

QUICK READ SYNOPSIS

The Use and Usefulness of
the Social Sciences:
Achievements,
Disappointments,
and Promise

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Political Ideas and a Political Science for Policy

Background

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Since its beginning in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, political science has been two tightly linked projects: building a better science and strengthening democratic practice.

- Political science has been American-centric in its preoccupation with the theory and practice of American political institutions and practices and with America's place in the international order.
- To view American political science as two intertwined projects, one scientific and one political, gains credence from the fact that the discipline has spent so much energy making sense of and trying to improve America's political practices.

History

In the nineteenth century, what gave the new social science disciplines their professional identity was a commitment to systematic observation and statistical fact—thus was initiated what was called “the science project.”

- Secular authority was gaining momentum in the 1860s—science began to appear both as authoritative modern knowledge and as a source of free inquiry in opposition to religious authority.
- Scholars struggled over what form of knowledge would be authoritative in the social realm—perhaps reforms that would displace political bosses with good government expertise and would help the nation guard against the “excesses” of democracy.
- Reform was recognized by early scientists as a two-edged sword. They worried that their work would lose credibility and financial backing were it seen to favor labor over management.
 - The new labor statistics were neither to side with laissez-faire doctrine nor with labor’s claim to a greater share of profits.
 - Claims of neutrality and objectivity assume importance in the social sciences as a platform from which to claim authority.
 - Later, America’s transformation came about from the emergence of a professional middle class that was insistently reform minded and wanted government returned to a “better element.”

1880 to 1950

From these first seven decades, two broad conclusions can be offered.

- Political science was becoming part of modern, liberal secular authority, with something to say about the political and social realms.
- Research did not have much immediate policy impact, but it did offer important “ideas” that influenced policy making.

1950 to Now

In the postwar period, political science reengaged ideas at the broadest level and in so doing refashioned a political science for policy.

- This unfolded in two stages:
 - recovering the principles of the enlightenment tradition and
 - the neoconservative revolt against the assumptions of the regulatory welfare state.
- They moved away from value-free assumptions; they endorsed those policy options that value modernity’s divisions among state, economy, and society as the first guarantor of liberty.
- The new political theory—interest politics to trump dangerous ideologies, rational choice to trump the excesses of democracy, expertise-based policy making to trump messy participatory options, liberal consensus to hold it all together—added up to a political science of ideas that confronted the grand alternatives and the “isms.”
- The emphasis is on how the policy sciences self-consciously and successfully linked normative goals with a steadily improving assemblage of methods, models, and theories.
- By the later decades of the century, people widely accepted the premise that the empirical tools of social science could improve public policy design and implementation.
- When the policy sciences took a turn to neoconservatism, they did so on the basis of applied social science.

Toward an Anthropology of Public Policy

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Gregory Feldman, University of British Columbia;
and Stacy Lathrop, *Anthropology News*

Background

In an ever more interconnected world, public policies are increasingly central to the organization of society.

- Public policies connect many different people in complex power and resource relations and play a role in reshaping society.
- Although some anthropologists who study policy become involved in public debates or advocacy, they are devoted to research into policy issues and processes and the critical analyses of those processes.
- Today, many anthropologists study global processes and how global, transnational entities interact with states, nations, and local groups.
 - There are those who argue that anthropologists should study professional institutions in the medical, legal, industrial, and educational realms.
 - Relatively little work has been done to explore how social organizations and networks organize transnational players and policy processes, global elites, decision makers, and influencers.

Public Policy

While policies may be clothed in neutral language, they are fundamentally political.

- Anthropologists explain how assumptions channel policy debates in certain directions, inform the dominant ways policy problems are identified, and legitimize some policy solutions while marginalizing others.
- An anthropology of policy is also interested in understanding the cultures and worldviews of those policy professionals who seek to implement and maintain their vision of the world through their policies.
- The study of policy incorporates the full realm of processes and relations involved in the production of policy.

Key Questions

An anthropology of policy asks some key questions:

- What exactly is policy?
- How should we conceptualize policy processes that tend to create particular “policy communities” who shape policy?
- How do policies shape a community’s ideas about human beings and being human?
- How useful is it to view policy as a “political technology” or to view it through a state’s rules, laws, and judicial rulings?
- How can we study policy processes anthropologically, and what is distinctive about an anthropologically informed set of perspectives?

Policy in Everyday Discourse

Policy has become the theme of modern organizations and an increasingly central organizing principle on a par with community, society, and nation.

- Policy must be understood as a kind of power as well as the embodiment of a certain kind of instrumental reason.
- Policies of one kind or another now shape and regulate the conditions of our entire existence.
- Policy imposes an ideal type of what a “normal” citizen should be. It is *through* the norms and dictates of particular policies that modern human subjects are governed.

NOTE: There is a tendency to view policy as a linear process with a predetermined outcome, rather than accepting that unseen variables have unforeseen consequences—we need a critique of this model.

Addressing Challenges

The anthropology of public policy is at the core of theoretical and methodological challenges facing anthropology and its potential contributions.

- Anthropologists are uniquely positioned to understand the workings of multiple, intersecting, and conflicting power structures that are local but are tied to nonlocal systems.
- They try to uncover the people, activities, and influences that shape policy decisions and how they play out—anthropology gives particular emphasis to the idea that the study of policy decisions and their implementation must be situated in an empirical or ethnographic context.

Rethinking the “Field”

There needs to be rethinking of the “field” as a single and geographically bounded place.

- Today, the field often consists of loosely connected actors located in multiple sites that are not always geographically fixed.
- Policies are no longer formulated primarily by governments—there are supranational entities, businesses, NGOs, and private actors.
- Anthropology offers a social organization approach to illuminate the processes that ground, order, and give direction to policies.
- By linking key players, social network analysis can show how the local or regional level is connected to the national or international.
- Anthropologists “study through” the sources of a policy to those affected by them to show how policy discourses sustain connections between individuals, organizations, and institutions—even if these actors are never in direct contact.

Ethics

Anthropologists have called for a reexamination of the traditional ethic—“The first responsibility is to those whose lives and cultures we study.”

- Janine Wedel asks, “Does an anthropologist have the same responsibility to an agency that employs a public relations staff as it does to a tribe facing extinction?”
- She says that studying powerful institutions and players should bind anthropologists to a code like that of journalists regarding sources.

NOTE: As to sources, the belief is that an environment of distrust results if field notes are not able to be kept confidential so as to avoid their use to investigate or prosecute research subjects or people with whom we work.

Anthropological Analysis

Bringing anthropological analysis to public policy can help counteract three related and dominant trends:

- the tendency to treat “policy” as an unproblematic given, without reference to the sociocultural contexts in which it is embedded and understood;
- the domination of public policy and debate, and even scholarship, by ideologized discourses, such as those of globalization, democratization, and privatization;

- the use of flawed dichotomous frameworks so prevalent in public policy—things like state versus private, macro versus micro, and so on.

NOTE: Anthropological analysis can disentangle the outcomes that are produced and help explain how and why they often contradict the stated intentions of policy makers—it should spur theoretical and methodological development that strengthens both anthropology and the study of policy.

The Current State of Economics: Needs Lots of Work

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Background

We are still far from having a science we can rely on to prevent major malfunctions of the economy or to treat them when they occur. In the current state of the discipline, there is no agreement on policy with regard to such vital issues as unemployment, deficits, taxes, or inflation.

- An economist's political ideology typically determines which side of any controversy over policy he or she takes.
- Without fear of contradiction, at least from the faction to which they belong, some economists purvey far-fetched notions to considerable acclaim.
- Any policy can add to the income of some people and take away from others, so material gain and career advancement come into play in policy controversies.

The weakness in economic science is mainly due to traditional methodologies economists employ, which, unchanged since the eighteenth century, require reform.

Microeconomics: Any science needs to be based on direct observation and data collection by the scientists themselves.
Theorizing without Observing

- But economists have little direct engagement with people, businesses, banks, and markets.
- The material students read in economic textbooks, and almost all of the new theoretical material developed by mainstream professionals, has been composed by economists who simply made it up.
- Economists have deduced how decisions would be made by businesses from a very simple characterization of business situations along with a standard set of assumptions about human rationality and greed.
- Very few attempts are made through firsthand observation to see whether these made-up theories accord with reality—in fact, conclusions made through these deductions often fail to predict correctly.

Macroeconomics: Almost all of the key economic policy issues we face as a society are the province of the macroeconomists—it is macroeconomics that suffers most from the politicization of the theoretical discussion.

Weaknesses

- The weakness of macroeconomics is arguably due in large part to the mode of theorizing. There is no formal, rigorous connection between models of

the macroeconomy and the underlying behavior of individuals, businesses, and markets. Rather, the reasoning is based on verbal assumptions about how one macrovariable (for example, total consumer purchases in the economy) depends on another (for example, total consumer income).

- The data sets on the performance of the macroeconomy contain little information, being heavily trended, and they contain relatively few observations.
- Often, the many available ways that macrodata can be analyzed give quite different results. There is a temptation to choose the way that bears out what the investigator is hoping to prove.

A macroeconomics more rigorously based on the underlying microeconomic behaviors can be achieved through computer simulation.

*A More
Empirical
Economics?*

A small number of economists and psychologists do make direct observations of human behavior, observing choices under uncertainty, or behavior in interactive laboratory experiments. Their work is gaining increasing acceptance.

- In many cases, these researchers are finding that people making choices depart from the rules of behavior that economists had assumed they followed.
- However, the experimentalists and behaviorists have done few direct observations of the people who manage businesses as they actually conduct their operations.

Conclusion

We are only at the start of the research that we need to construct a realistic model of the economy.

- Actual observation has yet to overtake observation-less theorizing as the leading activity of economists. We need an ever-increasing corps of economists willing and able to do the work of observation.
- It will be necessary in the construction of a realistic science describing the functioning of the economy for economists to come out of the laboratory and observe behavior in actual business settings.
- A macroeconomics needs to be constructed based rigorously, through computer simulation, on these observations.

The Return of the Repressed: Recovering the Public Face of U.S. Sociology, One Hundred Years On

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Background

Professional sociology still behaves as though it were in gestation—defensive about its scientific credentials, insistent on separating itself from lay thinking, wary of showing any public face for fear it would be discredited.

- This article aims to show that sociology's recent return to its publics takes place within the framework of an advanced discipline that can only benefit from interaction with the world it studies. Over the past one hundred years, sociology has built the professional infrastructure, knowledge, and experience that now supply the foundations for a mature public sociology.

Q
R
S*Public
Sociology
Today*

- A shift against sociology in recent years has become today both an inspiration for and the greatest obstacle to the new public sociology.

Public sociology today is taking sociology to publics beyond the university, engaging them in dialogue about public issues that have been studied by sociologists.

- Traditional public sociology aims to convey sociology to a wide lay audience in which the sociologist is a catalyst of public debate.
- The organic public sociologist is intimately engaged in the dialogue itself, often articulating and representing issues that publics are already struggling with.
- Public sociology can feed public debate and affect policy changes and so indirectly becomes policy sociology.
- It is difficult to maintain the balance between sociologist and public, which makes the ideal of symmetrical reciprocity all the more important.
- The evolution of sociology has led its dominant institutions to foster a language and practice at odds with public sociology that requires knowledge that is accessible to publics and relevant to public issues.

NOTE: Methodology texts and courses promote the conversion of common sense into sociology and the translation of empirical data into theory rather than suggesting the way sociology can be returned to the publics from which it came and to whom sociologists are ultimately accountable.

- We now need to move from the theories of the impossibility of public sociology toward theories of its possibility.

*Rethinking the
Public Sphere*

What better place to begin than teaching? For traditional public sociology, students are empty vessels to be filled with sociological knowledge, whereas organic public sociology begins with their rich lived experience and helps students locate it in the context of its shaping and unshaping.

- It is much more difficult to reorient publics than students.
- Sociologists must begin to think about constituting themselves as competent collective participants in the broader democratic process.
- With the help of electronic media, the American Sociological Association (ASA) has developed the infrastructure for open discussion through its various committees and sections, which mirror both publics and interests in the wider civil society.

*New Global
Dispensation*

Sociology finds itself upholding civil society and the public sphere against the corrosive effects of market resurgence and state authoritarianism.

- If the standpoint of economics is the market and its value the expansion of commodification, and if the standpoint of political science is the state and its value political stability, then sociology takes up the standpoint of civil society and its value is the social.
- Even though the different social sciences are dominated by different values, nonetheless, the disciplines are also fields of power and contestation, which gives ample scope for alliances and collaborations across disciplinary boundaries.
- The development of public sociology cultivates local, national, and international publics that are an important bulwark to the tyranny of markets and the despotism of states.

Conclusion

Building on a secure foundation of theory, methodology, and research, engaging publics is no longer threatening but invigorating, not discrediting but ennobling, not a choice but a necessity.

- The turn to sociology—and public sociology in particular—is a pent-up response to unfavorable times and a hostile environment.
- The more publics are endangered and the more degraded the very idea of the public becomes, the more challenged and yet the more urgent the task of public sociology.

Nature *and* Nurture: Genetic and Environmental Influences on Behavior

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Background

Both genetics and environment, and the interplay between them, contribute to the development of individual differences in behaviors including mental health and cognition.

- A flood of molecular genetic research seeks to identify the specific DNA sequences responsible for genetic influence on common behavioral disorders.
- An important implication is that we can develop a genetic risk index.
- Genetic research has shown heritable influence in such areas as mental illness, personality, cognitive abilities, and disabilities and drug use.

NOTE: The influence of genetic factors is substantial. The research has led to a growing acceptance of roles for both genes and the environment in differences in behavior.

Findings

Two of the most important findings from genetic research involve nurture rather than nature. These are as follows:

- Nonshared environment—the environments that affect behavioral development work by making children in the same family different.
 - The most effective environmental influences are those that operate to make children in the same family different.
 - These differences are called *nonshared* because they are not shared by children in the same family.
 - It may be that experiences outside the family might be richer sources of nonshared environment.
 - Chance may also be a factor.
- The nature of nurture—when measures of behaviorally relevant environments such as parenting, stress, or social support are treated as independent measures, they show substantial genetic influence.
 - A far-reaching implication of research is the recognition that we play an active role in selecting, modifying, constructing, and reconstructing in memory, our own experiences.
 - There is also the factor of differential exposure to experiences.

NOTE: More discoveries are coming as the environment is investigated in the context of genetically sensitive design.

Two Other Findings

Two other examples of going beyond heritability estimates are as follows:

- Developmental change and continuity—genetic effects at one age differ from genetic effects at another age.

*DNA
Research*

- Multivariate heterogeneity and comorbidity—this is the estimate of the extent to which genetic factors that affect one trait also affect another trait.

The future of genetic research on behavior lies in studies that will eventually identify specific DNA variants responsible for the widespread influence of genes in behavioral development.

- Most DNA variants have already been identified.
- The DNA revolution also provides tools to identify genes responsible for the heritability of common behavioral disorders and dimensions.

NOTE: The most far-reaching ramifications for behavioral research will come after behavioral genes are identified. This research will have a major impact on practice in our schools, courts, and hospitals.

Behavioral science will be central to the new era of genetic research, called the postgenomic era, in which the focus will shift from finding genes to understanding how these genes work.

- Behavioral genomic research is likely to pay off more quickly in prediction, diagnosis, and intervention.
- It will likely pay off eventually for behavioral preventions that use genes as early warning systems.

Conclusion

New findings raise new problems for medicine, parenting, education, employment, law, and insurance, as well as larger philosophical issues such as human dignity, free will, and moral responsibility.

- We must monitor and regulate DNA tests and interventions and possibilities that could lead to even greater inequalities in society.
- The democratic mantra that “all people are created equal” does not imply that all people are identical; people should have legal equality despite their individual differences.
- Decisions, both good and bad, can be made with or without knowledge, but we believe firmly that better decisions can be made with knowledge than without. Recognition of, and respect for, individual differences is essential to the ethic of individual worth.

The Uses and Usefulness of Psychology

Mitchell G. Ash, University of Vienna

Background

Psychology occupies a peculiar place among the sciences, suspended between methodological orientations derived from the physical and biological sciences and a subject matter that extends into the social and human sciences.

*Nineteenth-Century
History*

At the end of the nineteenth century, certain features of the “new” psychology can be identified, all of them part of the field’s self-conscious identification with natural science:

- use of instruments to establish scientific standing;
- use of physiological analogies, often based on mechanical physics and technology;
- a studied vagueness about the mind/body relationship;
- the use of the term *experimental* itself;

- a tendency to restrict its subject matter to topics that could be addressed by the natural scientific methods and apparatus then available; and
- a gendered dimension—the generalized “normal” adult mind was at least implicitly the common property of both sexes, while the vocabulary and practices carried unmistakably masculine symbolism.

Twentieth-Century History

- Psychology in the twentieth century went through the following progression:
- In the early 1900s, we see competing schools of psychology such as that of Gestalt psychology and behaviorism.
 - During the early part of the century, the turning point for the public visibility of professional psychology came with the mass use of intelligence tests by the U.S. Army during WWI.
 - In the 1930s, psychology was dominated by competing versions of what came to be known as neobehaviorism, which were also alternative approaches toward reintroducing theorizing into psychology.
 - In the United States, the 1940s postwar years saw explosive expansion and differentiation in both the scientific and professional realms.
 - In experimental psychology, neobehaviorist learning theory challenged a revival of cognition research.
 - Common to both, however, was an emphasis on standardizing experimentation and using statistical significance testing to evaluate results.
 - By the 1970s, both the sheer number of psychologists and the international representation of psychology had reached levels not imaginable fifty years earlier.
 - In the 1980s, psychology had become deeply dependent economically, institutionally, and culturally on American research styles and professional practices.

Conclusion

- It might well be asked why such a shakily legitimated field has acquired such an important role in twentieth-century culture and society.
- Precisely because it is so diffuse and widespread, psychological knowledge shapes the practices of welfare states and justifies them with a rationale according to which individuals are required to be free and feel obligated to correct defects if they fail to cope on their own.
 - Psychology’s alleged objects—mind, behavior, and personality—are not simply invariant fixtures of the species, but may have cultural as well as natural histories.

The Use and Usefulness of Criminology, 1751-2005: Enlightened Justice and Its Failures

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Introduction

- The decision to cast social science primarily in the role of critic, rather than inventor, has had lasting consequences, especially for the credibility of the conclusions of social scientists.
- Theories may be practical, but it is hard to visibly, or convincingly, show the benefits of social analysis for the reduction of human misery.

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S*Analytic versus
Experimental*

- The absence of “show-and-tell” benefits of analytic social science blurred its boundaries with ideology, philosophy, and even emotion.
- This problem has plagued analytic social science.

The history of criminology provides an experimental test of the hypothesis about analytic versus experimental social science.

- Social science has been most useful, and most used, when it has been experimental, with visibly demonstrable benefits from new inventions.
- It has been experiments in every age that made criminology most used and most useful.

*Henry Fielding**Early Social Science in the 1700s*

The first social scientist of crime to publish was Henry Fielding (1707-1754).

- His treatise on crime and punishment is a remarkable analysis of what would today be called the “environmental criminology” of robbery.
- He saw prevention without punishment as the best policy approach.
- Fielding documented the failures of punishment in three ways:
 - Voluntary policing by each citizen had become useless.
 - Requiring crime victims to prosecute their own cases (or hire a lawyer at their own expense) was failing to bring many identified offenders to justice.
 - Witnesses were intimidated and unwilling to provide evidence.
- He implied the need for a modern system in which the state pays for police to investigate and catch criminals, for the use of prosecutors, and even support for witnesses and victims.
 - The birth of the Bow Street Runners (a police force he created) was a turning point in the English paradigm of justice.
 - Relying on overly severe punishment (shoplifting punishable by death) had failed.
- Fielding was the first to conduct an experiment in policing.

*Cesare
Beccaria*

Cesare Beccaria took aim at a wave of torture and execution in European justice of the mid-1700s.

- He urged abolition of torture, the death penalty, and secret trials.
- Within two centuries, almost all of Europe had adopted his proposals in spite of his not having a shred of evidence in support of his theories.

*Jeremy
Bentham*

Jeremy Bentham devoted twelve years to an experiment in prison administration.

- He proposed punishment by incarceration rather than hanging.
- He was an experimentalist on the grounds that he spent much of his life on “trying” as well as thinking.
- Even though he never got to build his prison, similar prisons were built in the United States and elsewhere—the prison design can be classified as a form of invention, and experimental criminology can be seen as distinct from an analytical social science approach.

*Experiments in
Criminology**Social Science in the 1800 and Early 1900s*

From the Napoleonic Wars to the Korean War, criminology had little utility for society. Three major exceptions, experimentalist in nature, were as follows:

- the Marburg Programme—focused on the “special prevention” of future crime by convicted offenders—an attempt to reform each offender rather than seeking retribution or general deterrence.

- Chicago Area Project—community development strategy for developing indigenous leadership in socially disorganized communities.
 - The focus was on crime prevention—it is the oldest continuous community-based crime prevention program in the United States.
- Cambridge-Somerville experiment—a program of support for high-risk young males that eventually showed (surprisingly) that the boys would have been better off without the intervention.

The Renaissance: 1950-1982

*Experiments
in Juvenile
Delinquency*

The growing concern about juvenile delinquency in the 1950s prompted increasing federal funds for research. Many of these studies adopted experimental designs. Some of these studies were as follows:

- Provo, Utah, and Silverlake, California—these experiments compared incarceration to community-based treatment programs.
- California Youth Authority—these tested alternatives to traditional reform schools.
- Vera Institute of Justice—an experiment in bail reform.

Diversion

Many organizations in the United States and abroad were testing diversion from prosecution altogether.

- There was substantial evidence that diversion often does no worse than prosecution in repeat-offending outcomes.
- The increasing differentiation of program outcomes by offender profiles may eventually provide a better evidence base for achieving more effective crime prevention.

*Police
Foundation*

The Ford Foundation created the Police Foundation in Washington, D.C., in 1970 to foster innovation and improvement in American policing.

- It focused on conducting experiments in policing—many of which reshaped police practices and culture.
- PERF, a spin-off of the Police Foundation, conducted many research experiments and brought research discussions to big city police chiefs.
 - It set a model for the federal government, which embraced experimental criminology in the 1980s.

*Martinson
et al.*

The comprehensive review of rehabilitation strategies initially focused on the validity of research designs in experiments within prisons.

- The weak designs led the authors to say “we don’t know” what works.
- Eventually, an incorrect summary of the study said there is no evidence that criminals can be rehabilitated—this may have led to a three-decade increase in incarcerations.

*James
Stewart*

Warp Speed: 1982-2005

In 1982, James Stewart, director of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), decided that NIJ needed to invest more of its budget in experimental criminology.

- He cancelled existing plans for many grants for analytic criminology.
- The funded work included experiments in policing, probation, drug market disruption, drunk-driving sentences, and much more.

*Anthony
Bouza*

In Minneapolis, Chief Anthony Bouza was behind the first experiment ever in the random assignment of extra police to some street corners and not others based upon criminal activity rates.

Q
R
S*RAND Study*

The RAND Corporation conducted a controlled experiment in 1996 in monitoring repeat offenders.

- These experiments addressed intense debates in their respective field, providing the first unbiased empirical guidance to inform the debates.
- The hope is these experiments will have an effect on policy, but so far evidence is not sufficient to change policy in any context.

Additional Experiments

Since the 1980s, we have seen additional experiments concerning

- school-based prevention,
- drug courts effects on recidivism,
- boot camp effectiveness on at-risk youth, and
- nurse home visits to at-risk first mothers to show long-term crime prevention linked to lower child abuse and better anger management.

Academy of Experimental Criminology

The critical mass of activity in experimental criminology made possible the founding of the Academy of Experimental Criminology (AEC) in 1999.

- In 2004, the AEC sponsored the *Journal of Experimental Criminology*.
- Despite indications of a drop in funding by NIJ, the growth of this branch of science continues apace—there is also a resurgence in the United Kingdom.

Criminology—Analytic, Useful, and Used

There is a long way to go before criminology becomes an important part of the policy-making process.

- There is little indication that decisions are guided by criminological evidence.
- Research results may be useful, but there is no surety they will be used.
- Good evidence alone is not enough to change policy in any context. Yet absent good evidence, there is a far greater danger that bad policies will win out.
- Experiments can be misused if they are not designed or executed well.
- There is an intrinsic practical appeal of experimental criminology over analytic; the former may always offer more focus on variables that practitioners can change.
- There is no likelihood that analytic criminology will be abandoned.
 - The strength of experimental criminology may depend on the advancement of basic (analytic) criminology.
 - The full partnership between the two has yet to be realized.
 - Analytic still dominates field experiments by 100 to 1 or better.

NOTE: The future success of the field may depend upon a growing public image based on experimental results.

Conclusion

Science in general has often given far greater rewards to analytic work than to experimental.

- Experimental research requires scientists doing research to be away from their desks most of the day—analytic scientists may have the time to write more and hold more of their peers' attention.
- Experimental research has more to “show” policy makers, which makes it more valuable for the external image of criminology.
- A challenge now is embedding an experimental design into every long-term analytic study—the era of purely observational criminology should come to an end.

International Relations as a Social Science: Rigor and Relevance

Jeffrey A. Frieden, Harvard University;
and David A. Lake, University of California, San Diego

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- Background* Progress in the study of international politics depends on rigorous theory and systematic empirical testing.
- The route to relevance requires good theory and well-designed tests.
 - International relations is most useful when its practitioners can identify with some confidence the causal forces that drive foreign policy and international interactions.
 - The test of relevance is what the discipline provides in the way of approaches, theories, and analytical tools that can explain why events happen and what can be done to alter the course of future events.
 - Theory is not a substitute for policy expertise, problem-solving abilities, or political experience, but explicit attention to theoretical and empirical rigor provides a degree of generality and clarity that might not be obvious to even experienced policy makers.
 - Theory can discipline the thinking of policy makers so that sloppy or wishful thinking does not lead them astray.
- Examples* The authors provide three examples of research in international relations that use rigorous theoretical or empirical methods.
- Deterrence theory—how to prevent attacks on the United States and set nuclear strategy.
 - The democratic peace—democracies tend not to go to war with one another, underpinning new efforts at worldwide democracy promotion.
 - The political economy of trade—trade policy is largely the result of political influence of powerful groups and the impact of interstate bargaining and international institutions.
- New Frontiers* In the past decade, two new approaches have emerged that unite the subfields of international conflict studies and international political economy, respectively.
- The bargaining theory of war—explains violence as the product of private information with incentives to misrepresent and problems of credible commitment.
 - War is understood as a bargaining failure that leaves both sides worse off than if they had been able to negotiate a solution.
 - This theory has revolutionized international relations, providing a new and sound foundation for understanding the causes of large-scale conflict.

Q
R
S*Conclusions*

- Open Economy Politics (OEP)—attempts to analyze economic policy making with explicit attention to the international context.
 - The fundamental building blocks of OEP are interests, how individuals or groups are affected by particular policies.
 - Interests are mediated and transformed into policy through political institutions.
 - The final step in the OEP approach is to study how national states interact to determine the joint outcome of their actions.

A science of international relations is emerging that shares a set of core assumptions, agrees on the puzzles that good theories should be able to explain, and concurs on the anomalies that cannot yet be explained.

- International relations will eventually be most useful to policy makers by producing scientific discoveries that withstand rigorous theoretical and empirical scrutiny.