Truth or Truths?

Truth(s) for polity, knowledge and intervention in advisory reports of the WRR

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Abstract

Founded in 1976, the Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid (WRR) strives to independently provide the Dutch government with advisory reports on policy making and societal developments on the long term. Coming from a political philosophy perspective, in this thesis, I aim to investigate the philosophical notion of a pragmatist truth in connection with such reports. Consequently, the following thesis is proposed: "To what extent is the philosophical notion of truth relate with the concept of plurality, with regards to the WRR's advisory reports?" This is investigated through the three dimensions of policy making, which have led to a change in the landscape of policymaking: polity, knowledge and intervention. Besides, a distinction is made between classical-modernist institutions and new political spaces. Using these theories, the WRR is evaluated. Based on these findings, this thesis argues whether a trade-off exists between a truth or plurality of truths in policy advisory reports.

Contents

Introduction

The main agreements of the conventions of Brundtland and Rio - global environmental meetings in which countries convened to discuss possible environmental measures with one another - seem to be lost (Hajer & Fischer, 1999, p. 3). The reports on the damage done to the climate sparked a critique of the industrial and social relations that facilitated these developments. Simultaneously, the failure of sustainable development and the rise of a new era of green politics, suggest the re-examination of the discursive frame that is defined by change and renewal. I mention the failure of the sustainable development discourse because it shows one of multiple transcendary issues that governments struggle to 'solve' during their terms. And for the issue of climate change, it is not even sure whether it can be solved at all. Such problems are also called 'wicked problems' (Head, 2008, p. 101).

Thus, existing institutions are not compelled to reconsider the fundamental assumptions of their operations. Perhaps the institutions have learned and are now able to reinvent themselves in order to evolve into better problem solvers. So, solutions for the most pressing problems like climate change cannot be found within the boundaries of sovereign politics. Rather, political actions are performed in a so-called 'institutional void', where clear rules and norms on politics and policy are absent (Hajer, 2003, p. 175). This notion of the institutional void refers to a discrepancy between the existing institutional structure and the actual practice of policy making. Such a discrepancy is found in the difference between classical-modernist political institutions and new political spaces.

The Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid (WRR) is an independent thinktank that advises the Dutch government on long-term societal developments. This organisation is uniquely situated to investigate issues like climate change and writes reports on it. Its foundation is highly pragmatist as it together with the government and other societal stakeholders seeks to provide interdepartmental advice. The WRR operates within the void, as well as reflecting on its nature.

The philosophical aspect of this thesis is grounded in the discussion on truth that is woven throughout the entire text. As power within society is dispersing, there is no focus point from which the truth about society can be established. In order to make sense of the truth or truths found in advisory reports, I use a pragmatist account of truth. The reason for this is that the pragmatist theories of truth stress the broader practical and performative function of truth, while emphasising the role that truth holds in shaping certain discourses. Furthermore, the link of pragmatist truth with inquiry matches my aim to discuss the WRR's investigations with regards to truth. Specifically, I decided to incorporate John Dewey's (1859-1952) pragmatist account of truth.

Democracy in terms of the pre-existing community that collectively forms its will about political issues, is not able to devote enough attention to the urgent knowledge intensive questions such as climate change. In this thesis, I want to follow Dewey's alternative, which

puts the issue itself in the centre and consequently searches for the relevant public (Dijstelbloem, Schuyt & De Vries, 2004, p. 148). Are institutions like the WRR and its policy advice based on expert knowledge? What does this imply for the reports they issue? Consequently, the following thesis is proposed: "To what extent is the philosophical notion of truth relate with the concept of plurality, with regards to the WRR's advisory reports?" In order to investigate the thesis, I will look at the context of policy making. I follow Hajer (2003, p. 175) in saying that this context has been changing through three aspects: polity, knowledge and intervention.

Outline

In chapter one, I will dive into the environmental discourse, which has lost its political impact, especially in sustainable development. I will identify three elements that explain this failure: an obvious general change of thought, the third wave of democracy and the rise of what Blühdorn (2007) calls symbolic politics. Here, I add a nuance to the distinction between authentic and symbolic politics and treat it as a spectrum.

The second chapter builds on the first, in order to answer an urge to redefine policies and policy analysis. In my opinion, the changes mentioned in the first chapter call for a reconsideration of policy making. In this chapter, I will discuss Maarten Hajer's (2003) work on institutions and policy analysis. Hajer argues that as established institutions cannot handle problems on their own, new organisations have come to being in the so-called 'institutional void'. Thus, in this chapter I elaborate on the difference between classical-modernist institutions and new political spaces.

In the third chapter, I will sketch the three dimensions that are identified by Hajer: polity, knowledge and intervention. Polity concerns the organisation of the political community. Knowledge concerns how policy analysis still is a meaningful way of organising knowledge. The final dimension, intervention discusses the problem orientation that results into effective interventions. Because these dimensions are rooted in the pragmatism of Dewey, his pragmatist account of truth is introduced. It is important to distinguish 'pragmatism' in the familiar sense that is close to being flexible from the philosophical pragmatism that I am using throughout this thesis. In his book *Preludes to Pragmatism* (2012), Philip Kitcher too describes the new life that pragmatism can bring to contemporary philosophy. Following Kitcher's line of reasoning, Hajer's dimensions constitute the foundation of the analysis of the next chapters. The chapter ends with a discussion on deliberative policy analysis.

The fourth chapter marks the beginning of the analysis of this thesis and focuses on the first dimension of policy analysis: polity. Above all, it explains why the WRR is a good fit as an organisation to analyse with regards to the truth discussion.

In chapter five I analyse the relation between knowledge, the government and the WRR by explaining what is meant by appropriate knowledge and how the gathering of knowledge over time has changed. Then, I will take a look at the boundaries of policy analysis and the revision of methods. Afterwards, I will discuss the endangerment of knowledge provision.

Finally, I will take the hybrid structure introduced in chapter four and add the findings about knowledge to it.

In the final chapter, I will discuss the last dimension, intervention. In this section, I will explain that the WRR is not based on mere rule creation. Besides, I want to analyse what makes the WRR's policy advice effective. Consequently, I want to elaborate on the two previous chapters and say something about whether or not the WRR acts in the service of the government. What does that mean for the reputation of policy making? Does it become more authentic or symbolic?

The conclusion will serve as a section in which I aim to answer the thesis that was presented in this introduction and bring all the information together in the analysis. I hope to show with usage of the WRR that the pragmatist notion of truth in facts relates to the concept plurality of truths. Lastly, I also want to make suggestions for future research.

Chapter One – Failure of the Environmental Discourse

Ever-more extreme weather, environmental refugees, melting ice caps, and the enormous resource consumption of the vibrant BRIC economies; developments like these have created a new sense of eco-political urgency. In his book, *Political Ecology* Paul Robbins (2011, p. 3) identifies political ecology as a discipline that strives to get to the bottom of the political forces that are in place in environmental access, management and transformation. Research in the field of political ecology can shed light on environmental change and vigour. The finiteness of resources, the limits to growth and the unsustainability of the western model of democratic consumer capitalism are becoming painfully evident (Blühdorn, 2007, p. 251). It was science that revealed the global problems, and demanded wide-ranging collective action beyond nation-state borders, thereby posing a challenge (legal, institutional, and cultural) to the closed bureaucratic rationality of the nation-state. (Harvey, 1999, p. 165).

However, the principal messages and agreements contained in much of the environmental discourse before and during the interstate conventions of Brundtland and Rio are lost (Hajer & Fischer, 1999, p. 3). I mention the Earth Summit of Rio de Janeiro in 1992 because it marks the specific moment in which awareness of the global ecological crisis was finally accepted (Fischer & Hajer, 1999, p. 1). The Brundtland commission report of the United Nations encompassed a new political strategy called 'sustainable development' (Fischer & Hajer, 1999, p. 1). By being a reform-oriented and inclusionary discourse (Fischer & Hajer, 1999, p. 4), sustainable development aimed at a cooperative approach to environmental politics. The general consensus created by the conventions created a separation in the environmental discourse from conflict and paved the way for collaboration. But such consensus decreased the incentive to change, both socially and institutionally. Therefore, the discourse has actually led to a reduction of the reflective potential of environmental politics according to Fischer and Hajer (1999, p. 4).

Hajer and Fischer argue (1999, pp. 3-8) that sustainable development failed to produce a new era of green policy making, and therefore suggest the re-examination of the discursive frame in which we are searching for change and renewal. Even though society favours such change and renewal, not much action has been taken into that direction. Likewise, the interpretation of the meaning of environmental politics does not compel existing institutions to reconsider the normative and cultural assumptions that form the foundation of their operations. Currently, certain views hold that the major institutions could have learned and are thus able to reinvent themselves in order to become producers of a new sort of environmentally sustainable development. However, various key practices of modernity are furthering the (unintended) consequence of some of capitalism's essential features, such as the dominance of scientific rationality and expert knowledge. Societal forces have advanced the typical modernist features of big science and coordinated management while monitoring risk assessment. Strong cultural-political foundations from a policy-discourse perspective then lie at the core of sustainable development. Thus, it seems like sustainable development lacks the ability to induce the institutional restructuring that is widely needed to attain our ecological goals.

It can be argued that capitalism has battled environmental problems over the last few centuries (Harvey, 1999, p. 161). Institutions, public politics and regulatory practices have been adapted to deal with ecological issues. These practices have converged over time to form what Harvey calls '*the standard view*' of environmental management in advanced capitalist societies. It is believed that no general environmental concern should be in the way of 'progress' and that environmental struggles can be cleaned up when they have occurred. Thus, the general approach in the standard view is that the intervention occurs only after the event.

With the 1980 'World Conservation Strategy' of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), however, a shift in perception took place at the global level which had already occurred among American protectionists after the turn of the century. Nature turned from a treasure to be preserved to a resource whose yield had to be sustained (Hays 1959). The emphasis thus shifted from the protection of nature to the protection of the productivity of natural resources for economic use (Sachs, 1999, p. 33). This implies that it is no longer about the protection of nature, but about the protection of development.

To summarise, political ecology is a concept encompassing all analyses into the complexity of the environmental change as a result of intersecting and conflicting economic, social and ecological processes (Taylor, 1999, p. 122). Political ecology differs from ecological modernisation as the latter emphases the chances of environmental policy for modernising the economy and stimulating the technological innovation (Hajer, 1995, p. 260-262). People in the Western world tend to believe that their way of life is sustainable at the moment and in large parts of the global population (Blühdorn, 2004, p. 35). However, the Western system has provided clear evidence that liberal democracy is unable to include the environmental agenda while bringing together ecological imperatives with those of the capitalist consumer economy (Blühdorn, 2004, p. 35). As Blühdorn puts it: "Environmental issues have lost much of their ideological explosiveness" (2004, p. 35). What elements can be identified in order to explain why environmental issues have lost their ideological impact and led to the failure of sustainable development?

Change of Thought

It is my belief that three major elements have contributed to the visibility of the failure of sustainable development. First of all, it is important to address a change in thinking about and conceptualising socio-natural relationships. As Manuel Castells says, "throughout the globe, the old, simplistic opposition between development for the poor and conservation for the rich has been transformed into a multi-layered debate over the actual context of sustainable development for each country, city, and region" (Castells, 1997, p 110–111). Thus, we can no longer base our institutions and policies on the old oppositions like rich and poor. Does this imply that we need a novel approach to address ecological issues? Still, such problems are not resolved until we change our institutional discourses and cultural practices as well as the ways in which we produce and consume. Consequently, our social organisation and personal lives will or should be adapted as well (Fischer & Hajer, 1999, p. 20).

While we notice endeavours in policy making, alliances and research, I agree that late modern society has simply reformulated the environmental issue to make it conform to the capitalist system. This is what Blühdorn calls 'the pacification of the environmental issue' (2004, pp. 40-42). The pacification entails that societies have reformulated elements of the environmental issue to make them seem like technological or managerial issues, to better incorporate the issues in the existing system and institutions. By doing so, eco-political conflicts are not recognised as being environmental problems and tensions are prevented. This process makes the integration of environmental problems successful because it provides a sense of reassurance. This way, ecological problems are dissolving into current structures and institutions. Such dissolvement leads not only to non-engagement of post-ecologism, but to a denying attitude of environmental problems (Blühdorn, 2004, p. 42).

Third Wave of Democracy

To bring forward a second point, Robert Dahl said that democratic history consists of three great transformations or waves. (1994, p. 25). The first wave identified is the transformation from pre-democratic societies to Athenian assembly democracies. The modern-day nation state representative democracy is the second wave. The third wave is taking place as we speak and represents a shift from a national representative democracy to a new form of democracy whose characteristics are gradually becoming visible (Blühdorn, 2007b, p. 302). Some would even call this the post-democratic revolution. Even though Blühdorn wrote this almost fifteen years ago, I still consider it as valuable to contemporary developments. What we can understand from this is that the third type of democracy is a development where individuals experience their lives beyond the nation state. It means that their experiences stretch politics to an international level (Blühdorn, 2007b, p. 308). What usually triggered the transformation to the new type of democracy was size and complexity according to Dahl. And now again these effects are at the centre of the shift towards a transnational or global democracy (Blühdorn, 2007b, p. 302).

At the centre of global democratic transformation lies the concept of depoliticisation. It is an umbrella term that summarises developments like deparliamentarisation of advanced democracies, the advance of political marketing and the shift from substantive politics to politics of representation and communication (Blühdorn, 2007b, p. 312). Blühdorn proves its implication and significance by opposing it to the concept of politicisation and the three dimensions that belong to it. The first is the politicisation of issues, which suggests that issues that could not be negotiated are now negotiable. For example, issues that are taken of non-political spheres, like for example tradition, are scrutinised due to the rise of alternative scenarios. Decisions need to be justified democratically. The second dimension is the politicisation of people, which refers to the constituents that were excluded or uninterested before are now becoming engaged in political debates and consequently are becoming political actors. If people then are depoliticised, this implies that constituents are becoming less included. Finally, the politicisation of social organisations and institutions talks about the development of non-political institutions like universities to embrace or promote political agendas. Politicisation thus means that we recognise that things could be different in certain contexts. It is the realisation that social norms, practices and relations are changeable by the

new political agency in citizens, both collectively and individually. Depoliticisation is the exact opposite. It implies a development in which political issues, people and social institutions are becoming less political (Blühdorn, 2007b, p. 313). Even though it on the surface seems like peoples, institutions and issues are becoming more politicised, I might still be the other way around. While I notice endeavours in inclusion, I still find myself wondering to what extent this inclusion is reflected in the closed-off sphere of the parliament. As I tend to agree with Blühdorn that depoliticisation is occurring in the democratic transformation, I want to introduce his symbolic politics that I think explain this shift towards it.

Symbolic Politics

I will use the work of Blühdorn on symbolic politics to explain and elaborate on the third element of sustainable development's failure. According to Blühdorn (2007, p. 252), symbolic politics is the term that captures both the criticism of insufficient policies and the criticism of those who make them. Even though it was always around, symbolic politics has gained widespread significance in late modern societies. The source of this new feeling of urgency comes from serious doubts about an autonomous politics of performance which is characterised by a prioritisation of presentation over content (Nullmeier, 2005: 201). Generally, symbolic politics is based on political elites that are strategically using symbols, myths and rituals to deceive and control the mass public while maximising their own interests (Blühdorn, 2007, p. 257).

We need a more serious and effective politics that discards rhetoric and presentation and rather focuses on substantive issues and policy making (Blühdorn, 2007, p. 253). Unfortunately, such a change is held back by an unprecedented consensus that is mainly ruled by a defensive feeling. People are defensive of their 'blessed way of life' (Fleischer, 2001) in advanced modern societies. Such a way of living supports the continuation of a system that is driven by consumer capitalism and does not wish to explore any socio-economic alternatives. Even though doubts and suspicion exist against the symbolic politics, late modern societies have neither the will nor the ability to get serious (Blühdorn, 2007, p. 253). Thus, the system of capitalist consumer democracy is threatened by a crisis of unsustainability, and late-modern societies are confronted with a severe problem: in order to address the crisis of unsustainability and ward off the threats of ecological, social and normative collapse, they need to radically change the established system, yet there is no vision of any viable alternatives, nor is there the political will or ability to deviate from the established path (Blühdorn, 2007, p. 265).

Blühdorn distinguishes between authentic politics and symbolic politics, leading him to distinguish the four dimensions of insufficiency (2007, p. 258). These four dimensions show how (eco-)politics can and ought to be different (Hansjürgens & Lübbe-Wolff, 2000, p. 12). Eco-politics is also called green politics, and is a political ideology that, amongst others, aims at environmental sustainability. The first dimension deals with ontological quality. Symbolic politics is supposedly based on false appearances, whereas authentic politics is about trueness and originality. The latter is a production of politics while the former is a presentation of politics. The second dimension, that of effectiveness in problem solving, argues that authentic politics is socially effective because it focuses on the needs and problems of the constituents.

This is opposed to symbolic politics where problem solving is politically effective, meaning that one focuses on the needs and problems of elites. The third dimension concerns the ethical inclination of political actors. Actors in authentic politics are honest and transparent for example, whereas actors in symbolic politics are not. The final dimension is that of the effects on the political culture. Whereas authentic politics develops trust in institutions and facilitates engagement, symbolic politics undercut such trust building and produces apathy. A full summary of the expectations of authentic politics and its contrast with elements of symbolic politics, can be found in Figure 1.

	Authentic politics	**Symbolic politics**
Ontological quality	True, original Being (*Sein*) Production of politics Substantive politics	False, forgery Appearance (*Schein*) Presentation of politics Virtual politics
Dimension of effectiveness	Socially effective: focused on concerns, needs and problem perceptions of the governed	Politically effective: focused on concerns, needs and problem perceptions of political elites
Ethical quality	Honest, genuine Straight, inclusive Transparent Trustworthy	Dishonest, deceptive Two-faced, exclusive Secretive, disguising Corrupt
Effect on political culture	Builds trust in democratic institutions, nurtures rational public deliberation, facilitates engagement and participation	Undermines trust in democratic institutions, suffocates rational deliberation, breeds disengagement and apathy

Figure 1: Authentic and Symbolic politics

Even though Western citizens wish to keep their current lifestyles and accordingly liberal democracy is not able to bring the environmental agenda forward, Blühdorn notices a transformation of their politics and style of policy making that can arguably be described as something like a paradigm change (Blühdorn, 2007, p. 299). Scientific research, new actor alliances and innovative policy instruments have enabled adjustments that are slowing down the effects of the ecological crisis and provide solutions in the living environment (Blühdorn, 2004, p. 35). Non-traditional forms of political articulation such as consumer boycotts, single issue pressure groups, or direct-action movements are actually on the rise (Cain, Dalton & Scarrow, 2003, p. 1). We can in some sense detect a shift away from the nation state when it comes to environmental issues, because a large group of forces in our societies such as NGO's, pressure groups and community agents are becoming involved (Harvey, 1999, p. 167).

These positive developments show that the political sphere is not so dichotomous as Blühdorn is attempting to show. I personally think that one should think of Blühdorn's distinction between authentic and symbolic politics not as two opposites, but as two extremes of a spectrum. I have a number of reasons for looking at the distinction in this way. First of all,

I believe that politics by definition can never be authentic. For example, in the Netherlands, politics and policy making is built on making compromises. An elected party always needs to work together with other parties in a coalition. By doing so, their projected policy plans are a combination of their compromises, making them perhaps less authentic to the public. A liberal party that is arguing for lowering wealth taxes might need to let go of this ambition when it is ruling with a labour party. The public can perceive this as not keeping their promises made at election times; which makes that party less authentic according to them. Secondly, I do not think that one should look at authentic and symbolic politics as two extremes, like black and white. Yet, it is paramount to consider all other possible scenarios on the spectrum and not put this distinction as straightforward. One can easily imagine political situations in which one can be honest and genuine in ethical quality, while still aiming to be politically effective (see Figure 1). The greatest example here is a political party, say, the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) led by Geert Wilders. Even though his party focuses on being socially effective, it might also be considered a party that is based on appearance and presentation of politics (see Figure 1). It is socially effective as the citizens feel heard by the very populist party. However, the party's bold statements and provocative attitude is definitely a component that revolves around its appearance. The party and its leader are known to tap into the concerns and dissatisfactions of some citizens and enlarging them, which is a deceptive presentation of politics in my opinion.

But I believe there is one final important note to make that will clarify my new approach or perspective to Blühdorn's classification, namely that the notion of truth is at the centre of this issue. When we are thinking about the examples mentioned above about the party or compromise politics, it immediately comes to mind that this has to do with a perception of truth. Because I assume it is true that the PVV is focused on social effectiveness and appearance, I classify it as a hybrid form on the adapted authentic-symbolic spectrum. Someone else can think of it as entirely symbolic or authentic. I do not mean this in a relativist manner. Rather, I want to point out that truths can perform an instrumental role that we use in order to get our thoughts structured. It is possible to think of multiple truths, yet we tend to pick one that matches our opinion or beliefs of a certain object or concept. Like argued before, it seems difficult in contemporary society to create one definite truth. Therefore, I need to establish an account of truth that can transform our thinking into practice and will make the spectrum I have just sketched practical and realisable. To transform thinking into doing implies that I should be looking for a practically oriented notion of truth. In order to do so, a pragmatist account of truth is now introduced.

Pragmatist Account of Truth

If a truth or multiple truths exist, inquiry generally aspires to find the truth (Burgess & Burgess, 2011, p. 1). Perhaps instead of one truth, there are indeed multiple truths? For instance, chemistry inquiries strive at coming to different truths than philosophical inquiries (Burgess & Burgess, 2011, p. 1). With this many kind of truths, it is left to the philosophers to conceptualise a unified conception of what truths are (Burgess & Burgess, 2011, p. 1). A philosophical perception of truth is what is needed. Thus, in the beginning of this work, I will dive into the notion of truth and its implications. Probably the best-known philosophical quote

about truth comes from Aristotle (Metaphysics, 1011b25):[1] "To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true". What Aristotle means with this quote is that we can be right or wrong about determining what something is or is not. We cannot say that an apple is a pear because that would be false, as the truth implies that an apple holds exactly all characteristics that make it an apple. Yet, this is a rather broad idea of truth that is not easily applicable. Hence for the purpose of this thesis, I want to look into a specific theory of truth, called the pragmatist theory of truth.

The pragmatist theory of truth is part of a strain of other theories about truth and is usually tied to thinkers like C.S. Peirce, John Dewey and William James (Capps, 2019; Kitcher, 2012, p. xi). Historically Peirce, James, and Dewey had the greatest influence in setting the boundaries for what makes a theory of truth pragmatist (Capps, 2019). Whereas Pierce believed that true beliefs were at the end of inquiry (Levi, 2012, p. 1), James thought that the truth needed to be defined in terms of utility (Capps, 2019). So, Peirce's truth relied on its power to withstand scrutiny and James' truth implied that true beliefs ought to be useful. Even though pragmatist theories of truth have seen increased interest, Dewey's approach never received the same degree of attention as Peirce and James (Capps, 2018, p. 39). More on this will be discussed later in this chapter when I focus on Dewey's account of truth. Broadly seen, pragmatist theories of truth revolve around truth and epistemic practices, particularly those practices performed in inquiry and assertion (Capps, 2019). Pragmatist theorists tend to see the truth as a moving relation between the practices and commitments people engage in while they are solving problems, assert positions or conduct scientific examination (Capps, 2019; Levi, 2012, p. 80). Exactly this property is what makes pragmatist theory more eligible for usage in multiple disciplines such as legal and political discourses.

There are three important qualities of pragmatist theories of truth that need to be highlighted in order to explain its relevance[2]. First of all, pragmatist theories look into people's deeper essence in describing a statement as true instead of investigating what makes a statement true (Capps, 2019). In doing so, pragmatist accounts avoid analyses that consider truth as a substantial metaphysical property (Capps, 2017, p. 148). Besides, pragmatist theorists consider the truth as more than just a useful tool for creating generalisations (Capps, 2019; Levi, 2012, p. 80). The truth is something that is treated as an individual thing, something that is unified and not altered by the various topics that our beliefs might be about (Capps, 2017, p. 137). This implies that mathematical, ethical and political claims are true in the same way. We can in this way generalise truth when we say for instance "everything she says is true" (Capps, 2017, p. 136). Truth is thus used in a unitary way because it does not mean different things and does not come in different strengths when depending on what is discussed (Capps, 2017, p. 148). Finally, pragmatist theories of truth emphasise the practical implications of truth. It ties

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[1] Translations used from *Metaphysics* edition by Ross (1924)
[2] The features are also illustrated by Misak's modern version of Peirce's pragmatic theory of truth (Misak 2000, 2004, 2007).

together the function of truth and actual activities like assertion and inquiry in general (Capps, 2017, p. 136).

Therefore, the pragmatist theories of truth stress the broader practical and performative powers of truth, while emphasising the role that truth holds in shaping certain discourses. Misak (2007, p. 71) tells us that besides practicing assertion, truth goes even further by combing expectations for experiences, reasons and inquiry. According to Price (2003, p. 169), truth has the ability to transcend the role of the individual opinion and can distinguish between assertoric dialogue and dialogues without assertions. What Price means with this is that truth as an assertoric proposition can suppose that something is or is not the case. By this trait, truth enables individual opinions to take part in discussions with one another. If we did not have the concept of truth, a difference in such individual opinions would not make any impact because there is no search for an ultimate answer, namely the truth on that matter (Price, 2003, p. 180-181). Misak (2015, p. 263) agrees with Price as he argues that assertion and inquiry indeed will lose their point without the concept of truth since "truth is what we aim at and what we aim at is getting things right". Getting things right is exactly what the pragmatist investigator seeks. If the pragmatist investigator can show in inquiry that he can build towards something being true or right, then the investigation was successful. This rather pragmatist nature of truth, based on assertions and inquiry is crucial for the subject of this thesis for two reasons. First of all, truth as an ultimate answer to certain discussions can make the problems at the centre of these discussions more solvable. Secondly, we need a concept of truth as a motivation for our inquiries and investigations. This pragmatist nature of truth as an ultimate answer and motivational factor for investigations can have implications for institutions that are dealing with a failure of sustainable development. The next chapter acknowledges the changing context and look what these implications are for institutions and how they have adapted or evolved to it.

Chapter Two – Institutions

In the previous chapter, I discussed the changing context for (eco-)politics and sustainable development. Three processes were defined that explained the failure of such sustainable development; namely a general change of thought, the emergence of symbolic politics and the third wave of democracy. If the context of politics is changing and leading to unwanted developments, it generally is urged to redefine policies and policy analysis. In my opinion, such changing contexts call for a reconsideration of policy making. In this and the next chapter, Maarten Hajer's work on institutions and policy analysis will be introduced in order to adhere to the changing context of politics and especially policy making.

An important development that Hajer and Wagenaar (2003, pp. 1-2) introduce in policymaking is a shift in vocabulary and language during the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. Before, terms like government, state and authority were mostly prevalent. Even more, the state was widely considered and accepted as the main authority within society. Now, these terms have been replaced by notions like governance, networks, trust and interdependence. Even though such vocabulary changes may only imply rhetoric changes, I believe that it is different here. A new range of political practices has emerged between the institutional layers of the state and societal organisations. Hence, the new language is grounded in an appreciation of the importance of these new political practices. Currently, most solutions are provided within these transient and informal institutions, not in the traditional ones like states or authoritative decisions. Such informal policy networks like public administrators, scientists, experts and NGO's do not wish to become part of the formal policymaking structures. An example of such an NGO in the Netherlands, but with activities worldwide, is Greenpeace, who is one of the main advocates for a green and peaceful world. They form a global informal network as any local citizen can become part of their actions that are aimed to influence policies and policy making. Yet, Greenpeace wants to remain independent and does not accept funds from governments or businesses. Organisations like Greenpeace and many others indicate that there are now more actors that discuss pressing problems, instead of the established systems of politics, administration and society. Greenpeace is a new actor that is mainly motivated by practical needs and organises its efforts in a cooperative way. Greenpeace does not lay their intended actions upon its members, it simply organises them and then asks for participants, therefore making it cooperative as an organisation.

So, the new vocabulary of governance shows two things. On the one hand it underlines once again that the nature of policymaking and politics has changed. On the other hand, it shows a dissatisfaction with the limited solutions that traditional top-down government provided to prickly political problems. Consequently, this new vocabulary of governance introduces a change from well-established notions of politics to new sites, new actors and new themes (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 3). It sometimes seems like a new reality has developed

in political practices, something that is called an 'expansive democracy'[3]. Expansive democracy implies that increased participation via both small-scale direct democracy or connections between citizens and institutions pushes democracy beyond the traditional political spheres and making decision-making revolving around the persons that are involved.

Furthermore, Hajer & Wagenaar (2003, pp. xiii-xiv) claim that traditionally, a strict separation of knowledge and politics has been the basis for policy analysis. With neutral and scientific methods at it centre, analysts could develop objective knowledge that functioned as solutions to a large scope of economic and social problems. By collecting claims in a primarily factual way, traditional policy analysis thought of itself as the voice of rationality in a politically contested world. Yet, a number of scholars convincingly argue that this image is misplaced. They view the relationship between politics and analysis not as one in which policy analysis solely informs politics. Conversely, it is the representative democracy and its politics that require and thus sustain its own analysis. Therefore, in today's world of governance, a critical policy analysis is needed that is concerned with the contextual nature of knowledge.

New Institutions?

From the previous chapter, it can be concluded that established institutional arrangements do not hold the power to deliver the requested policy results on their own. Moreover, they partake in transnational and polycentric networks of governance with dispersed power. According to Hajer (2003, p. 175), political actions are performed in an institutional void in which "there are no clear rules and norms according to which politics is conducted and policy measures are to be agreed upon." The existence of an institutional void does not mean that institutions on a state-level and international treaties like those on environmental issues do not exist. What it does mean is that there are policy problems taking place that challenge the rules and norms of the state and international treaties. Policy making in an institutional void stems from the presupposition of a discrepancy between the existing institutional structures and the actual practice of policy making. This discrepancy can be further elaborated by illustrating the difference between classical-modernist political institutions and new political spaces on the other (Hajer, 2003, p. 176).

Classical-modernist Institutions

Before, classical modernist institutions provided the official site for policy making and politics in post-war era Western societies. In their book, Hajer and Wagenaar compare the classical-modernist idea of political institutions to a 'matrouchka' system. Governments according to them resembled the Russian dolls that fit into one another. For example, the local fits into the regional, the regional fits in national and the national fits into international politics. Therefore, notions such as representative democracy, ministerial responsibility and differentiation between politics and bureaucracy are based on expert knowledge. Hajer (2003, pp. 177-179) introduced five examples that showed a tension between a changing context of policy making and the classical-modernist institutions. First of all, a case about Shell displayed

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[3] Terminology by Mark Warren (1992)

that the institutional powers of the nation state are dispersed. Even though permission was given by state authorities in a legitimate way, Shell had to choose another policy due to the involvement of pressure groups and social movements that were using new strategies. Secondly, there is a new spatiality of policy making and politics where one needs to know when to appropriately intervene. In this example, NGOs were trying to stop a construction because it was directly placed over the habitat of endangered animals. Actors like that need to be able to know at what level they introduce their intended intervention. It shows that actors are not only members of the game within a national polity but need to consider the transnational and international polities as well. Thirdly, it is needed to rethink the standard view of participation and democratic governance. This has mostly to do with the traditional design of organising citizen-involvement. In this case, the Rotterdam municipality decided to redesign an entire delta island. Here, it showed that traditional forms of citizen participation like round tables are not the best way for citizen representation in policy deliberations. Fourthly, what is found in the examples as well is that the authority of (scientific) expertise is undermined. The fact that we ask for scientific investigation in order to resolve difficult problems in policy making seems to produce more uncertainty instead of less. Instead of reassuring certainty, scientific investigation as a means to resolve policy problems in a highly technocratic society produces only more uncertainty. The example here is that the British people in the 1990s found out that eating beef could lead to a deadly disease, even after government had been reassuring that it was safe. Finally, policy making's context is expansive because there are new subjects introduced in the new politics. This last example has to do with the fact that the politics of nature is bringing new themes to the fore like genetics and biotechnology. The WTO faced an issue on to what extent people or firms could claim property rights on genetic information and who can make legitimate decisions on these matters. It makes us question whether or not such information should be in the public domain or if it can be governed by market logic.

It is important to note that I am not arguing for the complete evaporation of classical-modernist institutions and its well-established patterns of behaviour (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, pp. 3-4). Obviously, much governing and policy making still lies with the traditional hierarchical institutions. But they are now competing with new political actors that are flexible and create ad hoc arrangement that provide them with remarkable problem-solving capacity, while finding the ability to learn and change in exactly the circumstances in which classical-modernist institutions could not deliver. The new vocabulary of governance discussed earlier uses the popularity of new political strategies of cooperation that are developed at the margin of the traditional classical-modernist political institutions. Such political practices are also defined as new political spaces.

New Political Spaces

Society has become disappointed with the classical modernist institutions' capacities for problem-solving; it learned that unintended consequences occur even after rationalised planning and that there are limits to the centralised, hierarchical regulation as the dominant mode of collective problem solving (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 10). As a result, the new political spaces arose. The new political spaces are defined as the unstable practices that emerge

in the struggle to tackle problems that the established institutions are unable to resolve legitimately and effectively. As mentioned before, for example the role of advisory organs like the WRR in agenda setting and non-political actors are activities that fall under this premise. It seems like the constitutional rules of the classical-modernist polities are unable to inform us about the new rules of the game (Hajer, 2003, p. 176). Adding to this is ongoing modernisation of society, featuring globalisation and individualisation simultaneously, hence eroding the self-evidence of classical-modernist institutions as the locus of politics (Hajer, 2003, p. 177).

New political spaces exist within an institutional void. What is meant by that is that there are no pre-given rules that determine who is responsible, who has authority over whom and what sort of accountability is expected (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 9). However, people still hold institutional expectations and routines that they bring as politics manifests between organisations. Besides, all participants follow their own 'logic of appropriateness' (March and Olsen, 2004 p. 1). The logic of appropriateness means that actions are driven by rules of exemplary behaviour organised within institutions. Actors wish to fulfil the obligations that belong to an ethos, practice and expectation of their institution. Consequently, such behaviour can steer politics in new political spaces away from content because their actors are only focused on following their own logic of appropriateness.

Following Hajer and Wagenaar (2003, p. 8), the older 'matrouchka' system is losing power because politics and policymaking happen in structures that do not comply with the previous formula. Politics in the network society is shaped by multi-level governance, regimes or transnational policy discourses (Hajer & Zonneveld 2000). The traditional top-down bureaucratic institutions move aside for civil servants and private sector actors that perform entrepreneurial or problem-solving roles in policy networks of their own making. Parties find their roles being challenged, as they are no longer the main player in the big debates and influential decisions.

Naturally, the distinction is based on the social and historical context that the institutions are situated in. I have to admit here that the distinction is based on the presupposition that politics is a socio-historical construct. For example (Hajer, 2003, p. 176), the development of the industrial society and the welfare state connects with modern political science and policy analysis because political institutions in the Western nations needed stability after the two world wars. The same is noticed in our contemporary society. Because of its ongoing modernisation and thus both globalisation and individualisation, classical-modernist institutions might no longer be the perfect fit from a socio-historical point of view. The institutions lack authority and problem-solving ability in an effective and legitimate way (Hajer, 2003, p. 177). Institutions emerge as an answer to particular historical struggles. Therefore, the institutional void will be more present in new political themes, like environmental politics, which are not part of the solution that the institutions we have now are built for.

Instead of suggesting that inquiries into policymaking and politics should be about the impact of the network society, I wish to follow Hajer and Wagenaar's (2003, p. 5) view that we should focus on concrete manifestations of policymaking and politics in the era of the

network society. The conceptual shift can be explained by Castells ideas on the network society. Castell (1996, p. 468) states that "networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of network logic substantially modifies the operation and the outcomes in processes of production, experience, power and culture. Of course, we can regard any social formation as a network, but we should look at the shifts in networks where new networks erode the power of previously powerful ones (Hajer & Wagenaar, p. 5). The main upshot is that society is experiencing a shift in language from institutions to networks. This political-sociological shift implies that absolute knowledge can also be found in the public domain, which backfires the longstanding commitment of policy analysis to deliver knowledge for policy (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 10). Under conditions of radical uncertainty, policymakers need to be aware of the limits of the (quickly) knowable. Alternatives strategies involve concrete problem solving, joint responsibility, continuous performance based and collective building.

Chapter Three – Dimensions of Policy Analysis

Policy analysis is all of the approaches that revolve around the study of policy making (Hajer, 2003, p. 181). Policy analysis is involved with the development and function of a variety of social-scientific insights that help resolve public problems via concrete policy interventions. Three dimensions of policy analysis that I will discuss now are identified in Hajer's work (2003, pp. 182-188): polity, knowledge and intervention. Hajer and Wagenaar (2003, p.6) draw on a method they call interpretative analysis of policymaking because it has a much wider relevance for understanding contemporary politics. It is rooted in the American pragmatism of John Dewey and has contributed to more subtle understanding of policymaking and politics. In such an analysis, the expert serves as a facilitator of public learning and political power (Fischer, 2003, p. 224). The practice they suggest can be seen as an extension of Dewey that would be central to deliberative governance in the contemporary network society that Hajer and Wagenaar envisioned in the introduction. This particular method is chosen because it can help us to begin to deal with the political phenomena of our time (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 7). In order to dive deeper into the interpretative analysis, I first want to start by discussing Dewey's pragmatist account of truth.

John Dewey's Pragmatist Account of Truth

For the purpose of this thesis, John Dewey's (1859-1952) ideas on the concept of truth are used. Dewey is not known for his theory of truth, possibly because he did not want to design one himself (Capps, 2018, p. 39). He did not avoid speaking about it nor did he aim to replace it with another notion. Instead, he tried to operationalise the idea of truth (Capps, 2018, p. 39). Talisse and Aikin (2008, p. 72) say that Dewey avoided a theory of truth since he replaces truth with a more tractable concept. Following the pragmatist tradition, truth does not fully exist on its own because it is the result of a moving relation during inquiries. Therefore, he introduced a term called 'warranted assertibility' as a replacement wording of the notion of truth. Dewey (1941, p. 169) defined it as "a definition of the nature of knowledge in the honorific sense according to which only true beliefs are knowledge". By capturing both truth and knowledge in warranted assertibility Dewey took away the differentiation in goals of inquiry. Pragmatically, it is not about acquiring more knowledge or truth, but about making more warrantable assertible judgements. Dewey (1941, p. 176) argues that claims are true not when they are verified but that the process of verification makes the claim true.

Because of Dewey's interest in the practical role of truth in everyday life (Misak, 2007, p. 68), it is hard to establish a definition of truth. Dewey distrusted such definitions because they would spur counterexamples and distract from the factors that generate particular truths (Capps, 2018, p. 43). Dewey's goal is not to give a formal definition of truth, but to examine how truth functions in actual inquiries that aim at resolving what he calls "problematic" or "indeterminate" situations (LW 12:108).[4] This of course is closely connected with his pragmatism, therefore aiming to shed light on the connection between truth and our practices,

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[4] The abbreviation LW in this section means that I am referring to his Later Works.

especially what we do and claim when we describe an idea or belief as being true (Capps, 2018, p. 46). Dewey supposed that truth is a property of well-verified claims (or judgments) (Capps, 2019).

Dewey was largely concerned with a theory of inquiry which encompasses all procedures to gather knowledge that is assumed to be valid and reliable. He used to describe his direction of inquiry with the term "logic" (Brown, 2015). Dewey (1938, LW 12:108) defined inquiry as "the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole". This means that Dewey strived to take away the unexplained elements of a situation by finding answers that together form a unified solution. For example, in a mathematical equation one needs to identify the unidentified variables in order to find the solution to that particular equation. What should be recognised as well is that truth is value-laden, meaning that a solution is appreciated only if one cares about it (Brown, 2015). Successful resolution depends on what is ethically, politically, and socially acceptable as a transformation of the existing situation. A resulting situation that is problematic for value judgment is in that sense an unacceptable resolution, and thus false. (Brown, 2015). Dewey has in mind here that beliefs are the result of inquiry (Capps, 2017).

Dewey in his pragmatist account distinguishes between propositions and judgements. This is linked with his attempt to operationalise truth to highlight its connection with practices of inquiry (Capps, 2018, p. 47). On the one hand, judgements refer to the settled outcome of inquiry and are the tested, verified solutions to problematic situations (Capps, 2018, p. 47; Dewey, LW 12, p. 123). Consequently, judgements are supposed to be either true or false (Capps, 2018, p. 48). A proposal, on the other hand, performs an instrumental role in inquiry because they state potentialities (Dewey, LW 12: 164). Like Brown (2015, p. 67) says, a proposition is a proposal which states what is going on or what could be done, therefore making it an instrument. By this instrumental role, proposals are the connection between certain problematic situations and their possible solutions. According to Capps (2018, p. 47) Dewey thinks that propositions are judged by their relevance and efficiency and are strictly speaking not either true or false. Truth is reserved only for judgements, which are final, and not for intermediate propositions leading to judgements (Capps, 2018, p. 48).

Propositions that are true and are acted upon lead to predictable and dependable outcomes which are trademarks of scientific verification, where such verification is the process of matching expectations with outcomes (Capps, 2019). A judgement is made with the intention to solve the problematic situation that came with it and is true if it does successfully resolve that problematic situation. The form of a final judgment is what Dewey called a "judgement of practice" (Brown, 2015).

I wish to make clear why I use Dewey's theory for this thesis specifically because it is not an apparent theory or account of truth within the truth literature (Capps, 2019). Two reasons can be distinguished for doing so. First of all, because he provides a different approach to scientific inquiry, knowledge and truth by which distinctions like truth/utility and belief/acceptance cannot be made (Brown, 2015). He argues that such distinctions are usually

more fluid and that no general way exists to draw such distinction that would ensure a value-free domain of science (Brown, 2015, p. 62.). So, Dewey's approach to truth is different. Since Dewey's pragmatism is more fluid, it forms the basis of interpretative policy analysis. Hence, it becomes well suited for the purpose of this thesis.

The second reason for choosing Dewey has to do with his response to the historical developments of his time that he is providing. Even though these were a long time ago, I see connections with current developments in our society. Dewey must have been motivated by political or cultural concerns and this is reflected in his writings (Hildebrand, 2003, p. 9). During the nineteenth century, philosophers faced a great divide between critical realism, new realism and pragmatism. I acknowledge that this discussion is a slippery slope and does not fit within the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, I want to mention that Dewey has provided a hybrid form between realism and idealism that is very usable for this thesis, as it is my aim to look into truth in policy making and policy reports in two ways; (1) what is happening there now (realism) and (2) how can I interpret or change what is happening there now (idealism). Dewey's new alternative is the best account to use if I wish to combine both idealism and realism.

In conclusion, Dewey's account of truth can be summarised in two propositions about what we are doing and what we claim to be doing in using or finding the truth (Capps, 2018, p. 54). First of all, people tend to commit to finding reasons that support claims that they argue to be true. In order to judge something as true, we point at reasons that support the claim to be or become true. For Dewey, this is like a natural extension of his theory of inquiry. Consequently, we can see a connection between a true claim and the fact that such claims are usually a product of inquiry. Secondly, claims about truth have a lot to do with its independence from the subjects of particular judgements. Dewey argues that the truth is the result of inquiry and therefore a property of judgements. Even though these judgements are warrantedly assertible, claims on truth go further. They maintain that judgements are true or get things right in a way that is independent of the people who are making the judgements. Now that I've established Dewey's pragmatist perspective on truth, I want to move on by discussing the three dimensions that belong to policy analysis.

Polity

The first dimension of policy analysis is polity. Polity here refers to the organisation of the political community. During the post-war period, people knew whom to address when it came to the political order, as the state was the addressee of policy analysis. As political power became more dispersed, it implied that if one wishes to confront those who hold important positions, we do not know who to address. Policy making in hindsight could be regarded as a product of a stable polity, which obviously no longer is the case.

How do we consider the polity now in this debate? In order to answer this question, it is needed to look into the contextual changes of policy analysis. Usually, we derived the stability of the polity, generally the sovereign state from an interconnection between three elements: administrative institutions, societal processes and cultural adherences. Accordingly, policy making becomes a sphere in which people reflect on who they are, what they wish to achieve

and to what extent they share cultural adherences. Together, they ensure the government as the territorial order. Legitimacy and effectiveness of these institutions is based on the ordering of societal processes and cultural adherence within that territory.

Currently, the balance or what Hajer calls 'territorial synchrony' between these three elements is challenged. Castells' (1996) metaphors of the 'network society' and 'space of flows', show that "societal processes and cultural adherences follow different patterns stretching across territorial spaces" (Hajer, 2003, p. 183). One cannot argue that this has led to the disappearance of the classical-modernist institutions. Yet, both the legitimacy and effectiveness of these institutions are restricted and challenged. Consequently, politics and policy making are primarily focused on finding formats that generate trust among mutually independent actors, rather than simply finding solutions for pressing problems (Hajer, 2003, p. 184). Therefore, we need to rethink the foundations of effective policy making. Policy is no longer the outcome of politics; it is the other way around. Politics is the outcome of public policy initiatives. Besides, Hajer (2003, p. 183) notes that we can establish three dimensions of policy deliberation: (1) it consists of advantages and disadvantages of solutions and takes into account the different viewpoints from which claims are made; (2) it is a negotiation of the rules of the game; and, (3) it is related to cultural politics where people discuss value commitments and discern or acquire shared adherences or not. Because of individualisation and different identity definitions, there are less of such cultural adherences, which produces a new role for policy processes.

Besides the contextual changes, the loss of a stable political setting with a fixed polity requires us to reconsider the elements that we wish to study, and which changes the meaning and importance of the policy process. If we cannot trust on territorial synchrony, then policy deliberation becomes all about integration and trust. Governmental trust was ensured by rituals and myths like the quasi-political role of royalty or the reinforcement of governmental authority in what was then a relatively uncomplicated media landscape. Now, in the new media age the magic of those practices has faded. Actors need to collaborate in ways that overcome institutional boundaries while trust cannot be assumed. New practices of policy making should be invented to secure solutions for problems. Again, this does not mean that the classical-modernist institutions are irrelevant. Indeed, they still hold substantial powers and we need the stability and reliability of these institutions.

Knowledge

The second dimension of policy analysis as defined by Hajer (2003, pp. 185-186) focuses on the idea of knowledge. Policy analysis still is a meaningful way of organising knowledge. We presuppose that policy analysis should provide us with uncontroversial knowledge that enhances the governmental ability to solve problems, but can we maintain this position? Can policy analysis become a quiet space for scientific rationality? We are more aware than ever of the limits to centralised and hierarchical regulation as the dominant way of problem solving. This awareness has raised a feeling of distress among citizens about effective state power. However, to put this more positively, it can be argued that knowledge is democratised and has shown policy makers that they should include the way in which uncertainties are dealt with socially.

When thinking of such limitations of knowledge, repercussions for the understanding of policy analysis can be defined. First of all, there is a widespread recognition that governments need to let go of the idea that decisions can be made only after appropriate knowledge is collected. Secondly, it is widely realised that scientific expertise comes with boundary work, meaning that policy analysis needs to rethink its methods too. Finally, at a more fundamental level, the commitment to providing knowledge is at stake. Therefore, policy analysis might be a combination of identification of unawareness and the provision of knowledge.

But policy makers and analysts have become aware of the works in science and technology which pointed out the facts that were a social product. Attention should be given to the ways in which knowledge is understood as the product of particular practices. This will increase the understanding of the policy process and raise awareness of the fact that knowledge is constructed. Besides, knowledge gathering will be more about interactive practices of deliberation because those are successful in building up both shared ways of orienting knowledge as well as trust and credibility in the numerous actors that are involved. During these interactive practices, actors are included in policy making in two ways. On the one hand, by doing so, policy makers can draw on their local knowledge. On the other hand, active forms of trust in policy making institutions can be (re)built in a period in which such trust is not evident anymore.

According to Dewey, knowledge is an achievement, the product of an ensuing process of inquiry (Hildebrand, 2003, p. 24). Therefore, knowledge is not something that we simply receive; it is a situated process that is designed to respond to a certain problem (Hildebrand, 2003, p. 24). In traditional philosophy, knowledge is supposed to consist of both perception and cognition, where perception is clearly inferior (Hildebrand, 2003, p. 24). But when we recognise both perception and cognition as dynamic processes that complement one another, this traditional philosophical dichotomy might be overcome (Hildebrand, 2003, p. 29). This vision of knowledge undercuts what is close to reality and expresses what is experienced, Dewey undercuts realism and idealism (Hildebrand, 2003, p. 86).

If society would follow Dewey's perception of knowledge, we can better focus on the practical roles of knowledge within policy analysis. Inquiry might have different goals and serve different interests. Moreover, policy analysis can inform politics, but politics can also inform policy analysis. In my opinion, an analysis that is open to these differentiations will better serve the contemporary situation of dispersed power, ambiguous institutions and a declining sense of trust. What should be introduced is a policy analysis that is pragmatist and has the ability to accommodate concessions in the network of actors. Besides, a critical policy analysis needs to adhere to a shift in the way institutions are perceived and designed.

Intervention

The last dimension to policy analysis relates to its essential characteristic of problem orientation and its commitment to facilitating effective interventions (Hajer, 2003, pp. 187-188). I want to introduce intervention as a final dimension because it relates to the failure of intervention that was identified earlier. Effective policy interventions are needed to solve contemporary issues. When the political setting is unclear, it becomes harder to act upon a

commitment to create effective interventions. For example, we cannot base interventions on existing legal systems if the problem transcends the territorial limits. The Netherlands cannot intervene in Belgium by its own legal system because Belgium has very different rules and procedures in its own legal system. Even more, if Belgium would have had the same rules, the Netherlands still cannot intervene because it does not hold jurisdiction over that territory.

Besides, intervention is tied to problem-solving, especially when it comes to transboundary problems like climate change. The task of problem solving has led to experiments in which stakeholders frame shared problems and discuss possible solutions. Likewise, policy making is expanded beyond the sphere of mere rule-creation. The stakeholders define agreements on actions that need to be taken which are supported by so-called 'soft-laws', like covenants or agreements. Being aware of the interdependence leads to the employment of benchmarking techniques, for example in multi-level governance immigration policies within the EU. This is largely due to the fact that the EU has come up with a mode that both enhances effectiveness across borders while not making other countries lose face. Effective policy making needs to assess which societal forces might support policy instruments. A good policy analysis should hold the ability to generate information on the ways in which specific social actors can be enlisted in a particular initiative.

In his conclusion, Hajer (2003, pp. 189-190) defines new ways to behave upon in the ideal of a policy science. First of all, policy makers and analysts must acknowledge that the political setting is no longer a given. Policy making is taking place in an institutional void and as a result, policy deliberation has become much more of a central site in policy making. Secondly, we should be challenging ourselves to reflect on the ways in which policy analysis itself is still part of the institutional crisis. Thirdly, the practical and pragmatist character of policy analysis makes it vulnerable to fulfil a role of servant to the governmental agencies. Fourth, it is needed to rethink the disciplinary orientations within the academy, or to reconsider the connection between policy analysis and political theory. Finally, policy analysis should insist on a connection between its theory development and empirical research.

The Path towards Deliberative Policy Analysis

To summarise, policy analysis still performs the meaningful role of organising knowledge. Because of the above we can call such organising endeavours a deliberative policy analysis that aims at valuing the quality of policy making both in terms of content and process. Deliberative policy analysis then is "the search for understandings of society to facilitate meaningful and legitimate political actions, agreed upon in mutual interaction, to improve our collective quality of life" (Hajer, 2003, p. 191). What is implied within this definition is that it is a starting point. Multiple methods should be used in interactive deliberation. What is considered to be meaningful intervention is derived from the discussion itself. Deliberative policy analysis is valuable because it is able to embrace two major elements. First of all, deliberative policy analysis includes a consideration of legitimacy. Our network society implies that policy will often be made without the backing of a polity. Therefore, we should think of policy making more like something that stands on its own. The issue of legitimacy is then more complicated because it is no longer possible to refer to the umbrella of formal political institutions for legitimacy. Policy making now involved citizens, their associations and

businesses exactly in the same way as it involves direct state intervention. Secondly, deliberative policy analysis incorporates a commitment to increase the quality of life because this would make the policy analysts think about the impact of certain actions. Quality of life here is not an abstract philosophical notion. The method of policy making itself will help to define what quality of life means when making a choice on policy making. If policy is primarily made within the sphere of politics, then policy analysts need to develop the thoughtfulness that allows them to facilitate processes of collective will formation that are oriented towards a notion of public quality of life. Therefore, I consider the wish to take deliberative policy analysis into account in the upcoming chapters in which I analyse the three dimensions described in this one.

Chapter Four – Polity

The previous chapter ended with the intention to follow a path towards deliberative policy analysis. Dewey is commonly regarded as one of the founding fathers of the deliberative democracy. A title that he earns through his argument in favour of epistemological qualities of deliberation (Dijstelbloem, Schuyt & De Vries, 2004, p. 146).

In order to analyse how truth and plurality of truths via the public relate, three dimensions of the previous chapter are used. These were polity, knowledge and intervention. I will use what I believe to be the most important upshots of these dimensions and relate this to the truth discussion. Simultaneously, the Wetenschappelijke Raad voor Regeringsbeleid[5] (WRR) is used as a case study that serves to illustrate the practical implications of the developments noticed in the three dimensions. The WRR started in 1972. This was a time in which advisory councils like it would be used for different policy areas and societal participation. The main task of the WRR is to establish issues and advise about future developments of those issues. The first council used a mainly theoretical approach that connected to international academic literature of new fields like policy science and public administration. In order to be able to scientifically base their advises, the council needed to be able to understand the academic world. The WRR started issuing reports for the government in 1975.

First of all, I want to explain why the WRR is a good case study for this thesis. Consequently, I will describe developments around addressal and trust that lead to what I think is a kind of hybrid connection between the state or government as a classical-modernist institution and the WRR as its own new political space.

There are a number of reasons that make the WRR a fitting case study for this thesis. First of all, the WRR is a thinktank of the Dutch government, based in The Hague. Its position an independent institute was founded in the law of the 30th of June 1976. The task stated on the website of the WRR is the following: "the council should gather scientific information for the purpose of the governmental policies" (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2020). Consequently, the WRR is often a contributor in governmental policy making. It is set up as an independent institute, yet it is also highly connected to the government, which might raise questions about its independency in practice.

Secondly, the advisory reports of the WRR extend to sectors and departments that are multidisciplinary. Together with the government, parliament and societal stakeholders, the WRR investigates a wide spectrum of topics. The resulting information is focused on long-term developments that could influence society as a whole. The council needs to point out contradictions and bottlenecks, while formulating problems that relate to major policy questions and propose policy alternatives to them. In order to do so, the WRR selects a wide range of potential topics for their working programme together with the government, parliament and other societal stakeholders. From the list of points, the council selects a few topics after discussing this with the prime minister. In the beginning of the thesis, the failure of sustainable development was discussed, implying a loss of impact in environmental advisory

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[5] In English: Scientific Council for Government Policy

reports. Environmental change is one of those problems that is unsolvable within one governmental term. Therefore, it is interesting to consider an institution like the WRR, because it is designed to devote its time and expertise to providing advice on such matters.

The final reason is related more to the philosophical accounts of pragmatist truth that I introduced earlier in this thesis. I consider the WRR as an inherently pragmatist institution, as it was founded as a service to the government. To illustrate, I wish to introduce an analogy by Dijstelbloem, Schuyt and De Vries (2004, p. 140-143) on the AIDS outbreak in the Netherlands. To this case, they apply Dewey's notion of the public. Deweys pragmatist philosophy forms an alternative for thinking in terms of control and power. In *The Public and its Problems* (1927), Dewey discusses the legitimacy of the treatment of a political issue. He defers from the notion of a collective but establishes the size and scope of the political issue. Then, the public is not given, but dependent on the issue that is at hand. (Dijstelbloem, Schuyt & De Vries, 2004, p. 143-145). The aids outbreak was managed by roundtables with those that were considered dependent on the issue at the time, such as the Dutch queer movement but also the blood transfusion services. It was this group of the public that contributed towards the implementation of policies concerning aids. I think the same goes for the Dutch government with issues such as climate crisis. Once they started to realise that problems could suddenly present themselves, they, initiated a new institution that is focused on those issues. From a pragmatist point of view, this makes the WRR interesting to explore.

Who is the Problem Owner?

In this chapter, I will analyse the first dimension, polity. Polity concerns the organisation of the political community. Nowadays, it is no longer clear whom one should address. For example, in times where something is going 'wrong' in a country. Who does society recognise as the problem solver? Is policy making still the product of a stable polity? And is the polity stable at all in contemporary society? In chapter two it was noticed that policy analysis comes with a change of vocabulary that connects to the new organisations founded between the traditional institutional layers. These new organisations are called new political spaces, such as NGO's and thinktanks. It is my opinion that the government or sovereign state has not vanished as an immediate point of addressal. Even though power has become more dispersed, citizens tend to know who to confront that hold important positions of accountability or responsibility. This tendency is noticed especially in times of crisis or chaos.

Since March 2020, the Netherlands is faced with such a crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the corona virus and corona crisis. In this thesis, I would like to use this crisis as an analogy that further illustrates the relationship between the government, the WRR and truth. As this virus causes a lot of people to get ill and possibly die, measures need to be taken. It seems like immediately, the Dutch citizens looked at their government to impose the right measures upon them. Of course, there is a part of society that criticised the government for not finding the right measures. Nevertheless, that still generally means that they are expecting solutions from the government, only different ones. The majority of Dutch citizens expect that the government will create policies that we can follow and that will protect us. And so, the

government did. It induced a so-called 'intelligent lockdown', meaning that all citizens were urged to stay home and needed to self-quarantine in case they showed any symptoms of the disease. The majority followed these new measures and regulations. The goal of the intelligent lockdown was to ensure that hospitals were not overloaded with patients and that elderly, a weaker group of society, were protected.

Yet, the government is not an institution that can establish truths on its own. It is not made up of experts that provide knowledge to legitimise the measurements taken afterwards. For example, in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is a novel and unknown virus that the government will not have vital information on. Pragmatically, the government established organisations like the WRR and in this example, the Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu[6] (RIVM) in order to have truths generated on its behalf via inquiries. The RIVM is the Dutch institute that is involved with public health and thus played a pivotal role during the corona crisis in informing the government. It gives regular advice and is part of discussions that regard policy making around the corona crisis. And generally, the government goes by the advice provided by the RIVM. For example, it issued a research into the effect of COVID-19 on children. Consequently, based on the results of this research, the government could decide on that information whether or not elementary schools should be closed.

In his theory, Dewey sought to exchange the term truth for warranted assertibility. Accordingly, he made the goals of inquiry more uniform. How? Well, because this meant that the main goal no longer was obtaining more knowledge or truth but making more warranted assertible judgements. I see the same flow in the relationship between the government and the RIVM or WRR. The two institutions' main goal is not to find more knowledge or truth, even though they produce it in their inquiries. Rather they aim to provide the government with authorised judgements that paves the way for credible policymaking.

Something that must not be forgotten is that the government does not only rely on the expertise of advisory organisations. Generally speaking, it represents all citizens in the Netherlands too. At the end of the day, the citizens have voted during election times and those votes are now represented in the government. A little side note I do like to make is that this representation is indirect, as ministers are not chosen by the public directly. Earlier I mentioned the matrouchka system metaphor, based on the Russian dolls that fit in to one another. There, it was seen as following; the regional fit into the national which fits into the international. I want to re-introduce this metaphor in order to implement it with regards to the WRR and the government. I see the government then as made up of advisory organs such as the WRR, which itself again takes information from advisory institutions and the academic sphere.

Trust Among Actors

From the previous section it was evident that the position of the polity is not so clear. In creating policies, the government needs other institutions to gather information and advice. Another important point of the polity dimension is that politicians and policy making focus on finding formats that generate trust, instead of solely providing solutions to pressing problems.

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[6] In English: National Institute for Public Health and the Environment

Trust and truth are two concepts that intuitively can go well together. On the one hand, for example, a minister who is thought of as one who generally speaks the truth is trusted. On the other hand, it can be dangerous to trust people. A minister that does not base his statements on the truth is generally thought of as untrustworthy. This shows that it can be dangerous to trust people. Besides, people search for reasons that support claims that they regard as true. This can also be called a confirmation bias. For instance, a lot of Americans trust in their president Trump, but he does not always tell the truth.

However, for the purpose of this discussion I would like to steer away from trusting people and move to other entities that can be trusted. In the House of Commons, the ministers can be trusted, but the members will critically judge their policies. Recently, on June 16th, the WRR published a report in which it reflects on the long-term consequences of the corona crisis, *Vulnerability and Resilience*[7]. Such reports might contain advice that certain members of the House do not agree with.

Trust for policy making is quite easily generated if it is based on what is believed are truths. Nevertheless, the meaning of truths can differ, when it is used in a pragmatist way. What I am referring to here is the fact that pragmatist theories are concerned with what people mean or do in describing a statement as true. For example, if we return to the example of the COVID-19 pandemic, truths can differ widely. After investigation, the RIVM decided that it was safe for younger children to remain at elementary school. This advice was also based on the effects that keeping children at home would imply for the parents. It would include home-schooling and day-care difficulties. However, a group of parents, teachers and students themselves were worried about their own safety risks and protested against schools staying open. At the same time, neighbouring countries around the Netherlands were already shutting their elementary schools down. Consequently, the government decided to close the elementary schools and high schools for almost three months. I believe such an example shows that there can be a tension between what experts hold to be true and what the public thought of it to be true in a pragmatist sense. The basis of this tension is the discordance between one truth, in this case of the RIVM, and the truth as perceived by the public. The public truth here is one of plurality.

Hybrid Institutions

In a classical-modernist model, the political establishments control policy making. Indeed, they still have powers and often society needs the stability and reliability of such institutions. Yet, the classical-modernist institutions are being challenged by new political actors such as NGO's. Because of the fact that their legitimacy and effectiveness is questioned, these institutions have adapted. Actually, the practices of policy making should be re-invented in order to find solutions to problems. The classical-modernist institutions can remain relevant if they hold the ability to do so.

Like mentioned before, I find the interaction between the WRR and the Dutch government an interesting one. In the introduction, the WRR's task of providing scientific information on long-term developments was mentioned. The advisory reports of the WRR extend to both sectors and departments, making them multidisciplinary. Together with the government,

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[7] https://www.wrr.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2020/06/16/kwetsbaarheid-en-veerkracht

parliament and societal stakeholders, the WRR investigates a wide spectrum of topics. Therefore, I think of the relationship between the government and the WRR as the following. The government itself resembles a classical-modernist institution because it is still the official site of policy making. Besides, it is still the main controller of policy making. In battling new political actors, the government has put the WRR in place, which resembles a new political space. This is largely due to the fact that the WRR has the ability to tackle problems that the established institutions are unable to resolve legitimately and effectively. Furthermore, the WRR is a new political actor that exists within the institutional void. The domain it operates in comes with not much pre-given rules that define responsibility, authority and accountability expectations. The WRR functions like a bridge between the government and its policies to solve issues and future developments.

The task of the WRR is to gather reliable information for the government to design policies around. I see a connection here with Dewey's importance of inquiry. Inquiry in his sense is the process of finding reliable and valid answers to problems. I believe that the task of the WRR matches Dewey's proposition. Especially in the sense that the WRR strives to remove unexplained elements by finding answers that form a unified solution. One question the WRR has been dealing with is the emergence of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence. On the 24th of April 2020, the WRR released a position paper that wished to contribute to the debate in the house of representatives about the usage of a so-called 'corona-app'[8]. This app was supposed to alert people who had been around someone that was diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus. In this paper, the WRR refers to six earlier inquiries in order to put forward two dangers of a corona-app. Even if in this way it does not provide a solution to the problem, it does make sense of unexplained elements for the members of the house.

Which Way Around?

Following the previous section, on the one hand, I agree with the statement that policy is no longer the outcome of politics. It is the other way around, namely that politics is the outcome of public policy initiatives. There are a couple of consequences that follow from this statement. First of all, it could directly contradict the assumption made in the first point, where it was argued that the government is still the one to address. Here it is argued that if policy is behind politics, then why are policy analysts and policy makers not the ones that we address? To press the point even further, I will now introduce the other side of the WRR. On the other hand, it is my intuition that the WRR is actually a case that proves that policy is the outcome of politics as well. Implying both policy as the outcome of politics and politics as the outcome of policy means that I am directly contradicting myself. However, I would like to introduce the following.

Actually, I do not find arguments for both too convincing. I believe that this has mainly to do with the fact that the relationship or construction as we could call it between the WRR, and the government is a novel one. Not in the sense that it has just begun, because it already started in the 1970s. Rather, they together form a certain hybrid version between the classical-modernist institutions and new political spaces. Like I said before, the WRR is a new political

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[8] https://www.wrr.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2020/04/21/position-paper-wrr-tweede-kamer-hoorzitting-rondetafelgesprek-corona-appa

actor that functions as a new political space due to its problem-solving qualities. Besides, the government retains its position as classical-modernist institution. Especially because it was noticed in the first part of this chapter that it generally remains the one to address, especially in times of chaos. As the relationship between the WRR and the government is both a bridge and hybrid, I would like to call it a *hybridge* relationship.

I do concede that introducing this new term can raise new problems as well. Within this thesis I do not have the framework to discuss the implications of the invention of this term. Yet, I am convinced it is a term with potency that can positively valuate the WRR and is thus valuable for my argument.

This relationship also has consequences concerning the distinction between authentic and symbolic politics, made earlier by following Blühdorn. First of all, the ontological quality increases due to the hybridge relationship, since truth and originality are fostered by the investigations of the WRR. Moreover, the WRR ensures that the government focuses on the needs and problems of the constituents and has the ability to solve them, making it more authentic as well because it does not focus on the needs of political elites. Finally, the hybridge ensures trust in institutions and facilitates engagements throughout all levels of society Therefore, the hybridge function of the WRR and the government would in my intuition imply that the reputation of politics goes more to the authentic side of the spectrum.

Chapter Five – Knowledge

The second dimension of policy analysis is knowledge. Therefore, in this chapter, I will look into the relation between knowledge, the government and the WRR. First of all, I will discuss what it means to have appropriate knowledge and how the gathering of knowledge has changed over time, especially within the WRR. Secondly, I intend to say something on the boundaries of policy analysis and the revision of methods. Afterwards, the fact that knowledge provision is in danger is considered. Finally, I want to look into the consequences of the hybrid structure mentioned at the end of the previous chapter with regards to knowledge.

Governments Letting Go

To begin with, there is a widespread recognition that governments need to let go of the idea that decisions can be made only after appropriate knowledge is collected and confirmed. Earlier it presupposed that policy analysis can provide us with uncontroversial knowledge that enhances the governmental ability to solve issues. I wonder whether or not one should think of policy analysis as a sphere of scientific rationality? Especially when we think of the pragmatist account of truth. According to Dewey, knowledge is an achievement; it is the product of a process of inquiry. As power has become more dispersed and it is not fully clear who to turn to, some people feel stress about effective state power. Can or will there be a place full of scientific knowledge that is unreputable?

If one looks at this more positively, policy makers have started to include the impact that uncertainties are dealt with in society. Simultaneously, the gathering of knowledge has gone from centralised, namely by the state, to democratised. This can be found especially in the ways that the WRR has changed its perception on knowledge gathering and processing over the years.

After the first report in 1977 called *We Will Work on It[9]*, the WRR received major critique by officials, politicians and journalists that it was too involved in policy. The council took on this feedback and started to engage in supplying action perspectives on broad societal issues. The legitimacy, both societal and political of the WRR is sought to enlarge, by focussing on "real, future problems". These problems are multisectoral and interdisciplinary. As the WRR chairman said at the time: "realistic solutions for the long term" should be at the centre.

During the nineties these changes were implemented and formalised. Besides, attention shifted from content policy to the prerequisites of policy. Furthermore, the style of the reports changed, as they are now more focused on offering policy arguments.

From 2003 and onwards, more often current and normative themes were explored. For example, about the relationship between religion, and the state or society. But also, between society and the media during digitalisation times. Simultaneously, the council broadened its perspective in order to include society as a whole. It was decided that the council should invest

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[9] All publications of the WRR can be found on their website:
https://www.wrr.nl/publicaties?trefwoord=&periode%2Dvan=&periode%2Dtot=&onderwerp=Alle%20onderwerpen&type=Rapport

more into international orientation and the translation of individual reports to policy and society.

In 2013, the council chose to follow a more dynamic and flexible way of program making, which should connect better to the dilemmas of the government and parliament, while leaving space for asked advices and current developments. The WRR has chosen to focus on a more dynamic and flexible method of programming, which is even more compatible with the current dilemmas of government and parliament and which leaves more room for requested advises or contemporary developments. The input for this program is found in periodic conversations with ministers, policy makers and members of parliament. Besides, societal actors and scientists are consulted for this program. Furthermore, the council starts following the programs of other advisory councils on national, European and global level. In order to do all of this, the council created more flexibility and responsiveness to short-term projects and greater product differentiation. Consequently, themes such as dealing with physical safety risks and big data, privacy and safety became part of the council's agenda.

In the chapter on polity I noticed a decline in power of the classical-modernist institutions, leading to a dispersion of power. Dewey argues that policy analysis that can deal with these differentiations can better adhere to the contemporary situation of diffused power, with ambiguous institutions and depreciating levels of trust. Consequently, a pragmatist policy analysis should be implemented that accommodates concessions between the different actors. In my opinion, the knowledge processing change by the WRR indicates a shift towards a more pragmatist policy analysis that has also shifted the way in which institutions are perceived and designed.

Boundary Work and Rethinking Methods

Something that was also highlighted in the previous chapter is the fact that (scientific) expertise comes with boundary work. The primary board of the WRR is supported by the so-called 'bureau of the WRR', which consists of scientists, managers, communicational staff and interns (Wrr.nl, 2020). Usually, the council exists of five to eleven members, who are elected by the cabinet for a period of five years. Moreover, all council members are professors of different disciplines, ranging from criminology to corporate finance. All decisions of the board are communal. One can imagine that someone who is a professor in corporate finance understands the economy but does not understand a criminal's perspective on it. The inverse goes for a professor in criminology. What will he or she know about technological developments in society?

In chapter two I mentioned that therefore policy analysis should rethink its methods too. And to a certain extent the WRR has done this. In the historical overview in the last section such changes have been noted. Whereas the WRR used to be theoretically based on scientific literature, it seems as though there is now more discussion and engagement going on in writing these reports. Furthermore, the board of the WRR is filled with professors and experts from all kinds of disciplines, which leads to more interdisciplinary reports. Nevertheless, if one takes a quick glance over the latest reports, it is noticed that they are still filled with academic references. The literature section in the last report on *The Better Work* has over fifty pages of

references. Even though it is said that societal actors are involved in the reports, can the WRR really say so if you take for example the Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS)? Is that truly a societal actor or is that a bureau that runs extensive inquiries on all kinds of topics? Following Dewey, it might be the case that inquiry can have different goals and serve different interests. This is mostly true if we look at the practical roles of knowledge within policy analysis.

Commitment to Provide Knowledge

Another point found in the previous chapter was that the commitment to providing knowledge could be at stake. Yet, it is my opinion that the hybridge between the government and the WRR ensures a steady flow of knowledge provision. Can it be said that policy analysis is made up by a combination of identifying unawareness and providing knowledge? In the next paragraph I will investigate the implications of identifying unawareness and knowledge provision and relate it to the WRR.

For the first element of policy analysis, identifying unawareness, I want to say the following. If it is assumed that the government itself does not have the ability to put forward its own pragmatist truths, then it needs to turn to other institutions. And it did in 1972 when it started the WRR. Consequently, the main task of the WRR, to inform the government about interdisciplinary and transcendary future issues, can be tied to the (identification of) unawareness task. Governments in the Netherlands are elected every four years, making their time in office relatively short. Consequently, governments tend to deal with issues they face during their ruling times. But there are long-term developments and issues that need to be dealt with. One of the most obvious ones is climate change. A government does not have the ability to solve that in one term of four years. It is the WRR's task to inform them on these tasks. Therefore, I think that it functions as an organisation that identifies problems that the government might be unaware of. For example, the WRR published a range of documents that focused on the project called *Tenable Healthcare*. This project revolves around the investigation of future health care in the Netherlands. Currently, the quality of healthcare in the Netherlands is excellent, but it is expensive. Such projects and publications identify pressures that will be present in the future, such as increasing health care expenses and pressure on health care workers. Through the reports, the WRR informs the government of these upcoming developments that it might have been unaware of.

The publications of the WRR are categorised into four series: reports to the government; policy briefs; explorations and working papers. The WRR-reports are extensive inquiry reports that are dedicated to advising the government. Policy briefs are shorter publications that consist of thoughts from the WRR on a current issue, while making suggestions for the policy around this issue. The WRR has released seven policy briefs that are roughly between twenty to fifty pages long. Explorations are focused on pointing out societal developments and issues that should be on the political agenda. Generally, explorations are vast bodies of work that range between 150 to 500 pages. Lastly, working papers are the background studies that support the claims and advises made in other works.

About the second element of policy analysis, knowledge provision, I want to discuss two issues. On the one hand, the WRR takes its role to provide the government with knowledge

very seriously. Serious in the sense that it currently produces reports of almost three-hundred pages. The first report on the European Union, the structure of the Dutch economy and the energy policies was a bundle of three parts. The parts were all around forty pages long. And at this time, summaries did not exist. Every report issued by the WRR has a summary of around ten pages. These summaries are a lot shorter and to the point than their lengthy parents. On the other hand, a quick glance over the four types of published documents issues by the WRR have been increasing in length over the last two or three years. And this is after a slow but steady decline in length over the years before that. What does this mean? Dewey argued that knowledge is not something that is simply received. Rather, it is a situated process that is designed to respond to a certain problem. So, the one thing this increase can imply is that the WRR needs more knowledge in order to answer to contemporary problems. Or that in this reasoning, problems are becoming more complex.

Knowledge in the Hybridge

So, in the previous chapter a new structure between the government and the WRR (and other informative institutions or societal actors) has been identified. Likewise, this dialogue between the two institutions and their new practices has implications for the second dimension of policy analysis: knowledge. Knowledge gathering now is more about interactive practices of deliberation with multiple stakeholders and societal actors. This development was found in this chapter in the change of methods of the WRR during its existence. The fact that the government and the WRR as a hybrid work in a more flexible way is also represented in the WRR's methods concerning knowledge. Currently, it has the ability to leave room for adaptations and conversations with all those involved in the policy making. Such interactive practices can lead to an increase in local knowledge within the reports. Besides, forms of trust between actors in policy making institutions can be rebuilt during a period with lower levels of trust. So, due to its flexibility, the WRR had the capability to change its methods to some extent. The board is made up of a mix of scientists from all fields. Besides, they strive to include as many societal actors within the reports as possible.

It is logical to think that democracy can be realised quite well in a society based on knowledge. The combination of highly educated citizens and technological opportunities to inform themselves and discuss are the best circumstances for a thriving democratic culture (Dijstelbloem, Schuyt & De Vries, 2004, p. 135-137). Yet, our current democracy is challenged by the rise of a new category of problems, such as climate change. Dijstelbloem (2003) introduces the notion of UPO's, *unidentified political objects*, Nevertheless, doubts exist already for a long time whether democracy can consort with knowledge. The public is usually thought of as short-sighted and are not based on enough insights. However, Deweys pragmatist perspective is the exception to the rule here. Dewey prefers a knowledge theory that is pragmatist and argues that 'intelligent thinking' is relative to the concrete problematic situations. This means that democratic institutions, if they contribute to the problem-solving ability of society, can perform a knowledge acquiring function.[10] Dewey thinks of the public

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[10] Dewey discusses this in *The Public and its Problems (1972)*

more as those who undergo the consequences of an action. The method Dewey had in mind was a combination of academic inquiry and democracy. However, it should not be a technocratic solution, because Dewey discarded technocracy. If power is in the hands of a small group of experts, two things occur. Firstly, rulers become deaf to the opinion of the public. Secondly, no use is made of the knowledge available in society at local level. The state's problem-solving ability can be enhanced if it uses (locally) present knowledge.

I am looking at the challenge of society to find new legitimacy for the treatment of political and epistemological issues that problems such as climate change can induce. Such issues appear mostly in knowledge-based society. Thus, they are confronted with two kinds of new problems (Dijstelbloem, Schuyt & De Vries, 2004, p. 137-139). First of all, there is an introduction of new entities, such as the emergence of a new technology or virus. Secondly, boundaries of the framework in which problems are positioned are blurring. As a result, democracies are facing the challenges to find new answers on two fronts. The first front concerns control. The complication here lies in the fact that some problems cannot be formulated without the use of expert language. The second front concerns the power of experts. How can we ensure that experts will not make the decisions rather than politicians?

Dewey defines the public as "all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent that it is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for" (Dewey, 1927, p. 15-16). This usage of the public has important implications for democracy. In the classical view, the state is a prerequisite for a democracy because it created the institutions and tools that enable the collective willpower that leads to the formulation and realisation of general interests. Dewey turns this relationship around. He acknowledges that democracy primarily is about self-constituting publics. Therefore, object of politics are the issues that have public consequences.

The commitment to providing knowledge in my opinion is no longer at stake. Especially not when institutions like the government and the WRR bundle their powers/advantages together to aim their actions towards the public. The WRR identifies issues the government might not be aware of, such as climate change. Simultaneously, the WRR is serious in its knowledge providing role. Besides, it acknowledges the situatedness of knowledge.

The methods and seriousness of providing knowledge of the WRR show that it strives to include the public so to say into the reports. There are truths from a wide range of academic fields, truths from investigations of other institutes and truths from other societal actors that can be impacted by the new policy measures. All these truths together are bundled into one truth that is presented by the WRR. The WRR bundles the diversity of the public and represents a vast amount of perspectives, even if these perspectives cannot be categorised under one heading.

Chapter Six – Intervention

Intervention is the final dimension that I brought forward in chapter three. What becomes clear from the word itself is that intervention is important for problem solving. Effective interventions are needed in policy analysis in order to address contemporary issues. During the chapter on polity it became clear that society today struggles with whom they should address, especially in problematic times of hardship. The COVID-19 pandemic is such a situation in which citizens can turn to different institutions that hold powerful positions within society. Furthermore, the chapter on knowledge showed that for issues such as climate change, it is good to include the (appropriate) public in order to account for multiple perspectives that face the consequences of the actions that the WRR can advise.

This chapter is rather complex, due to the fact that the WRR itself does not intervene in the way that the word itself would imply. The WRR does not hold any power to actively intervene in governmental policies. Yet, it advises can be directly found in governmental policies and thus it indirectly is involved in actual policy making. This is also connected to the distinction between policy analysis, what the WRR does, and policy making, what the government does.

First of all, I want to discuss how policy advice in the WRR is not centred around rule-creation. Like Corien Prins, director and chairwoman of the WRR puts it (2020): "the WRR makes suggestions about the direction in which the government should go but does not wish to be involved in the actual design of that policy advice".[11] Afterwards, I want to look into the methods that make the WRR's policy advice or 'intervention' effective. Finally, I wish to say something on whether or not politics is the result of policy, or the other way around. Also, what does that imply for the reputation of politics? More authentic or symbolic politics?

Policy Making Beyond Rule-Creation

Because the WRR uses an interactive approach with multiple stakeholders in writing their reports, policy making expands beyond the sphere of mere rule creation. Other societal institutions and stakeholders are included within the policy reports of the WRR. Likewise, the reports of the WRR are no longer about voicing one truth. It bundles a variety of truths in a way that it can respond to urgent and transcendary problems that the government might face in the future. Lately, all reports in the beginning mention that the academic and scientific spheres are the major influences of the advices. But other sources of information are explored as well.

Firstly, for example, in the report *Het Betere Werk[12]* every chapter closes with a section called 'a day at the work of'. In these sections, people from all kinds of employments; truck drivers, accountants, order pickers, ICT and teachers are discussed. Truck driver Max describes how he starts his day at five or six in the morning and works around fifty to sixty hours per week. Besides, he describes how technology has influenced his job on a day-to-day basis. The authors of the report at the end add a box of demographics about all truck drivers in the

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[11] The Dutch phrase makes this even more clear: "bij de WRR willen wij ons focussen op de richting, niet de inrichting van het overheidsbeleid"

[12] https://www.wrr.nl/publicaties/rapporten/2020/01/15/het-betere-werk

Netherlands. This includes the total amount of employees, their educational level, their salary and the work pressure that is experienced in their jobs. Secondly, figures and statistics are included that come from the CBS, committees dealing with a similar issue, the academic world and the WRR itself. Lastly, the WRR's reports are based vastly on academic sources, which shows in the almost forty pages of references at the end of the report. Altogether, the information gathering has become more plural and public. Thus, the creation of the WRR reports has become an interactive process that includes the public, even if this only creates an image of them in the report.

Effective Policy Making

So, it is impossible to consider the activities of the WRR as interventions in the way most people know it. But it does provide governmental policy advice. I think it is interesting to look at how the WRR ensures that such advice on policy making is effective. With effectivity here I mean that the measurements should produce the three D's: it should be desired, decided and decisive. Therefore, I want to bring forward three characteristics of the WRR's methods.

First of all, the WRR works with projects. These projects, like I mentioned before, ensure the flexibility of the WRR. For example, I noted a short advice that was issued concerning the implementation of the corona crisis. The project nature of the WRR allows for such quick issues and advices. Another example I found really interesting is the podcast that was introduced recently, called *Vogelvlucht*[13]. As I was perusing through all the publications of the WRR, I noticed that it lacked certain new media forms, such as videos. The only media communication the WRR seems to be using is written text. I believe that the WRR needs to engage in new media forms for two reasons. First, to ensure that there is more communication towards the public both during and after the release of the new report. Second, these fast ways of portrayal I think fit the project-based character of the WRR and will therefore increase it effectivity. Media forms like the newly introduced podcast by the WRR are informative and transparent. Besides, it is more attractive to the broad public to listen to thirty minutes of interesting information than to read a three-hundred-page report.

Secondly, the WRR strives to find a balance between thinking on its own and consulting other experts in policy and science that ought to be at the front line of the field. The WRR is one of a kind in the sense that it is the only advisory organ in the Netherlands that accounts for multiple sectors. Thus, every project includes roundtables, interviews with people in the field and expert sessions. An example of this has been treated in the previous section. It is the belief of the council that the best advises emerge from interaction between professionals, policy makers and scientists. In terms of effectivity, the policy advices will become more effective when there are more actors involved.

Thirdly, the council meets every two weeks about the content and progress of the investigations. Colleagues check one another's work in the concept phase and afterwards, an external peer review ensures the quality of the reports. Unfortunately, there was no more

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[13] For the first episode of Vogelvlucht about the WRR as an organisation:
https://www.wrr.nl/publicaties/geluidsfragmenten/2020/06/11/vogelvlucht-1-het-verhaal-van-de-wrr

information about the details of this external peer review, which of course lies in the nature of peer review. However, the WRR has its own kind of interventive mechanisms. Every five years, the WRR asks an independent committee to evaluate itself in terms of effectivity. The last independent evaluation took place in 2017. The recommendations made by this committee play an important role in the future development of the organisation.

Servant or Service?

A thing that was mentioned in chapter three before and I want to address again is the role of the WRR for the government. The practical and pragmatist character of the WRR makes it vulnerable to fulfil a role of servant to the government. First of all, I find that even though the WRR does portray itself as an independent think-thank, it does serve the government to a great extent. Therefore, it is vulnerable to become a servant to governmental agencies. Yet, Corien Prins (2020) mentions in the podcast *Vogelvlucht* that the WRR's reports are only based for twenty percent on governmental requests. The other eighty percent is put on the agenda by the members of the WRR itself. Still, the government can ask for advice on a specific issue but does not have any influence on the actual contents of the reports.

I think the WRR can take measures in order to retain its role of being independent. In the hybridge relationship, I find it important that a balance exists. One of the parties should not become more important nor more powerful than the other. The WRR does a good job in enhancing trust and authenticity for its own organisation. Every five years, the WRR is being evaluated by a self-appointed committee. The upshots from this evaluation are incorporated into the future work of the WRR. One example is that during the last evaluation in 2017, the committee argued that the WRR should explore more communication during the process of writing the advisory reports. Now, with initiatives like the new podcast, I think they are most certainly taking that on board.

I want to return to three dimension of policy deliberation that I think makes the WRR's 'intervention effective' and ensures its independency from the government. First of all, policy deliberation in the WRR consists of the weighing of upsides and downsides and solutions, while taking into account the viewpoints that these claims are coming from. It includes multiple stakeholders that each have the opportunity of voicing their truth. Secondly, the WRR adheres to the fact that policy processes have changed because it has changed its methods over time to fit the context. This is a context in which cultural adherences are lessened and where individualisation has led to a different identity definition. Finally, I think the WRR itself is the balancing factor for the government between authentic and symbolic politics. If the WRR for example argues against a corona-app in its quickly issued report, then those in government that oppose the idea have a trusted and authentic truth they can base their arguments on. But it also relates to deliberative policy analysis; the search for understandings of society to facilitate meaningful and legitimate political actions, agreed upon in mutual interaction, to improve our collective quality of life.

In my opinion, the methods that the WRR uses to 'intervene' contribute to a more authentic politics or policy making. Especially since its new methods have enhanced the ability to include

the public. There are certain checks and balances within the WRR's own organisation that ensure a balance between the government and itself. Therefore, I do not believe that the WRR is a servant of the government. Rather, it provides a, sometimes unsolicited, service for the government that it can use or not use whenever it wishes to.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have attempted to ask and answer to what extent the philosophical notion of truth relates to the concept of plurality, with regard to the WRR's advisory reports. It started by establishing that sustainable development does not have enough impact as it should have. Besides, I used the distinction between symbolic and authentic politics to create a distinguishable spectrum. In order to account for this failure of sustainable development, policy making needs to be reconsidered. Yet, in order to do so, it is important to investigate the institutions in which policy making might take place. Thus, Hajer's distinction between classical-modernist and new political spaces was introduced. Furthermore, the third chapter focused on three dimensions put forward by Hajer as well: polity, knowledge and intervention. These dimensions and their developments together should follow the path of deliberative policy analysis. Also, I used the three dimensions to analyse the concept of truth and plurality of truth or the public. From this analysis, it became clear that there is more of a balance between one truth versus plurality of truths, especially within the reports of the WRR. Together, the WRR and government form what I newly called a hybridge. A structure or relationship that is well suited for the support of one another. Even more, the hybridge is able to represent views from the public in its policy making. By working together and including the public in its actions, the government has been able to perform politics in a more authentic manner. The state needs to be able to serve different publics. Then, the scope of the government is not decided from the present publics, but from the consequences certain actions might have and the functions that the state is being ascribed.

Thus, after this analysis, I want to argue that the WRR does not form a threat to traditional classical-modernist institutions. Instead, I view the WRR as a carrier of contemporary political democracy. For future research it can be interesting to look more into what trust has to do with these notions. During my writing, I encountered it multiple times and I suspect it to be of influence. Dewey said in his book *Democracy and Education* (1916) that "arriving to one goal is the starting point of another". This thesis represents my goal of achieving an academic masters' degree in the field of philosophy. In terms of this topic, the invention of the hybridge relationship amongst other findings contribute to the goal of answering the thesis I proposed in the introduction. Therefore, by arriving to this goal, I must agree with Dewey that this is the starting point not for one, but for many other goals.

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