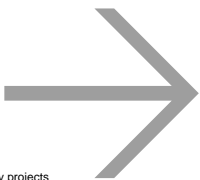


CHILD HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT: RESULTS FROM EU FRAMEWORK 5

The marriage between Science and Policy

Scenes from a marriage



Results from EU Framework 5, Pinche, children genonetwork & plutocracy projects
Brussels, 23-25 November 2005
Julie Ng-A-Tham

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Introducing our couple: the family Asbestos

Science Asbestos:
Personality: independent, proud, a bit arrogant, self centered
Needs: recognition of her virtues
Seeks: a partner who gives attention and listens

Policy Asbestos:
Personality: capricious, demanding, anxious
Needs: to be seen as reliable
Seeks: a partner who is supportive

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The scenes:

- How they met: seeking attention and getting attention
- The early years: making it work
- The '7' year itch: do we get what we want
- A renewed attraction

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Seeking attention and getting attention

When they met: '60-'70

Science:

- A lot of research on health effects of asbestos
- Policy was spotted as a desirable partner
- Science tried to seduce Policy

Policy:

- Was interested in Science
- The mother of policy: *politics* did not support the match because of economic reasons

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Making it work

The first phase of marriage: '80-'90, watched closely by the press

Science
Was taken seriously by Politics and felt recognised

Policy
Was productive and received recognition from *Politics*

A lot of specific regulations were conceived

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Do we get what we want

The critical years: '90-2000, the press still follows the couple

Science:
Going her own way, exploring other areas

Policy:
Mother *Politics* is not satisfied with the offspring: policy has to discipline the offspring

A coherent chain approach is developed on asbestos

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→ **A renewal of attraction**

Reestablishment: 2000-2005 and the press remains interested


Science:
Was able to seduce policy again by providing new insight

Policy:
Was a bit taken by surprise by Science, Mother Politics however, was able to use the information well

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→ **Some frustrations**

- Policy does not listen and does not seem to understand
- Science is too self-absorbed and does not give what we want
- The press is always there in search of sensation

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→ **A bit of analysis**

- There are three and not two partners involved
- Each of the partners has needs
- Needs can be met within this 'marriage game'
- The rules of this game have to be clearly understood by each of the parties

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→ **Role of science in this particular game**

- Providing facts and figures within an explanatory context
- Tools and methods
- All tailored to the particular demand
 - depending on particular stage: agenda setting, problem solving, evaluation
 - with focus on (intermittent) outcome of debate, not content
- Consensus about the scientific state of play is a prerequisite
 - this does not exclude incomplete or divided knowledge

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→ **The role of policy in this particular game**

Understanding

- The knowledge provided by science
- The wishes of politics


Preparing policy alternatives taking into account

- knowledge provided by science
- wishes of politics

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→ **The role of politics in this game**

- Being clear about needs and wishes to policy
- Making decisions on policy alternatives
- Providing explanations of the decisions
- Handling the press carefully

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