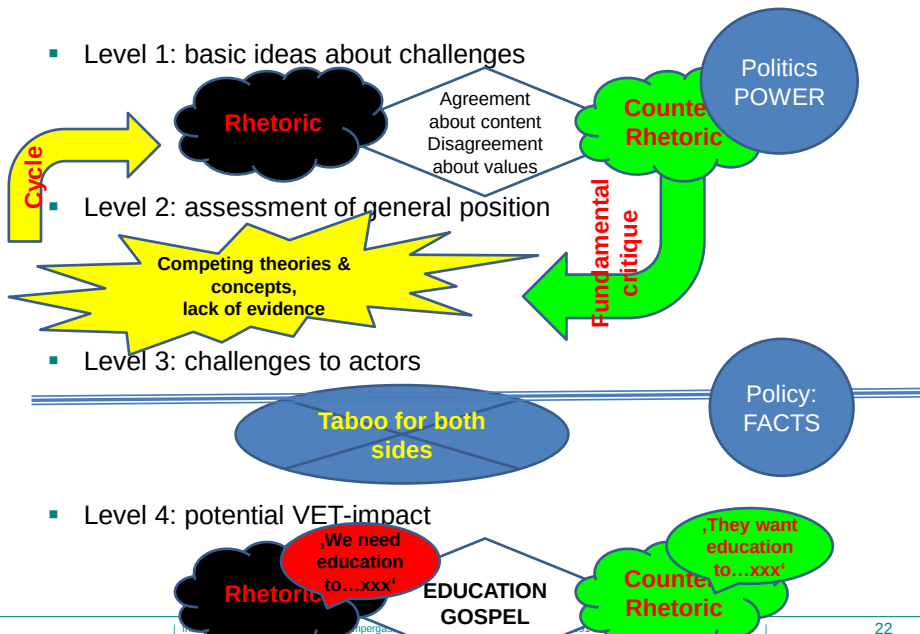
Policy and Politics

- Policy: focus on facts
- Politics: focus on power



Problem for assessment

- Level 1: basic ideas about challenges



- Level 2: assessment of general position

- Level 3: challenges to actors

- Level 4: potential VET-impact

Dilemmas

- If you start with politics, you never get to policy
- If you forget or neglect politics, your results don't get recognized or implemented

- ...search for solutions anyway



- ...set priorities, take decisions

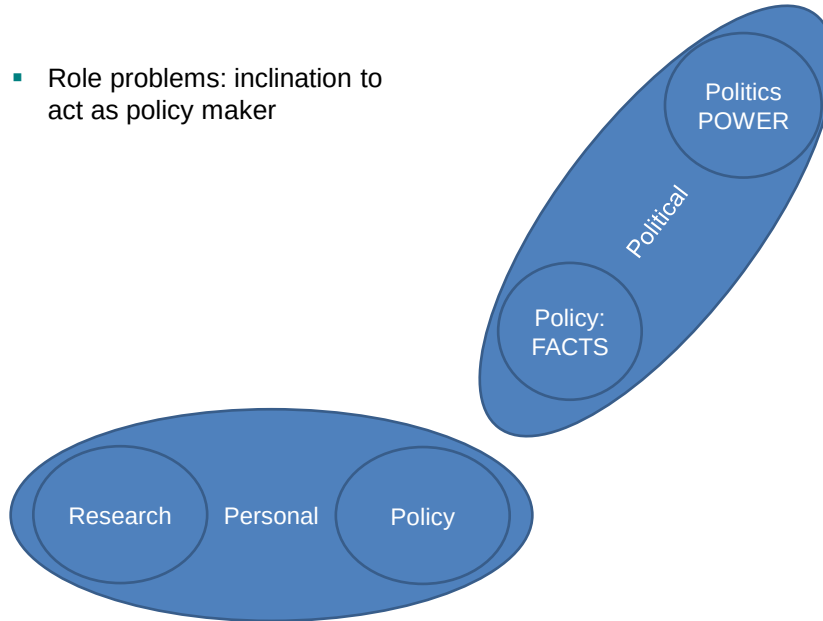


*to put one's own
house in order...*



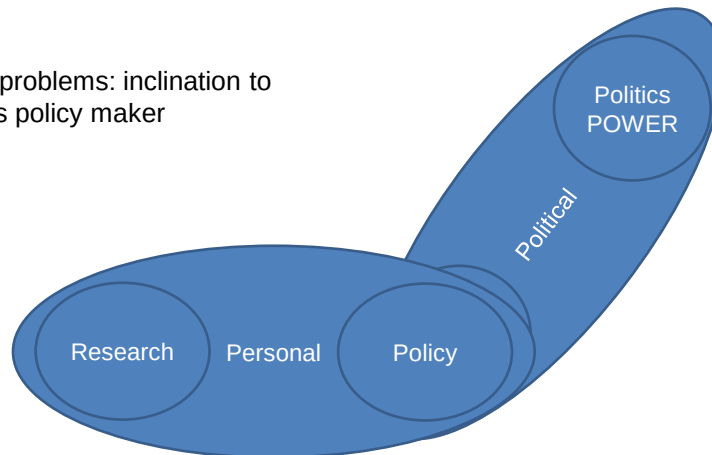
Research – Policy Interface

- Role problems: inclination to act as policy maker



Research – Policy Interface

- Role problems: inclination to act as policy maker



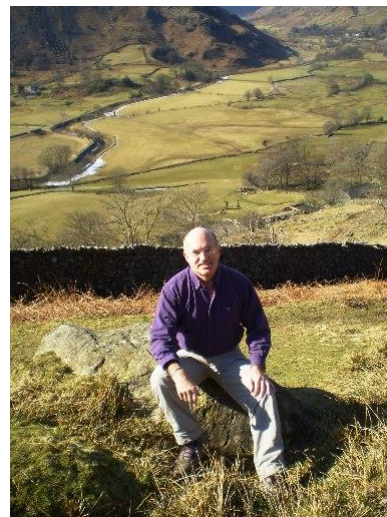
Vorbemerkung: Kritische Reflexion über LLL-Politik-Elemente

- Möglichkeiten und Grenzen angesichts der Erfahrungen der letzten Jahre zwischen ‚Pragmatismus‘ und ‚Volks-Begehren‘
 - ‚Reformdynamik‘ und/oder ‚Stillstand‘...
 - ...und: ist da was dazwischen?
- Persönliches:
 - vom Paulus zum Saulus...
 - ...und Indiana Jones...
- ...oder: was kann man von der Politik erwarten? ...und was nicht?



Solution: ‚Enlightenment‘?

- Two approaches of policy research: engineering vs. enlightenment



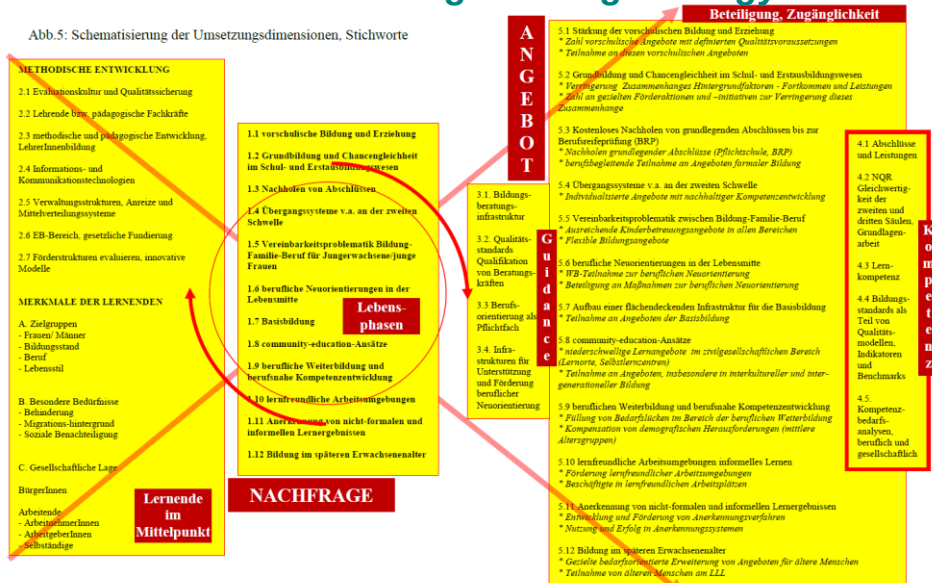
- Paul Trowler, Education Policy, Routledge, 2002

Table 6.1 The engineering and enlightenment models of research

	Engineering Model	Enlightenment Model
Type of data collected and analysis method	Bias towards quantitative	Bias towards qualitative
Ontological position (i.e. view of the nature of 'reality')	Foundationalist: considers there to be an objective reality which can be apprehended by research. Research results have a foundation in reality.	Relativist: considers social reality to be socially constructed (to a greater or lesser extent). Research results are true for particular social groups only. They are themselves constructed in nature: stories.
Epistemological position (i.e. view of the status of 'knowledge' created by research)	Absolute/positivist: 'true' knowledge which correctly describes reality can be achieved given sufficient effort and rigour and effort in research.	Relative/interpretative: 'knowledge' is conditional upon its social context. Absolute truths, at least in the social world, are not achievable. Insight and informed judgement are among the important goals of research.
Relationship to policy	Informing policy-makers about the 'facts'. Proposing solutions to 'problems'.	Giving policy-makers enlightenment or challenging the accepted definitions of 'educational problems' and reframing what is problematic in education.

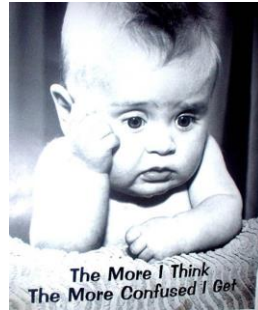
Example: using engineering for enlightenment Austrian lifelong learning strategy

Abb.5: Schematisierung der Umsetzungsdimensionen, Stichworte



Does anybody want to be enlightened?

- ...in particular policy makers have to be enlightened before...



The End



Material

