

those same individuals and situations in a more critical light. I might also remind the authors that cases were frequently derived from someone's thesis, and were, therefore, full of lengthy and irrelevant descriptions, making them burdensome to study and teach. Despite their greater length, those cases didn't any better represent objective reality than the shorter versions we see criticized here. Finally, when cases came into serious use in the public policy schools, they were used in supplementing a curriculum that failed to teach about the political and managerial world.

Thus, as I scratch my head to determine what these authors are saying, I can only surmise that it is that if the case doesn't have all the context, all the questions, and all the data, that no one can be presumed to know what to do with it, or to learn much from it. But case teaching is, after all, about active engagement with the material and learning to apply effective judgment. Thus, the thrill would be gone and the purpose defeated if cases were written to do everything the article suggests they should—and we would be dooming ourselves to repeat the history of our profession instead of moving beyond it.

So, thanks for reminding us of the importance of cases showing people operating below the stratosphere, and thanks for reminding us of the importance of collaboration—or at least understanding other interests—in government decisionmaking, and thanks also for the reminder that cases require care in their preparation and reality in their presentation, just as do exercises and other forms of pedagogy in our business. But no thanks for failing to recognize that an individual case is a tool, along with many others, in a course and in a program. Cases cannot teach themselves, just as students will not find answers readily available in the situations they will later encounter.

Choosing and using the tools skillfully and in relevant combinations are the instructors' job now, and the students' later. It is not sufficient, nor is it relevant to the experience of capable teachers or curious students for us to offer a new set of cases that somehow could simply teach themselves without the need for faculty to guide, or students to struggle with. Rather, we need to continue to provide case material for students to look to—not only for answers but for questions, failures, and sometimes, even the facts.

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**USING THE MASTER'S TOOLS TO DISMANTLE THE MASTER'S HOUSE:
CAN WE HARNESS THE VIRTUES OF CASE TEACHING?**

Sally J. Kenney

Chetkovich and Kirp criticize the conception of politics that dominates policy schools and that cases transmit implicitly. They criticize specific cases and indict the limitations imposed by the case genre itself. I endorse their critique of the dominant paradigm,

and I would add a more thoroughgoing gender critique of existing cases. But I am not yet persuaded that the genre itself is irretrievably flawed. Although case writing conventions do circumscribe and structure how cases tell stories, cases still have many virtues.

THE VALUE OF CASE TEACHING

Cases meet the needs of professional education. They present lessons of public policymaking, bringing to life dilemmas of real people. They convey wisdom gleaned from successes and failures and compensate for students' lack of real-world experience and knowledge, which is why business schools created them for aspiring CEOs. Cases quickly describe policy episodes. Because we want to capture and share the stories and lessons of second wave feminism, the Center on Women and Public Policy¹ has launched a program to produce case studies. Students (particularly those geared toward practice rather than academia) need to know what ERA stood for, why the pornography ordinance so divided feminists, what the UN Conferences on Women accomplished, who Anita Hill was, etc. In short, our students need to quickly acquire basic knowledge and understanding of landmark events in the world they seek to enter, whether it is feminist activism or environmental politics. And few satisfactory materials are available that both tell these stories and invite students to explore their meaning.

Second, cases encourage active participation and engagement. Because cases are accessible stories, students from different majors can enter the case discussion on a relatively equal footing after reading even a short background section. Because they present dilemmas, cases lead students to identify with the protagonist and to grapple with the problem. I believe you have to think out loud to learn, and cases generate class discussion. They challenge students to take sides, play roles, identify stakeholders, or demand that a restricted menu of options be expanded.

Third, cases breathe life into theory by showing its relevance for practically oriented students who just want "tools." Unlike Ph.D. students, public affairs Master's students are generally not interested in mastering arcane jargon and exploring theoretical disciplinary debates. They share no single disciplinary orientation and are often impatient with theory. I selected the Tailhook case (Simon, 1995) for my Politics of Public Affairs class to supplement my international relations materials and to address questions of regulation and implementation in a policy area I know a lot about—employment discrimination and sexual harassment. To my delight, I discovered the case illustrates Allison's argument about standard operating procedures (SOPs) (Allison and Zelikow, 1999) by examining the two naval investigation services. It also illustrates Wilson's arguments about operators and key tasks, professions, and change and innovation in bureaucracies (Wilson, 1989). Tailhook deepens our understanding of sexual harassment by embedding it in an organizational context, demonstrating the complex constraints on managers.² Thus cases may lead students to theory rather than promote policy analysis by anecdote as I had initially feared.

¹Founded in 1985, the Center on Women and Public Policy in the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute staffs a concentration in women and public policy for Master's students in public affairs. It also conducts applied research and community outreach.

²Despite its virtues, Tailhook has three of the problems Chetkovich and Kirp identify with "Walking a Fine Line." Tailhook implicitly frames women, particularly the integration of women, rather than sexism, as the problem to be managed, just as it situates the complaint of sexual harassment rather than sexual harassment itself, as the management problem. The case offers little historical context. The case presents the policy problem as easy to identify, although the solution is difficult.

LESSON ONE: WHAT IS POLITICS?

Cases do contain unacknowledged positions on the nature of politics. Policy schools often offer up a dominant paradigm (say neoclassical economics) as THE way rather than one framework among several. Identification of the paradigm's implicit messages and assumptions requires skill, a valuable skill for our students—critical thinking. Much of the policy analysis literature adopts an unduly narrow conception of politics, one closest to economics, which generates the implicit dichotomy between politics and analysis Chetkovich and Kirp criticize in the cases they analyze. But other cases (perhaps they are exceptions) support a broader definition of politics. I teach that this vision of politics is but one construction. Simply put, I argue we can define politics at least three ways. First, politics is who gets what how, a distributive, interest allocation definition that appeals to economists and is dominant in policy schools and some sub-fields of political science. Second is the broader Platonic view that politics is about what the good life entails and is about asking the question, how should we live? How shall we structure our institutions, economies, and communities? Third, what we might call a postmodern definition of politics maintains that politics is about how we construct the world. Questions of meaning and interpretation are inherently political.

This third definition is not new. Kingdon (1995), for example, raises the question of how a condition comes to be a problem and asks the question when has an idea's time come, recognizing that politics is about contests over meaning and constructions of the world as well as distributing things. He explores how policy communities arrive at common understandings of public policy problems and solutions. Perhaps because of the two policy areas he chose, however, transportation and health care, Kingdon's view of agenda setting leaves out social movements. The political world consists of organized interests, policy experts, politicians and staffers, and the public (with moods) with no additional mediating entities. Political science only recently has expanded its purview beyond government and voters to include interest groups and has left social movements to sociologists.

Cases that construct politics as exclusively about individual choice and agency leave out social movements and the constitutive aspects of politics. I teach two counter examples. "Against All Odds: The Campaign in Congress for Japanese American Redress" (Naito and Scott, 1990) documents how a broad social movement changed the way many people, including Japanese Americans, thought about internment. As new institutionalists would lead us to expect (March and Olsen 1984), the players did not enter the arena with fixed fully-formed preferences but changed how they thought about the world through political engagement. Nelson and Hummer's (1989) case, "The Origins of the YWCA's Anti-Racism Campaign," shows how black women organized themselves separately to change the mission of the YWCA to add "eliminate racism" to its mission of "empower women and girls." Their separatism enabled the institution to integrate. Interest group analysis fails to explain both cases. Rather, minority groups persuaded the majority to see the world their way. The contest is not just about numbers, bargaining, and interest, but also about persuasion, framing, and meaning. Both cases are retrospective. Unlike the cases Chetkovich and Kirp analyze, neither has a single protagonist who drives the action. Yet both generate robust class discussion. Both can be used to invite students to reflect on the limitations of Kingdon's theory.

ANALYZING CASES IN ACTION

Chetkovich and Kirp's analysis of cases would have been even better if they could have analyzed the cases as run, i.e. looked at class discussion as well as the texts of the cases. In one case, for example, the lone decision-maker format undermines itself.

“A Towering Dilemma” (Simmons and Dunrud, 1996) on first read, appears to demand that the park manager, Liggett, cogitate on the problem, do a stakeholder analysis, and impose a solution. Yet discussion quickly turns to process—who needs to be at the table as opposed to whose interests must Liggett factor in. The case supports the conclusion that the lone decision-maker cannot effectively impose a solution on the parties. Rather, to secure a lasting solution, she will need to initiate a process that will secure maximum consensus, or what economist-driven language calls “buy-in.” While the case does not support the Wilsonian organizational analysis I favor, it does require an analysis of the institutional environment. Students are forced to confront the reality that resolving conflict successfully may require more than declaring and imposing an answer from above. The case also raises questions about arenas of conflicts and framing of rights as the issue moves into the domain of the courts (Burton and Ruppert, 1999). Thus, although the lone decision-maker may be an inescapable feature of decision cases—necessary for cases to work their magic in producing engagement on the part of students—the cases may undermine the model by reproducing it.

THE MASTER’S TOOL OR OURS?

We could write more cases about social movements. We could write more cases whose protagonists are low-level managers rather than cabinet secretaries. Some problems, however, appear to be endemic to the case genre itself. Cases have to be short for students to “inhabit” them quickly. Identification, with or without role play, requires a named protagonist, be it an individual or a group. Yet presenting policy questions as problems facing individual protagonists may lead to distortions. The case “Sexploitation? Sex Tourism in Cuba” (Geske and Clancy, 2000) is laudable, both for the historical and structural analysis lacking in the cases Chetkovich and Kirp criticize, and for raising a women’s issue. Its authors, political scientists Geske and Clancy, teach international relations and sought to remedy the deficiencies of the Pew Case Studies in International Affairs set of 248 cases that includes no cases on women, gender, or feminism.³ Geske and Clancy’s case has been substantially revised since they presented it at the American Political Science Association annual meeting in 1998. The case documents the rise in sex tourism to Cuba and the concomitant decline in the quality of life for Cuban women. The earlier draft supports the reader in placing the blame for the sexual exploitation of Cuban women on men from Western countries who travel to buy women who are cheaper, more compliant, and more “exotic” because of the racialization of Latin women. Tour operators who explicitly organize and market sex tours as well as economists who insist on tourism for Third World development are also villains. The first version has few characters and no single protagonist. Nor does a single tough decision structure the narrative. The case describes international organizing to prevent the sexual exploitation of children as a possible policy intervention, but also shows the economic constraints under which Cuban officials operate. As revised, however, the agents of the action are Cuban officials. The dilemma is whether Cuban governmental policy should be to continue to market and sell Cuban women to tourists—to build on what economists would call its comparative advantage, cheap sex—or suffer even more severe economic consequences.

³The only case with even a female protagonist charts Margaret Thatcher’s demise within her party and appears to support no gender analysis (Ortmayer, 1995). Chetkovich and Kirp’s analysis of the top ten cases includes three cases in which gender is a central component. This 30 percent figure is not representative of the universe of cases as a whole. Few cases have a female protagonist. Fewer still deal with women’s issues, however imperfectly, and almost none feature feminist organizations.

The case demonstrates how prostitution is produced, not only by intentional governmental policy, but by the world economic system, rather than merely resulting from the “free choices” of women and men. Yet the imperative to view this problem through the eyes of a single decision-maker, a Cuban governmental official, distorts our understanding of the issue by inflating the agency of the Cubans and, by leaving the other characters off stage, implicitly exonerating them. The revised version may have a single identifiable decision-maker whose unhappy alternatives may generate student discussion, but the price of conformity to the formula is too high if it sacrifices our understanding of prostitution. Can the genre be stretched to include the first version? Or does it propel us toward the second? Can a single protagonist be found who can frame the policy problem satisfactorily? Can we use the master’s tools to dismantle the master’s house?⁴ Or do cases inescapably promote the problematic assumptions about politics that Chetkovich and Kirp identify? I look forward to describing the Center on Women and Public Policy’s case project as well as the gender critique of cases that motivated it in a future volume. Despite ambivalence, I believe cases have promise.

⁴I would like to extend Lorde’s (1984) argument in this essay to argue that feminist case writers will fail if they try to insert women, gender, and feminism into the straightjacket of the case formula that Chetkovich and Kirp describe and criticize, but I would argue, perhaps against Lorde, that the public policy teaching case can be reformed to be a vehicle for exploring feminist issues.

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