NEGOTIATING TEMPORARY SETTLEMENTS:
AN ARCHAEOLOGY AND GENEALOGY OF
POLICY PRODUCTION IN AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper identifies a number of strategies employed by policy actors in the production of Australian higher education entry policy during the (Dawkins/Labor) period from 1987 to 1996. It begins from the premise that while policy is often intended to be read as if spoken with a single voice, suggesting rational debate and (then) consensus amongst policy producers, it is more cogently understood as the product of struggle and conflict. Informed by twenty-seven semi-structured interviews with politicians, political advisers, bureaucrats, academics, institutional administrators and independent authorities, the paper addresses the temporary settling of these actors' struggles and conflicts in contexts of policy making through strategies of negotiation: including, trading, bargaining, arguing, stalling, manoeuvring and lobbying. Rather than providing a sequential account of higher education policy that weaves its way through these negotiations, as grand narrative, the paper is more sporadic in its representations of strategies, identifying them in 'local' and specific knowledges and practices. Drawing on Foucault, what emerges is both an archaeology and genealogy of policy production.
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Introduction

I appreciate definitions of policy as the 'authoritative allocation of values' (Easton 1953; Anderson 1979), not least because they draw attention to the who and the how of policy production. Prunty has argued similarly, that:

The authoritative allocation of values draws our attention to the centrality of power and control in the concept of policy, and requires us to consider not only whose values are represented in policy, but also how these values have become institutionalised. (1985: 136, emphasis added)

For me, such considerations are important because they expose the partiality (and, hence, fallacy) of rationality and consensus in policy production, or at least make room for such disclosure. In my view, traditional representations of the democratic process, in which policy is produced through mutual agreement while authority to produce it is invested in elected representatives (often supported by technical expertise) --- consigning all else and others to the domains of implementation and consumption --- are both theoretically naive and politically abhorrent. In redressing the latter, drawing attention to the who of policy production enables the naming of values inherent in things that are seemingly technical (such as policy) and the foregrounding of radical democracy (Lummis 1996) as a legitimate basis for policy's authority. Whereas, drawing attention to the how of policy production challenges not just the premise of rationality in policy making but also how particular individuals and groups are involved in various contexts as policymakers. In brief the who and how of policy production are dialectically related. They are, as Bourdieu might describe them, much like field positions and stances: 'two translations of the same sentence' (Spinoza in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 105).

These are the issues I seek to explore in this paper: relations between the who and how of policy production and how these are connected to particular contexts of policy-making. They represent what Foucault might term 'the conditions of their realization' (Foucault 1972: 207) and are matters that I have characterised elsewhere (Gale 1999a) as the interests of critical policy historiography, specifically policy archaeology and policy genealogy. Regarding the first:

critical policy archaeology asks: (1) why are some items on the policy agenda (and not others)?; (2) why are some policy actors involved in the production of policy (and not others)? and (3) what are the conditions that regulate the patterns of interaction of those involved? (Gale 1999a: 13)

Whereas:

Policy genealogy ... is not convinced by analyses of policy production explained by 'bounded rationality' (Simon 1960) or 'incrementalism' achieved through 'partisan mutual adjustment' (Lindblom 1959). Certainly, it asks (1) how policies change over time, but it also seeks to determine (2) how the rationality and consensus of policy production might be problematised and (3) how temporary alliances are formed and reformed around conflicting interests in the policy production process. (Gale 1999a: 15)
These interests, particularly (2) and (3) of both policy archaeology and genealogy, involve discerning the nature of 'social actors’ engagement with policy' (Gale 1999a: 9) and, in this paper, are explored through analysing the production of Australian higher education entry policy during the (Dawkins/Labor) period from 1987 to 1996 (Gale 1997; 1999b). In particular, data is drawn from twenty-seven semi-structured, in-depth interviews with policy actors located at various levels of the Australian state: politicians and political advisers (PPA), bureaucrats and policy advisers (BPA), 'cowboys' and independent authorities (CIA), and academics and university administrators (AUA).

The paper begins by considering the political nature of 'policy speak', although this is also argued in relation to theoretical issues. It includes an account of the relations between policy makers and contexts of policy making or which policy actors tend to dominate particular stages of the policy process. The second section of the paper examines more empirically who has permission to speak policy and is interested in uncovering how the boundaries of 'who', 'where' and 'what goes on' are contested and, therefore, how particular production processes represent temporary settlements (Gale 1999c) of policy vocalities. In exploring the 'how' of policy production, the third section of the paper extends the analysis of 'what goes on' to consider the strategies policy actors utilise from particular positions within particular contexts to produce particular policies. That is, the interest is in the work of production: what policy actors do more than what they produce, although these are not unrelated. Focused on one particular context of policy making, the contention is that what can be done by policy makers is related to where they are positioned within that context; that is, how they are related to other actors and contexts. Throughout the paper, I am guided by what Troyna sees as the central questions in any critical analysis: specifically, to determine 'what is really going on?' and 'how come?' (Troyna 1994: 72-73).

Policy speak: should politics be part of the vocabulary?

Traditionally, permission to speak policy has been vested in the state. In the academic literature, for example, definitions of policy often carry references to the state or to government as a way of framing what is legitimate policy and what is not, or what is not of particular significance. This literature also refers to distinctions such as 'public' policy and 'education' policy --- references one could imagine as framed respectively by the 'context of outcomes' and the 'context of political strategy' (Ball 1994) --- as ways of demarcating policy from other socio-political activities and actors. Many of these definitions are informed by 'executive' models of policy production, whereas others adopt a 'partnership' model (Yeatman 1998) and, hence, different conceptions of the nature of the state and how this defines the positioning of policy actors. Some extend this examination to questioning the legitimacy and adequacy of the state itself in producing policy in postmodern societies (see Dale 1992; Hoffman 1995). Others note that the rhetoric of withering nation states and policy relevance under the influence of market globalisation is not simply matched by empirical evidence (Keating & Davis, 2000).

Such distinctions are informed by matters of 'policy speak'. Even though 'policy' and 'politics' are derived from the same root word (from the ancient Greek city-state of polis) and are indistinguishable in many European languages (politik in German; politeque in French, etc), some still view policy as 'concerned with outcomes, whereas politics is concerned with process - and in particular, with the participants' position in the game' (Colebatch 1998: 73). Drawing on Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), I return below to such talk of positions and games but in a way that gives recognition to the politics of the policy process. That is, rather than viewing policy as static, the understanding here is that it invites its own distinctive type of politics that is 'internal to the policy process and is shaped by it' (Yeatman 1998: 22). In particular, it is a politics that speaks of a desired future: 'policy occurs when social actors
think about what they are doing and why in relation to different and alternative possible futures' (Yeatman 1998: 19, emphasis added).

Such discussions are about the political and theoretical boundaries we draw around policy, including those who participate in its production (and those who do not) and under what conditions. The theoretical boundaries between those who produce and those who implement policy have undergone considerable debate in the policy literature (see, for example, Wilenski 1986) and are now well and truly dismissed as ill informed. Roger Dale, for example, has noted that:

Severing implementation from formulation of policy involves not only a distortion but a serious misunderstanding of the role of the State in education policy. It is a misunderstanding connected to the view that the State involvement in education implies ownership, control and operation of education systems, with a functional division of labour between formulation and implementation of policy. (1992: 393)

But the distinction lives on in the minds of many and in hegemonic ways that serve to privilege some policy actors and their activities in particular contexts at the expense of others. In short, advocating such separations on theoretical grounds amounts to political strategy. Yeatman, for example, notes that to define policy:

as technical in character ... [is to privilege] the advice of experts not the participation of citizens. This is the function of the recent take-over of the policy agenda by libertarian neo-classical economics where the most important policy issues are represented as economic ones. This particular brand of economics is especially salient because it not only privileges the private power of business corporations who command enormous political influence but it seems to speak on behalf of the freedom of choice of the ordinary person. (1998: 25, emphasis in original)

What is clearly evident here is the political nature of the policy process or, more accurately, the political nature of attempts to deny the legitimacy of the policy process. In a political sense, 'for the conception of policy as a policy process to be possible, the work of state administration has to be conceived democratically' (Yeatman 1998: 17). Here Yeatman intentionally confuses politics and theory; a strategy she extends to conceptions of policy activism:

I am offering a normative definition of policy activist ... as anyone who champions in relatively consistent ways a value orientation and pragmatic commitment to what I have called the policy process, namely a conception of policy which opens it up to the appropriate participation of all those who are involved in policy all the way through points of conception, operational formulation, implementation, delivery on the ground, consumption and evaluation. (Yeatman 1998: 34, emphasis in original)

I appreciate the politics here but would want to theorise policy activism as also including the activities of those with commitments to less participatory interests, as their commitments concern others' participation. However, I acknowledge the theoretical intent of aspects of Yeatman's account, particularly the challenge to Heclo's original conception of policy activism, as restricted to policy advisers, through its broadening to include activists at all stages of the policy process.
We might imagine, then, a pairing, as illustrated in Table 1, where particular policy actors dominate particular policy contexts. What is envisaged are ‘key mediators of policy in any setting who are relied upon by others to relate policy to context or to gatekeep’ (Ball 1994: 17). In other words, ‘only certain voices are heard at any point in time’ (Ball 1994: 16). What is not meant is a strict separation between contexts and their productive activities (see Gale 1999c) nor a linear representation of the policy process despite Yeatman’s listing of stages. As particular policy actors tend to dominate particular contexts, so are they dominated by particular activities, but not exclusively so. Policy actors and their activities cannot be pinned down but rather are temporarily settled in particular contexts. Similarly, contexts are not defined simply by their material properties but can be conceived as ‘different descriptions of the same social reality’ (Gale 1999c: 404).

Another way of explaining these relations between policy contexts, actors and their activities is in terms of Bourdieu’s notions of capital and field (see, for example, Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 98-99). In such terms, determining the limits of a policy field/context is one and the same thing as determining the capital valued within that field/context. In other words, at any one point in time certain cultural, social, economic and symbolic resources (capitals) tend to dominate any one policy context. Hence, as illustrated in Table 1, the resources seen to be required to formulate policy are privileged in contexts of policy text production. Further, it is not just the volume but also the structure of one’s capital that determines a policy actor’s positioning (his/her relative force in producing policy) and his/her strategic orientation within particular policy contexts. Hence, bureaucrats and public officials, for example, might be better positioned to produce policy and, therefore, dominate contexts of policy text production because they possess more of the relevant capitals that the context values. Bourdieu’s analogy of a game to explain the interactions of and more fluid relations between (policy) actors within (policy) fields is instructive here. In negotiating the policy process or ‘game’, policy actors or:

players can play to increase or to conserve their capital [and, hence, their positioning in a particular policy context] ... in conformity with the tacit rules of the game and the prerequisites of the reproduction of the game and its stakes; but they can also get in it to transform, partially or completely, the immanent rules of the game. They can, for instance, work to change ... the exchange rate between various species of capital, through strategies aimed at discrediting the form of capital which the force of the opponents rests ... and to valorize the species of capital they preferentially possess. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 99)

Permission to speak policy: the who of policy production

These are issues well illustrated in the production of Australian higher education policy during the period from 1987 to 1996. The players in this policy ‘game’ are those I have described above and elsewhere (Gale 1997) as politicians and political advisers, bureaucrats and policy advisers, ‘cowboys’ and independent authorities, and academics and university administrators. Whereas, the rules of this policy game can be found in the withdrawing and redrawing of commitments, conditions of eligibility and manageability, and the sites of engagement with policy matters. These are discussed in turn.

Withdrawing and redrawing commitments

Changes in government are telling moments for policy actors. They can result in the repositioning of policy actors within policy contexts; a reduction in their status and/or
legitimacy as policy producers and sometimes their exclusion from policy making contexts altogether. The following extracts illustrate something of the effects a newly elected government had on one set of policy actors identified with a particular Independent Authority (IA1) with considerable investments in issues of Australian higher education entry. As the new Minister of Education described it:

I had the boffins in [IA1] still telling me, 'look, the TE [Tertiary Entrance] score system's terrific. It really is the fairest thing.' I mean they were just totally convinced. They didn't want to change it, and they could sit down and draw up the graphs and the computer models all they liked, I told them, 'but', I said, 'out there, you've lost the battle. Whether it is the fairest system in the world or way up there with the best, it doesn't matter. You've lost. The war's over. People don't think it is'. (PPA1)

What is championed here by the Minister is the need to take account of politics within the policy process; an account that these policy actors where unwilling or unable to accept and which formed the rationale for withdrawing IA1’s authority as the dominant policy maker and repositioning it as subservient to a second and new Independent Authority (IA2). The Minister's political adviser noted at the time that the intention was to create:

a more community orientation than [evident within IA1], and it has to [be community orientated] because it's a forum which has representatives from all different groups ... That's not a criticism of [IA1]. It is a technical organisation ... [That's] one of the reasons why [IA2] there ... to expose them and the other players to 'Well, hang on, what other views have the other groups?' (PPA3)

There is a certain politics in claiming technical expertise and:

it's quite easy for these authorities [such as IA1] to become branded as cowboys, and they are viewed typically as cowboys because they're not bound by the same level of accountability to the political process or the financial processes ... Statutory authorities ... are not obliged to account financially in the same way, and the political process is not as hard on them because they can always say, 'Well, we're an independent authority'. (BPA4)

But the effect of creating IA2 was to insert new interests into the policy making context and to rework the regard for existing interests, diminishing previous levels of autonomy. It is as Bourdieu describes: the policy field was (re)defined by the capital it valued. As illustrated in this example, such reconstruction:

put TAFE [Technical and Further Education] in there which changes the balance, they put the Department [of Education] in there as well, and the interest groups in the outer ring have changed that balance ... the broader redistribution of power will follow from that. I think that it will be the case that [IA1’s] powers have been diminished by this ... [whereas] the universities have not been losers ... they have retrieved their position. (AUA6)

And, as Colebatch notes, 'in this context, the question is not simply, "Who needs to be included?", but also, "Who must not be left out?"' - ie. whose exclusion would frustrate the policy or simply make it pointless'
Conditions of eligibility

A further condition that determines policy actors' access to contexts of policy making is related to the particular structure of their capitals (the resources they draw on to produce policy) and how these are valued within the field. That is, the reconstruction of the policy context described above privileged different kinds of policy makers and capitals. In this particular context:

AUA6 was chosen because she's an expert at policy making, not because she knew anything about this particular [issue] ... She's a very bright, able policy analyst. That's her background. And that's what they wanted. They didn't want any educational person ... That was the rationale behind choosing AUA8 [as Chair of the Reference Committee] ... and AUA6 [as the Reviewer] ... that they're both policy people. (AUA1)

Such positioning of 'education people' is not uncommon in contemporary contexts of education policy making, where their vocality within the field of education is seen as indicative of an inappropriate emphases in the structuring of the capital that is required to produce education policy or at least to drive its production. In short, the strategy is to discredit the form of capital education people possess. Hence:

the people you negotiated with in [Australian] higher education were almost never the educators. They weren't from the Faculties of Education. The people who set the pace and had the views came from Engineering, or Medicine, or Physics. (CIA6)

Emphasised here is the productive work within policy making contexts and their associated capitals more than the content that might inform a policy text. This is the critique above of education policy that stresses education (expertise) rather than policy (expertise). Hence, in allocating permission to speak policy and to manage its production:

it's the capacity of people that's important more than their so called expertise in a particular area. That doesn't mean you pull people off the cane harvester and get them to do [a review of] tertiary education, but if they're broadly educated and well known in educational areas, it's much more important to pick a person with that strength of character and background which shows they can do things, rather than saying, 'well, let's find the person who is the expert in that area'. (PPA1)

In this account, policy 'problems' are no longer dominated by the expert knowledge of specialist content areas but by policy expertise; that is, the politics of the policy process. This is what is valorized, as Bourdieu would say. Eligible policy actors, therefore, are those who possess a particular kind of political expertise, which necessarily has implications regarding the allocation of values.

Conditions of manageability

A second set of conditions regulating how policy actors are positioned within policy making contexts more explicitly involve the structural relations established amongst policy actors. In producing Australian higher education entry policy, these structures were informed by certain time constraints that were mediated by a desire to incorporate a more participatory politics (noted above). Although, given the particular interests and historical dominance of some policy actors in this context, politicians and political advisers regarded the latter as
subservient to the former. Hence, a particular kind of structuring of the policy context was required:

The idea of a single reviewer had been something which the British Civil Service had adopted some years ago - I think out of something called the Rayner Review Process. Derek Rayner was Chief Executive of Marks and Spencer, I suppose one of the early quality managers ... [He] came up with the idea of a single reviewer with a reference committee ... in the belief that a single reviewer had a better chance of doing the job than a committee. (AUA4)

Here, again, is the imperative of 'doing the job', getting it done, a focus on the political work of producing policy. And, according to the Minister who appointed this 'single reviewer' (AUA6) and charged her with the responsibility of producing the policy text, this particular structuring of the policy context:

was one of her ideas. It was a very good idea - a consultative committee ... with the players in the field having a real chance to influence her ... They'd be on this committee that worked one down from her, but it would be her report. Not their report. And they had a chance to help and not to dominate. (PPA1)

A particular outcome was envisaged by these arrangements, one informed by 'the context of outcomes' (Ball 1994). That is, strongly influencing this particular context of policy text production was how current Australian higher education entry arrangements were perceived by the public and, more specifically, the immediate users of the Tertiary Entrance score that current policy settings delivered. The rationale, or fear, that informed this restructuring, then, was that:

if you had a committee design it, you'd have different people doing different things all over the place. And you might not have ultimately a situation that everyone's happy with. But if you have a Reviewer, one person with the responsibility to produce a report to the government, who can use the views of experts and others in the field to bounce ideas off, but then, that person's held responsible for providing a report to the government, you've got a much better chance of an outcome, and it was an outcome that we really wanted. (PPA3)

Illustrated here is that 'coherence is not so much one of the attributes of policy as one of the central problems: how to get all the different elements to focus on the same question in the same way' (Colebatch 1998, pp. 3-4). Inevitably, this is a political issue.

Sites of engagement

A final area concerns the sites in which the politics of policy making are engaged. Certainly, formal meetings featured in the research reported here but what should be noted is how the dominant policy maker in this context explicitly connected these formal meetings with other less formal sites of policy production and, therefore, drew them into the control features of the process. As she explains:

We would send the drafts out on a Monday by fax to everybody and then they [would] have a meeting the next Monday with their interest groups. They all had this very sophisticated networking processes of all these interest groups. And they would fax back the groups' comments. And then they would come to the [Reference Committee] meeting to reinforce it and then we'd go through
the next stage. So we'd draft it. We'd draft it in committee, in those kinds of ways. (AUA6)

Indeed, several policy actors used and even created informal sites of policy production with some effect. For example:

Queensland turned on some real power ... it appears as if the Premier's Office itself insinuated itself strongly into the game, opened channels of communication directly through to the Prime Minister's Office, and so the two education bureaucracies - the [Queensland] State one of higher education [and] the Commonwealth [division of] higher education - were playing to a context created by Premier to Prime Minister Office contacts. (BPA2)

But while politicians and political advisers were very aware of the need to engage with the policy process in less formal contexts, others were not. It was as if some of these policy actors (eg those associated with IA1) held to a theoretically naive executive model of policy production that could not or would not entertain the possibility of influencing policy text production within sites other than those officially designated. Hence, the need to engage with the media's criticism of current policy settings, for example, was not fully appreciated. Yet:

That's the reality we face. This is not the 1950s. This is an example of the [IA1's] failure to engage publicly. I mean given that reality, they should have got stuck into that, and they're the only ones who could demystify it, who could make it understandable, who could give out the comfort messages that we needed, and they tried once or twice and then gave up, and blamed the Courier Mail. And the Courier Mail was just outrageous, but no worse than the Sydney Morning Herald when they first put league-tables in or anybody else. And it was - it's a failure to understand modern policy making which is a public phenomenon, and if you haven't got the skills or the drive to engage publicly, you lose. And the [IA1] could have done that better. (CIA4)

Playing with the hand you've been dealt: the how of policy production

Focusing on the 'how' of policy production provides another translation of this 'same sentence' (Spinoza in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 105): a reading of policy makers' 'strategic orientation toward the game' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 99) or what Lyotard describes as a "move" in a game (1984: 10). More strongly, in producing Australian higher education policy, 'determining the "who" of policy production [their objective positioning] necessarily influenced aspects of their interaction' (Gale 1999a: 13). This research disclosed six strategies in the negotiation of Australian higher education policy developed from the data: strategies of trading, bargaining, arguing, stalling, manoeuvring, and lobbying. While their separations imply a certain discreteness, they are more cogently understood as interrelated. For instance, a certain amount of stalling can be exercised in the process of bargaining, lobbying can involve a degree of trading and argument, while a strategic manoeuvre might involve several strategies of negotiation. Each of these strategies is illustrated in turn.

Trading: negotiating the exchange of interests

In the process of producing policy text for Australian higher education:
[AUA6] would come to the Reference Committee and she would listen to them and then she would say, 'No, I don't like that, I won't do that' ... [but] she's a very good operator, because at the same time, when she is strong and makes her position, she'll tend to give a bit of ground somewhere else. So, she doesn't alienate people, or there's a minimum of that. (CIA7)

Interestingly, however, trading was not a strategy frequently engaged by policy makers in this policy context and was almost exclusively confined to politicians and their political advisers in other contexts of influence (Bowe et al. 1992) or what Bourdieu refers to as broader fields of power.

**Bargaining: negotiating the moderation of interests**

In contexts of policy text production, policy makers were more frequently and discursively engaged in the to-ing and fro-ing (as in the Latin: *discurrere*) of interests or what might more accurately be described as their moderation. Evidence of this can be seen in the bargaining over targets for new entrants into higher education. For example, some policy actors:

went out publicly and got the school leaver targets back because the [Federal] Government was getting hit over the head with the huge retention increases to Year 12 - social pressure from parents and kids - and the universities themselves had argued with the Government that they needed to expand the sector in order to accommodate the Year 12 increases. So we thought at least on that we could hold them, so we included these school leaver targets. Then they came back to [us to] say by using them we were denying mature age access. (BPA1)

**Arguing: negotiating the persuasion of interests**

Similarly, there was struggle and conflict over more technical matters in which rational argument was used effectively by policy actors as a political strategy to persuade others of the legitimacy of their interests. The politics of these exchanges should not be underestimated:

We had a lot of big fights about important things ... I tried very hard to talk them into one form of scaling - I tried really hard - and if you read [AUA2's] argument (the first appendix) you can see why I couldn't and anyone who wants to get rid of one form of scaling, has to answer [AUA2's] argument. And that's why it's there as the first appendix [in the policy document]. (AUA6)

**Stalling: delaying the negotiation of interests**

But policy actors did not always find it as easy to convince others purely on the basis of argument, particularly when the power relations were not balanced in their favour and when there was little appreciation of the politics involved. As one of these policy actors revealed:

one of the sources of greatest frustration for me and for [IA1] through the early 80s was the fact that we could never ever get any dialogue with the Federal government. It was a stone wall ... I went to Canberra on a number of occasions and interviewed numbers of different people ... They'd always be interviewed off the record, particularly if they were senior public servants. Never on the record ... We believed that Queensland was being given a raw deal in terms of allocation of places and funds and all the rest of it. (CIA7)
**Manoeuvring: negotiating the circumvention of interests**

When 'the shoe is on the other foot', differently positioned policy actors are able to manoeuvre their way around obstacles to the policy process. In the following example, the need to appease political interests and at the same time address compelling argument produced a political solution to the policy process that enabled the circumvention of such argument. As it unfolded:

one group who'll be pushing it [a national system of university entry] is the Commonwealth, again because it'll get them off this policy hook about shifting load [to redress the imbalance of student places allocated to universities in different Australian States]. If they can say, 'Well, anyone can apply anywhere and go anywhere easily and there are no formal barriers to that', then that gets them a bit off that policy hook that they really need to put political pressure on Victoria to get rid of places. So they'll be supporting it. But the other bunch that are supporting it - this is what makes me really cross - is the bloody Directors of Admission Centres because they can become a national empire, you know. (BPA4)

What is worth reiterating here is the dominance of politics over rationality in the policy process.

**Lobbying: negotiating the coalition of interests**

Contrary to the traditional rhetoric that positions bureaucrats as merely instruments of the political process, the research reported here revealed these policy actors as well versed in the politics of policy making. In particular, and more than most policy actors, they were adept at combining interests in ways that served particular policy agendas that held political currency while also advancing others. The use of particular economic discourses is a case in point. A number of these policy actors would:

imbibe all this macro stuff about the economic environment and we construct rationales that are influential in those terms. Now, a lot of it's unresearched and untested, but there's no doubt that we argue for certain things in terms of what we describe as perceived economic advantage. And then you also try to create a coalition of interests with what you know to be the Minister's personal interests ... Some ministers are better than others at principles and policy broadly and some are much more framed by personal experiences and understandings. (BPA4)

Relations between policy actors and the (above) strategies they employ to produce policy are represented in Tables 2 and 3. Recognition needs to be given to the particular context in which these observations were made: the production of Australian higher education policy from 1987 to 1996. It should also be noted that these relations are indicative rather than comprehensive. That said, the first table lists the most frequently used strategies by policy actors in contexts of policy text production while the second lists the most likely policy actors associated with particular policy-making strategies. The point is to illustrate in tabular form that policy actors who are positioned in particular ways tend to employ some policy-making strategies more than others and, similarly, that particular policy-making strategies tend to be associated with certain policy actors more than others. The centrality of politics in the policy process should also be noted and how, in this particular case, rationality was treated within the process.
Conclusion

There are a number of matters of policy I have argued in this paper through references to aspects of the policy literature and by drawing on research data from the production of Australian higher education policy. They are matters about the politics of the policy process. They are not about neat, rational debate and then consensus on entry issues in Australian higher education, nor are they concerned with an examination of the differences from one policy text to the next in order to determine the extent of the increment. Indeed, I suspect that often it is narrowly focusing on policy texts that produces accounts of policy production as informed by the ‘characteristics of organized action ... [that is,] coherence, hierarchy and instrumentality’ (Colebatch 1998: 3, emphasis in original). Certainly, ‘there is less written about what policy participants actually do than on almost any other aspect of policy’ (Colebatch 1998: 100) and perhaps this provides some explanation. However, I suspect our inability to provide adequate theoretical explanations of the policy process is also an issue of politics.

Theoretically, then, critical policy analysis would be well served by explanations of policy and the policy process that concern themselves with the who and how of policy production. As illustrated above, these are not separate endeavours but necessarily go hand-in-hand. Such explanations also require a less rigid account of policy contexts and their structural relations. I have argued such theoretical concerns elsewhere (Gale 1999c). Here I want to conclude by drawing attention again to Yeatman’s (1998) notion of policy activism and particularly to its normative elements. Policy is not only produced and reproduced by actors variously located within western democracies in a theoretical sense, such engagement by policy actors should also be acknowledged and enhanced as an expression of a radical democracy (Lummis 1996). In this account of policy making:

the intent ... would be to establish the conditions for new conversations (genuine expressions of interest, understanding and aspiration) and for new actions (proactive engagements with local and global constraints and opportunities); their newness deriving as much from who is involved and how, as from appreciation for new times. (Gale, 2000: 132, emphasis added)

What is envisaged, then, are opportunities for policy actors: to focus on a wider sense of policy communities; for policy conversations across cultural and contextual boundaries, directed at collective commitments (rather than consensus); and for pursuing creative possibilities. This is a constant, on-going task that is forever incomplete.
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Table 1: Policy making contexts and their policy makers

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<td><strong>What kind of productive activity?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interest groups</strong> (Lawton 1986);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contexts of policy making</strong></td>
<td><strong>Policy activists</strong> (Yeatman 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bowe et al. 1992; Ball 1994)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stages of the policy process</strong> (Yeatman 1998)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• context of influence (Bowe et al. 1992);</td>
<td>• politicians (Lawton 1986);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• setting the policy agenda and policy development (Yeatman 1998)</td>
<td>• government executives (eg Cabinet), legislators, the judiciary (Yeatman 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• context of policy text production (Bowe et al. 1992);</td>
<td>• bureaucrats (Lawton 1986);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• policy formulation</td>
<td>• public officials - bureaucrats, public servants, public managers (Yeatman 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• context of practice (Bowe et al. 1992);</td>
<td>• professionals (Lawton 1986);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• policy implementation and policy delivery (Yeatman 1998)</td>
<td>• Direct service deliverers - eg those who staff a school, from principal to teachers to ancillary staff (Yeatman 1998);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• context of outcomes (Ball 1994)</td>
<td>• the consumers, users, recipients of policy &amp; those subject to its regulation (Yeatman 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• context of political strategy (Ball 1994);</td>
<td>• policy analysts - analysis of and for policy (Gordon, Lewis &amp; Young 1977; Kenway 1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• policy evaluation and policy monitoring (Yeatman 1998)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Most frequently used strategies by policy actors in producing Australian HE policy, 87-96

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy actor</th>
<th>Strategy (most frequently utilised)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>politicians &amp; political advisers</td>
<td>1. bargaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. arguing and lobbying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bureaucrats &amp; policy advisers</td>
<td>1. manoeuvring and lobbying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. arguing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'cowboys' &amp; independent authorities</td>
<td>1. stalling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. arguing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academics and university administrators</td>
<td>1. arguing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. bargaining and stalling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Policy actor (most frequent utiliser)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| trading      | 1. politicians & political advisers, and bureaucrats & policy advisers  
2. academics and university administrators |
| bargaining   | 1. politicians & political advisers  
2. academics and university administrators  
3. bureaucrats & policy advisers |
| arguing      | 1. academics and university administrators  
2. politicians & political advisers  
3. bureaucrats & policy advisers, and cowboys' & independent authorities |
| stalling     | 1. cowboys' & independent authorities  
2. academics and university administrators  
3. politicians & political advisers |
| manoeuvring  | 1. bureaucrats & policy advisers |
| lobbying     | 1. bureaucrats & policy advisers  
2. politicians & political advisers |