POLICY EVALUATION AND PROGRAM TERMINATION

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ABSTRACT

One example of treating the policy process as an integrated process is the relationship between policy evaluation and policy termination. Policy and program terminations are seen as having three rationales: cost reductions, programmatic inefficiencies, and political ideology. The third appears to be the most important. Even so, formal program evaluation is increasingly critical to the termination exercise. This has important policy implications for both the professional evaluation community and those who have program termination responsibilities.
POLICY EVALUATION AND PROGRAM TERMINATION*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Until relatively recently, the policy process was seen as a series of disjointed activities. Even though many of the intellectual pioneers of the policy sciences (notably, Lasswell, 1951; Quade, 1970) emphasized its multidisciplinary approach and, somewhat later, the definition and delineation of a holistic policy process (Lasswell, 1971), it was not until the mid-1970s that policy researchers began to recognize the field as largely characterized and restricted by single disciplinary approaches to specific policy problems. The exemplary collection of essays by Bauer and Gergen (1968) illustrates both the strengths and weaknesses inherent in this conceptualization. While a number of excellent case studies were produced under the label of "policy analysis," these left distinct knowledge gaps; later analysts and policymakers were unable to translate these particular "lessons," insights, and recommendations into practical policy actions in their particular policy fora. There was, in Lasswell's (1951) terms, a surfeit of "knowledge in" the policy process (i.e., information about the substantive topical area) and a deficit of "knowledge of" the policy process (i.e., how the process operates).

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This deficiency was implicitly acknowledged during the 1970s with the failure of so many well-intended social programs and an inability on an intellectual plane to explain the failures in a satisfactory, comprehensive manner. Lasswell (1971) and Brewer (1974), addressing what they conceived to be conceptual shortcomings in existing models of the policy process, offered an analytic framework which simultaneously emphasized discrete stages in the policy process and their essential integration. Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) stressed the process and politics of implementation, a focus seconded by Hargrove (1975), who referred to implementation as "the missing link" in policy analysis. Researchers and policymakers alike turned to policy evaluation, an exercise which was essential for assessing the merits of the new public sector programs. Unfortunately, this seemingly symbiotic relationship proved more frustrating than beneficial for both parties, as their respective approaches and needs were only rarely reconciled. Evaluators sought to apply their methodological approaches in relative isolation from the policymaker's requirements, thereby creating serious communications and credibility gaps between the two communities. (Rossi and Freeman, 1982) Finally, in the late 1970s, another group of researchers began to include policy and program termination as an integral part of the policy process (Biller, 1976; Behn, 1978). They questioned if there were sufficient knowledge of the concept--let alone the political process--regarding policy termination to permit decisionmakers to entertain that option with anything more than the faintest idea as to its execution or ramifications.
All of this argues by way of background that there has been a growing recognition that the general policy process is composed of various stages, that these separate stages probably require different conceptual and methodological approaches, and, finally, that they are all interrelated and rely on one another in important and discernible ways (Brewer and deLeon, 1982). While one can focus on a particular stage, such as decisionmaking, to overlook the connections between decisionmaking and implementation is to warp in fundamental ways one's knowledge of the overall policy process and, inevitably, the capability to determine the effectiveness of recommended policies and programs. The policy analysis community can no longer be solely concerned with aggregate, allocative decisions, which were largely predicated on a dependence on microeconomic theory. The distributive effects of policy decisions, which require a much broader, integrated, and multidisciplinary approach, is necessary to appreciate the complete implications of a policy.

A crucial yet unexplored illustration of these observations deals with policy evaluation, program termination, and their relationship. This neglect is especially apparent within the last few years as national, state, and municipal governments are faced with declining budgets, forcing them to "cutback management" or what Levine and his colleagues (1982) refer to as "the politics of retrenchment" (also Behn, 1980). Numerous examples of well-intentioned but poorly-conceived and ill-fated program terminations have recently come to light. Perhaps coincidentally, research on many of these cases has demonstrated that little rigorous evaluation of these programs lay behind the termination
decision, that, for example, the Office of Economic Opportunity was abolished not because its programs were ineffective but because of the political priorities of the Nixon Administration (Levine, 1970).

The public sectors within most of the industrialized nations are confronted with pressing and growing financial constraints (deLeon, 1982; Tarschys, 1981a; Chapman, 1980-81) and the consequent necessity of reducing program expenditures. Although the conditions are somewhat novel, there is little reason to think they are passing. If these necessary reductions are to be achieved in an equitable, systematic fashion with a minimum of social disruption and personal hardship, then it is essential that the policy evaluation community become active in the program termination activities. In other words, careful program analysis could compensate for the political inadequacies of the system.

This paper examines the current program termination activities in terms of their underlying motivations and concrete examples. The emphasis is on the political motivations which underlie many program terminations or reduction decisions, as opposed to usually-cited criteria of economy or efficiency. Naturally, in the governmental arena, policymaking will always reflect an element of principally political or ideological consideration. The essential questions posed here are, first, if this condition exists to the relative exclusion of "rational" program evaluation; second, if so, why; and, third (again assuming such a condition exists), what are the proper responses and responsibilities of the policy analysis and evaluation communities? While focusing in large part on terminations and their programmatic effects, this emphasis is more by way of illuminating the more important point detailing the essential linkage between policy evaluation and program termination.
II. PROGRAM TERMINATION

Before examining the rationale and politics of program termination, a brief review of prior termination research is in order. Some authors (e.g., Brewer, 1978) have stressed the draconian nature of policy termination while others (e.g., deLeon, 1978) have talked about "partial" termination. Still others have stressed the ephemeral nature of termination activities, pointing out how government agencies and institutions typically outlive whatever termination activities might momentarily threaten their existence (Biller, 1976; Kaufman, 1976). Behn and Sperduto (1979) illustrate how recipient expectations, or what they call the "entitlement ethic" and the political power that supports it (e.g., federal funding for medical schools), remove many potential termination candidates from even being proposed, much less seriously considered; if true, then only "weak sisters" need fear the termination axe, as Mitzman (1979) suggests has been the case with sunset legislation.

In light of their limited empirical base, these authors have proven remarkably prescient in their attempts to outline termination costs and benefits. Within the past five years, a number of concrete examples have come to light which amply support many of the hypotheses proposed by this literature. Some programs have had multiple "deaths" and "rebirths," the B-1 bomber (Wade, 1977; Ingersoll, 1981) being only a very visible example. Government agencies have been slated for dissolution by their own administrators, only to prove themselves remarkably hale. The best attempts of the Reagan Administration to dissolve the departments of Energy and Education and their continued
existence (Hershey, 1982) gives testament to the hardly perservance of public sector institutions. Job training programs within the Department of Labor are disbanded by the Reagan Administration but, like dragon's teeth, crop up elsewhere as quickly as they are eliminated (Lanouette, 1982). The National Weather Service was able to "weather" the Administration's order to shut down 75 stations with appeals to congressional allies (Franklin, 1982); the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms is successfully resisting Administration efforts to reduce its budgets as the liquor industry and National Rifle Association combine to maintain the Bureau's position in the Treasury Department (Wines, 1982; Gailey, 1982). Perhaps the most interesting observation from these varied experiences deals with the byzantine coalitions formed to obstruct and prevent the proposed cutbacks and terminations; for example, nuclear power proponents have joined with solar energy and conservation advocates to defend Department of Energy, as institutional prerogatives seem to outweigh ideological preferences (Miller, 1981).

There is, however, another side to the termination issue, as a number of agencies have been eliminated and certainly many specific programs have undergone sizeable budget reductions. It is to these that we turn our attentions, for their experiences indicate some of the criteria applied in program terminations and what types of program evaluations (if any) might have been used or were effective in advancing the termination cause. Examples of agencies and programs actually terminated include the Office of Economic Opportunity (Levine, 1970; Arnold, 1974), the Community Services Administration (Shribman, 1981), and various mental health programs (Bardach, 1972; Bradley, 1976). In addition, this historical base can be expanded by presenting arguments
used by Reagan Administration spokespeople to support the curtailment and elimination of various programs and agencies, such as job training, endowments for the arts, education, energy research, and legal aid services. Finally, a few examples can be gleaned from the recent cancellation of nuclear power reactors by their public utility sponsors.

The evidence aggregated from many termination experiences strongly suggests that three criteria are generally applied in greater or lesser degrees: financial imperatives; governmental efficiencies; and political ideology. Each, of course, represents a legitimate set of values. Furthermore, none of these should be considered independently of the other; a comprehensive examination of most termination decisions will reveal them to have aspects of--or at least nominal allusions to--all three. For our immediate purposes, however, we will examine them individually to determine their relative weights.

Financial or budgetary constraints have been increasingly posed as stimulating program terminations or at least retrenchments. Huge budget deficits--both actual and projected--have spurred American policymakers to reduce programs wherever such cuts seem possible; almost daily, newspapers report how various programs are being forced to severe austerity measures to survive; the prosperity of the Downsian bureaucrat (1967) securely expanding his organizational satrapy is irrelevant in the current fiscal environment. Tarschys (1981a and 1981b) demonstrates that this is not strictly an American phenomenon; even oil-rich Arabs are not immune (Ignatius and Ibrahim, 1982).

Governmental efficiencies--i.e., the ability of the public sector, especially on the federal level, to deliver a desired service in an efficient, timely manner--is a second criteria (Shubik, 1978) when
proposing program cutbacks. If, for instance, a Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program were proven to be too costly in terms of product delivered (e.g., employable personnel), the program could be termed inefficient by some standard (e.g., cost per trainee) and terminated. To cite another example, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara was convinced that there were better, more efficient alternatives for maintaining U.S. strategic deterrence than the air-launched Skybolt missile, so he discontinued the program (Enthoven and Smith, 1971).

Finally, political ideology—that is, one's general political orientation as it affects specific policies and programs—necessarily influences the termination decision. Even in periods of relative financial plenty, ideological precepts identify certain programs for attack, such as Nixon's assault on the OEO. Ronald Reagan, while Governor of California, opposed the California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) program and brought official malfeasance charges against it even though the CRLA was a "free good" to the citizens of the state, in that it was entirely funded by the federal government.

Nominally, government administrators and civics text authors have cited the first two reasons as motivating whatever program terminations might be considered necessary. Fiscal and operational responsibility is a virtual catechism in government offices; no agency wishes to be accused of wasting money or acting in an inefficient manner. Even lacking demonstrable evidence, public officials cite cost overruns and programmatic inefficiencies as grounds for eliminating programs. Rarely are purely ideological reasons given for terminating a given program.
However convenient and defensible the pleas of economy and efficiency might be, in terms of policy termination, they are in practice much less important juxtaposed to the third criterion, political ideology. Department of Energy (DOE) Undersecretary Guy Fiske, when asked about cost savings to be realized by the Department's dissolution, stated to reporters that "This isn't being done for savings.... There will be some savings, I am sure, but it is not being done because there is a cost savings of this much or that much."

(Anonymous, 1982) Other programs, such as compensatory aid to education and many job training programs, have been evaluated as being relatively cost-effective (see Stanfield, 1982b; Lanouette, 1982; respectively), yet are programmed for deep budget cuts and possibly total elimination.

The inherent difficulties in estimating costs and efficiencies, hence savings, might be one reason why government spokespersons are loathe to present termination policies in terms of savings or better delivery of services. A GAO report found that the Administration's claim that DOE's reorganization would save $1.3 billion in FY83 was "poorly documented" and impossible to support; even a revised saving estimate of $250 million over a three year period was judged as "not adequately documented" and failing to "reflect a full assessment of potential reorganization expenses" (U.S. Comptroller General, 1982: 12).

In some cases, projected economies are only first approximations which do not take into account any compensating expenditures or second order effects. For instance, a recent analysis by the CBO (Congressional Budget Office, 1982) reported that a 20 percent reduction in funding for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program
would produce a savings of only half that magnitude because the now-deprived AFDC recipients could turn to other forms of social welfare payments to compensate for their losses. The cancellation of projected nuclear power stations in the Pacific Northwest has saved the state public utilities money in the short run but the forecast 700-800 percent boost in electricity rates necessary to pay off the bonds issues which purchased the reactors and the immediate hike in local unemployment engendered by the cancellations make the financial arguments underlying the decision at least questionable (Redburn, 1982; Wilhelm, 1982).

At times, it is impossible to estimate with any confidence what the costs of a program deletion might be given that certain of the programmatic functions will have to be assumed elsewhere; i.e., savings realized on one level of government might easily be lost or exceeded as the costs are assumed on other levels, as could easily be the case in many of the Reagan Administration's "New Federalism" proposals (Demkovich, 1981 and 1982). Transition costs may be ignored in an attempt to make a termination look more attractive (U.S. Comptroller General, 1982). Finally, costs can be deliberately neglected because it is impossible to estimate what the "costs" really are. For example, the Reagan OBM has ordered a reduction in program funds for the Federal Child Immunization program with little way of estimating what the costs might be, either in monetary terms (i.e., resources that might have to be reallocated to medical treatment because of a lack of immunization) or in human suffering (i.e., diseases which might not have been contracted had the immunization program been continued). (Stein, 1982) For whatever reasons, the textbook preference for financial savings have not been widely advertised or, apparently, used as a motivating rationale for specific program terminations.
Efficiency of operation has been a more broadly cited explanation for program terminations. Downs and Larkey (1981: 384) offer tentative evidence that the California voter supported Proposition 13 in the expectation that it would force government to provide services in a more efficient manner. If cost savings were not to be realized from the reorganization of the Department of Energy, Undersecretary Fiske explained, it will "allow us to utilize our federal resources more efficiently." (Anonymous, 1982) And the Reagan Administration has repeatedly averred that state and local units of government are more capable of delivering governmental services to the populace than the distant federal monolith (Stanfield, 1982a); the "'New' New Federalism" is predicated on the assumption that programs dismantled at the federal level can, if desired, be reconstituted at the state or municipal levels and be more directly attune to the needs of their constituents. The evidence for this assumption is clearly open to debate.

Although perhaps the most difficult to defend and to define of the three termination criteria, political ideology has increasingly been forwarded as the basic cause or motivating factor in program terminations and budget reductions. A draft report by the Department of Housing and Urban Development claimed that:

Too often the Federal Government has been called upon to intervene, to insulate individuals, businesses and communities from the consequences of changes brought about by evolving technology, shifting market conditions and altered social attitudes. Intervention can do more harm than good by slowing the processes of individual and collective adjustment to changes. (Quoted in Herbers, 1982a: 20)

The final version of the report, while softened in tone, is no less firm
in its conviction, claiming that "in the past, the federal government has too often mandated an unassailable social objective and left it to others to pay the bill." The report asserts that "State and local governments have amply demonstrated that, properly unfettered, they will make better decisions than the federal government acting for them."
(Quoted in May, 1982) Or, in the words of President Reagan, "We are committed to restoring the intended balance between the levels of government." (Wade, 1982: p. 20; emphasis added)

Regarding the proposed dissolution of the Department of Education, Stanfield has observed that "whether it's a foundation or an education assistance agency is less important than the diffusion of power and the reduction in general size." (Stanfield, 1981a: 1909) Or, as in the case of compensatory education funds, the program's critics claim that

it's simply something the federal government shouldn't be doing. Education is the province of the states and localities...and no matter how effective a federal program may be, it still intrudes on the state and local domains.
(Stanfield, 1982b: 201)

The administrator of the Community Services Administration, which represented the final institutional vestiges of the federal War on Poverty, described the closing of his agency as a philosophical decision, "a returning of local decisions to local governments...the devolution of programs back to state and local governments [because] we no longer need that degree of federal presence." (Quoted in Shribman, 1981) CETA programs are being reduced with the explanation that since they primarily benefit the private sector, they should be funded by the principal beneficiaries (Lanouette, 1982) and many social welfare functions are being redirected with uncertain fates towards charitable organizations. (Hymowitz, 1982; Schellhardt, 1982)
In no area, however, is the philosophical stimuli to program termination more pronounced than in the case of the Department of Energy. President Reagan, in a 1980 campaign speech, asserted how "President Carter called for the 'moral equivalent of war' and created the Department of Energy, which is the bureaucratic equivalent of surrender." (Solomon, 1982a: 1) The Department's mandated sunset review document was more explicit:

Many of the department's programs are no longer valid within the context of the federal role in the energy sector of the economy.... In view of the demonstrated success of energy markets in those cases where they have been allowed to function freely, and given the limited role and responsibilities of the federal government in this sector of the economy, it is no longer necessary or appropriate to maintain a Cabinet-level Department of Energy. The department was established to address a set of problems that were peculiar to their time and that were largely the result of a philosophy that stressed excessive government intervention in the energy market in the first place. (Quoted by Solomon, 1982b: 1)

The emphasis on the ideological component to policy terminations is not restricted to the present spate of program cutbacks. Cameron, drawing largely upon reductions and changes in mental health services, has noted in general "the necessary impetus for a significant redirection in policy is provided by ideology" and that "ideology therefore lends legitimacy to proposals for change." (Cameron, 1978: 305, 306)

If these examples of program reductions and terminations are at all representative, then the fundamental reasons for program terminations lie not in the economics or efficiencies of the program, as the advocates of rational evaluation and planning in government, e.g., PPBS
or ZZB, might have one believe (Deniston et al., 1968). Rather, critical decisions are made on the basis of political expediency and beliefs. While these are surely important components of any political decisionmaking exercise, they are far removed from rigorous program evaluation and analytic influence. This finding, by itself, should come as little surprise, for ideology is, of course, the lifeblood of politics, the context policy analysts must recognize and operate within. What is somewhat surprising is that termination decisions are so overtly reached on these bases given the nominal adherence to "objective" standards and the availability of data describing the targeted programs. That is, more evidence can be collected and assessed regarding the effectiveness of a program by the time termination is considered than at any other stage of the policy process, certainly more than, say, the implementation stage. Decisions on program curtailments should be especially amenable to rigorous, methodologically-sound evaluations. Yet these criteria are largely ignored in favor of political and ideological dictates. If this is an accurate depiction, we need to inquire as to the role of policy evaluation as part of the termination montage and, in broader terms, its effect on public policy writ large.

III. PROGRAM TERMINATION AND POLICY EVALUATION

The emphasis on political ideology as the motivating factor behind policy termination decisions has two important consequences. First, it forces inequitable changes upon the body politic, with those who have less political voice such as the elderly, the poor, and the unemployed generally being the disadvantaged. This observation is supported by recent cutbacks in social welfare services, such as home insulation
programs for low-income persons (Corrigan, 1982), legal representation (Drew, 1982; Paltrow, 1982), and job training programs (Lubin, 1982a). As the New York Times headlined, "Fairness of Reagan's Cutoffs of Disability Aid Questioned" (Pear, 1982: 1). At issue is not so much the legitimacy of these reductions but the apparent lack of standards by which they are assessed or, when standards are established, how they are derived. Second, lacking substantive analytic support for such actions, there are few bases besides hope, intuition, and faith to predict what the results will be. There are legitimate questions as to the costs and benefits of Reagan's New Federalism, which Stanfield (1982a) described as "A Neatly Wrapped Package with Explosives Inside." Cameron (1978: 306) best summarizes the situation:

Legitimizing the proposal involves a systematic effort to delegitimize the policy it is designed to supplant. This frequently takes the simplistic form of "the right and the good" versus the "wrong and immoral...." But the simplistic approach that gives ideology its coalescing force results in ill-considered policy choices: data that are inconsistent with the ideology are ignored or explained away; rigid adherence to credo becomes more important than inquiry into the potential risks attending the prospect of contingencies;...

Even in the best of policy worlds, the difficulties in evaluation and analysis are legion. As noted above, many social welfare programs are resistant to the procrustian demands of cost-benefit analysis and its conclusions. Can one easily put a price on immunization programs, especially as they are applied to the young and the elderly? The Census Bureau recently released a report outlining the problems in defining, let alone measuring poverty (Herbers, 1982b). The Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training, Albert Angrisani, testified that "when we came here a year ago, they couldn't even measure what was right
and what was wrong...because nobody was really looking at performance.... There is no standard measure out there that everybody will accept as the basis for success or failure of the program." (Quoted in Lanouette, 1982: 241) On what basis can one predict what the reduction of funds to the National Transportation Safety Board (Rapoport, 1982) or the Bureau of the Census (see Stanfield, 1981b; Herbers, 1981) will have if nobody can accurately evaluate their present functions?.

There are, in fact, two alternatives for structuring program reductions which accept the three ascribed components of policy termination--economies, efficiencies, and ideologies--but in different degrees and priorities. The first, as cautioned by Cameron, is that "To the extent that the conceptual dimensions of policy are formulated on the basis of 'sweeping universals,' they are divorced from actual phenomena and therefore can be neither empirically verified nor refuted," a condition which "often results in a patchwork, piecemeal process characterized by a vast array of unanticipated consequences." (Cameron, 1978: 306, 305) Over the long term, inconsistencies would result due to changes in administrations, thereby undermining whatever order one might expect from the overall policy process. Under such conditions, one could only expect a series of program reductions and terminations ill-conceived, badly-managed, and probably counterproductive in their effect.

The second alternative is deceptively simple: to do better. But beneath this policy bromide lies a number of critical assumptions, roles, and challenges for the policy evaluation community. It is likely--perhaps even justifiable--that political ideology will continue
to be the dominant decision criterion for important policy and program termination actions. Policy is, after all, a manifestation of political values. In this sense, the ideological aspects of a policy decision are important data for the comprehensive understanding of the political context in which termination occurs. The key analytic question then becomes, to what degree can policy analysis or policy evaluation support or possibly affect program termination decisions which are based on ideology? The answers are, of course, simultaneously critical and resistant to generalization. If solid analysis can lend evidence to a program's performance (be it either positive or negative), it could have a definite effect on a decision to expand, maintain, or terminate a program. For instance, recent positive evaluations of CETA programs have undercut the Administration's negative, philosophically-based assessments of job training programs and given Congress valuable leverage in its attempts to retain public sector employment programs at a level well above the Administration's requests (Lubin, 1982b). Even though the political costs were admittedly great, McNamara's analytic evaluation of the Skybolt program was so persuasive that the Kennedy Administration was willing to pay the political price (Neustadt, 1970). By the same token, careful evaluation could identify programs which were thought to be productive but were, upon scrutiny, candidates for termination. This is especially true in many cases of technology research and development (deLeon, 1983).

The linchpin to this second, more optimistic alternative lies largely with the credibility of the policy evaluation community to contribute to policy termination debates. As suggested above, the shortcomings of policy evaluation during the 1970s were due to both the
practitioners and the sponsors. Their inability to share the same perspective or objectives greatly reduced the possibility that the evaluator and the client would have their respective expectations met and that their relationship would almost certainly be frustrated. The tensions between the evaluator’s formal methodologies and the policymaker’s institutional restrictions and requirements only exacerbated the communications gaps which already existed between the academic groves and the bureaucratic battlefields. Within such an environment, it was almost certain that policy evaluation would suffer in the eyes of the client (Larkey, 1979). Fortunately, many sound correctives to this overall situation have already been proposed (see Wholey, 1979; Freeman and Solomon, 1981; Rein, 1981; Cronbach, 1980). However, if evaluation research is to be be effective in the termination dialectics, it must recognize that it cannot continue in its purely retrospective mode, that it must be willing to project its findings into the future policy contexts and expectations, for policy termination opportunities represent both an end and a beginning (deLeon, 1978).

It is perhaps this second task, the abandonment of evaluation as a historical exercise, which presents the greater challenge and opportunity to the policy evaluation community, for, in many ways, it calls for a distinct separation from its past activities. Mere methodology enhancements are certainly not sufficient. The difference is less in the tools used than in the perspectives employed. Evaluations have to be carefully tailored to fit into the political context of the sponsor (Clark, 1976) which, as we have seen above, often means coping with--or at least paying heed to--political ideologies.
There should be few illusions here: at times the most thorough, conclusive evaluation will fall prey to political exigencies. But careful evaluations, where possible, will help to outline the ramifications of program terminations, identify those who will be hurt and helped (maybe even addressing matters of degree), and in the end, acutely reveal the political and ideological factors that enter into policy termination decisions. These analyses and revelations promise to bring a greater measure of equity and honesty into the policy process. Whether they are sufficient reward for encouraging the policy evaluator into entering the highly politicized program termination fray is, of course, another question, one best answered as a function of specific program contests, bureaucratic stakes, and personal inclinations.

Still, the potential rewards for the policy evaluation community appear to be well worth the candle, both in terms of tangible professional satisfaction and the more amorphous development of an improved policy process (Rich, 1979).

There is another set of incentives, more negative in its nature than the positive ones just posed. The first alternative, as outlined above, would be to permit conditions to remain in their present, highly unsatisfactory state. The political marketplace, as described by the incrementalist school of thought (Lindblom, 1965), has barely proven capable of "muddling through." Major government programs in such areas as health insurance or housing subsidies should not be undertaken without carefully formulated and evaluated pilot programs. To abandon such experiments and programs to the caprices of political ideology would be considered by some to be a fundamental failure on the part of
the evaluation community (Rivlin, 1971), for sound evaluations can offer important, substantive contributions to the policy debate (Boeckmann, 1976). The uninformed program termination can easily have deleterious effects, both on the actual program recipient and the community at large, as the deinstitutionalization of mental health treatment programs has painfully demonstrated (Wolpert and Wolpert, 1976). Finally, the lack of evaluation would permit termination decisions to be made and promoted strictly on ideological grounds which, for better or worse, undermines the transparency and credibility of the policy process to act in equitable ways and could conceivably lead to long-term deterioration in the accountability of the public sector. For all of these rather baleful reasons, then, the policy evaluation community might be accused of being timorous--perhaps even derelict--were it to ignore or bypass the challenges and opportunities presented by the current program termination activities.

IV. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The objective of this paper has not been to judge the state of the art knowledge in policy termination research or strategies or to correct whatever shortcomings that might exist in policy evaluation approaches and procedures. Distinctions between "terminations" and "retrenchments" or "summative" and "formative" evaluations are surely important but are better left to more specific analyses of such details. Rather, this discussion has focused on the interaction of these two stages of the policy process, to argue that from a public policy perspective that neither the evaluation or termination stage makes much sense without the other. The isolation of one from the other--either in concept or practice--would be difficult to justify.
If one agrees that program evaluation should inform policymakers and generally improve specific programs—that is, positively affect the policy process as opposed to having as its primary purpose the improvement of one's methodological skills or disciplinary reputation—then the evaluation-termination nexus becomes essential. Evaluation, if well-done and generally meeting the requirements of the sponsor, must be viewed as providing some indication as to a program's success or shortcomings. If this is the case, the evaluation results should certainly influence a possible termination decision regarding that program should the assessment prove negative. The evaluation question then is less one of relevance and more one of target or level (e.g., summative or formative); tactics, not grand designs, are at issue.

The acceptance of this charge manifests the tacit admission of the policy relevance and proactive orientation of evaluation research within the public sector. If the initial assumption—that evaluation has important policy implications—is not granted, then the evaluation exercise becomes much more academic and, in all likelihood, much more limited in both its scope and following. While such an eventuality is not unimaginable or indefensible, it would represent a major divergence from most recent trends in evaluation research as well as sizeable new opportunities lost, resources the political system can scarcely afford to squander. In fact, such an evaluation retrenchment or orientation would probably be opposed by a majority of members in the evaluation research community. Thus, policy termination becomes a central feature

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In this instance, "policy termination" is used in its broadest sense to represent actual agency terminations, basic policy redirection, partial terminations, and fiscal retrenchments.
of the evaluator's world, for even if the evaluator emphasizes the positive aspects of program assessment, without at least the implicit policy termination arrow in the quiver, the evaluator lacks a key threat in the recommendation arsenal. Without the option of program revision or termination, there is little cause to warrant the evaluation.

From the standpoint of the policy terminator, evaluation plays an equally critical role, but in a very different manner. If one holds that finances or efficiencies spur program terminations, it quickly follows that program evaluation is intimate and imperative to the termination process; how else can one arrive at program costs or benefits lacking skilled evaluations and the evidential base they provide? If one accepts the evidence and interpretation presented earlier—that ideology rather than programmatic costs or inefficiencies determines the program termination agenda—policy evaluation is still necessary because the relatively "objective" evaluations will reveal precisely who will be affected (i.e., who will be disadvantaged), perhaps to what degree, and the ideological or political reasons which motivate the cutbacks. Accurate, comprehensive analysis can identify and possibly relieve the inadequacies and inequities of the political process by pointing out the harmful effects of program terminations on groups that are politically invisible or disenfranchised. Their losses might still be ignored but at least the neglect would be deliberate and accountable. All of these are extremely important considerations which should be informing the termination debates but, to date, have been sorely absent. For these reasons, the policy terminator must rely heavily on the evaluation community.
What do these observations mean in practice? Again, the answers are somewhat straightforward and easy while their implementation is not. At a minimum, the evaluation researchers must recognize that their analyses need to consider the distinct possibility that a program could be eliminated as a result of their findings. To many, this responsibility might be unpalatable; Brewer (1978; also Brewer and deLeon, 1982) contends that the general neglect of termination research is partially due to a psychological reluctance to confront issues touching upon termination. Still, such a realization is needed if policy evaluation is to influence and improve future policies and, in particular, policy termination. Similarly, those within the policy termination realm should recognize the benefits and limitations of the information the evaluation community can provide. This working relationship, of course, must be more than a matter of fleeting convenience. It should be tempered by a long-term, continuing relationship, the mutual recognition of and respect for each group's basic requirements, approaches, and objectives, and the general acceptance of this paper's principal premise—that while both groups can function independently of the other, to do so would fundamentally distort our understanding of the policy process and ultimately undermine the public sector's ability to govern effectively and responsibly. The intellectual and institutional challenges posed by this relationship deal with its design and operation. There should be little question that these challenges are both difficult and real, yet well worth the effort; whether the policy analytic community has the conceptual and professional wherewithal to meet them is somewhat more problematic.
I. REFERENCES


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