Bearing down: The political ecology of a policy monopoly in New Jersey black bear management

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Abstract

Some agencies tend to view wildlife as resources to harvested and potential threats to be controlled in the name of public safety. Due to a long history of hunting for conservation, this view intersects with the structures and ways the agencies work. Hunting monopolizes policy and is the main tool to manage black bears in New Jersey. This study explores what that monopoly looks like and how it endures, especially in the face of opposition. That opposition, coming from environmental and animal activist groups and their allies in government (mostly the state Legislature in this study) who oppose hunting, derives from their viewing wildlife with more sentiment and therefore they conclude non-violent management plans more focused on human behavior and humans' relationships with bears should take precedence. Using Qualitative Content Analysis on 22 policy documents, four themes emerge. The first two explain that structures and ideas create the monopoly. They are: 1) "Agencies' practices flow from power-laden interpretations, influencing access;" and 2) "Humans should shape (anthropocentric) nature-society interactions." The latter two themes elucidate the means by which the monopoly perpetuates itself. They are: 3) "Certain knowledge claims get default institutionalization" and 4) "Agencies can decide what voices to accommodate." Power asymmetries run throughout the process, exercised by actors in relational ways and rooted in assumptions and routine operations of policy players. Channeling political ecology to understand how a policy monopoly both forms and operates can better enable wider participation and communication in maintaining or changing policy.

Keywords: Power, political ecology, wildlife management, policy, New Jersey

Résumé

Les agences ont tendance à considérer la faune comme des ressources à exploiter et des menaces potentielles à contrôler au nom de la sécurité publique. En raison d'une longue histoire de chasse à des fins de conservation, cette vision recoupe les structures et les modes de fonctionnement des agences et, par conséquent, la chasse monopolise la politique et constitue le principal outil de gestion de l'ours noir dans le New Jersey. Cette étude explore à quoi ressemble ce monopole et comment il perdure, notamment face à l'opposition. Cette opposition, venant de groupes de défenseurs de l'environnement et des animaux et de leurs alliés au sein du gouvernement (principalement l'Assemblée législative de l'État dans cette étude) qui s'opposent à la chasse, découle du fait qu'ils considèrent la faune sauvage avec plus de sentiment et concluent donc des plans de gestion non violents plus axés sur le comportement humain. et les relations des humains avec les ours devraient avoir la priorité. En utilisant une analyse qualitative du contenu sur 22 documents politiques, les résultats produisent quatre thèmes. Les deux premiers thèmes expliquent que les structures et les idées créent le monopole. Ce sont: 1) « Les pratiques des agences découlent d'interprétations chargées de pouvoir, influençant l'accès » et 2) « Les humains devraient façonner les interactions (anthropocentriques) entre la nature et la société. » Ces deux derniers thèmes éclairent les moyens par lesquels le monopole se perpétue. Ce sont: 3) « Certaines revendications de connaissances sont institutionnalisées par défaut » et 4) « Les agences peuvent décider quelles voix doivent être prises en compte. » Les asymétries de pouvoir existent tout au long du processus, exercées par les acteurs de manière relationnelle et ancrées dans les hypothèses et les opérations courantes des acteurs politiques.

Canaliser l'écologie politique pour comprendre comment un monopole politique se forme et fonctionne peut mieux permettre une participation et une communication plus larges dans le maintien ou la modification des politiques.

Mots-clés: Pouvoir, écologie politique, gestion de la faune, politique, New Jersey

Resumen

Las agencias tienden a ver la vida silvestre como recurso que se debe aprovechar, o amenazas potenciales que se deben controlar en nombre de la seguridad pública. Debido a una larga historia de caza para la conservación, esta visión se cruza con las estructuras y formas en que trabajan las agencias y, por lo tanto, la caza monopoliza la política y es la principal herramienta para manejar a los osos negros en Nueva Jersey. Este estudio explora cómo es ese monopolio y cómo perdura, especialmente frente a la oposición. Esa oposición, proveniente de grupos activistas ambientales y sus aliados en el gobierno (principalmente la Legislatura estatal en este estudio) que se oponen a la caza, se deriva del hecho que ven la vida silvestre con más sentimiento y por lo tanto forman planes de manejo no violentos más centrados en el comportamiento humano, y la idea de que las relaciones de los humanos con los osos deberían ser el enfoque de la gestión. Utilizando un análisis cualitativo del contenido de 22 documentos de políticas, se identifica y discute cuatro temas. Los dos primeros temas explican que las estructuras y las ideas crean el monopolio de la caza en el manejo del oso negro. Ellos son: 1) "Las prácticas de las agencias surgen de interpretaciones cargadas de poder que influyen en el acceso" y 2) "Los seres humanos deberían dar forma a las interacciones (antropocéntricas) entre la naturaleza y la sociedad." Los dos últimos temas aclaran los medios por los cuales el monopolio se perpetúa. Ellos son: 3) "Ciertas afirmaciones del conocimiento conllevan una institucionalización predeterminada y basándose en ellas las agencias deciden qué voces acomodar" y 4) "Las asimetrías de poder se extienden a lo largo de todo el proceso, ejercidas por los actores de manera relacional y arraigadas en supuestos y operaciones rutinarias de los actores políticos." Canalizar la ecología política para comprender cómo se forma y opera un monopolio político puede permitir una participación y comunicación más amplia para mantener o cambiar las políticas.

Palabras clave: Poder, ecología política, manejo de vida silvestre, política, New Jersey

1. Introduction

A *brief ecological, social, and policy history of black bear management in New Jersey*

In mid-20th century New Jersey, from 1945-1997, the institutional procedures and objectives which predominate in today's black bear government policy had their origins. The nine-person Fish and Game Council (FGC) gained centrality over wildlife management over decades, although not prioritizing the bear population. In fact, following extremely small bear hunts from 1958-1970 in which a total of 46 bears were killed, the newly formed Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) declared bears off limits for hunting. Yet a branch of the DEP called the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), which houses the FGC, suggested that over time the bear population was shifting, the landscape was changing, and sightings were increasing, meaning they were less endangered (Lund, 1972, 1980). Changes in the landscape combined with lack of hunting may have been factors in the estimation by the DFW that the black bear population had grown from around 100 in 1980 to possibly over 3,000 by 2003, though anti-hunt activists dispute these findings (Fish & Game Council, 2015).

The DFW's 1997 Comprehensive Black Bear Management Plan proposed to reintroduce hunting as a management tool, but it encountered legal challenges and did not go into effect until 2003 (McConnell *et al.*, 1997). Large swathes of the public objected, and there was internal discord in the New Jersey government as well. Governor Corzine stopped the hunt the following year, then it returned in 2005 following a state Supreme Court case, but it did not occur again until 2010. These became larger hunts, taking several hundred bears each. DFW argued that potentially undesirable human-bear encounters had to be reduced by regulated hunts: relocation, aversive conditioning, and other non-lethal responses were insufficient (Vreeland *et al.*, 2010).

Human complaints about dangerous encounters with bears is a major justification for hunting as the main tool of bear management. The 2015 Comprehensive New Jersey Black Bear Management Plan, for example, proposed in contrast to its 2010 predecessor a more liberal hunting season "…both to provide mandated recreational opportunity and more effective control of the black bear population…" (Fish & Game Council, 2015, p. 4). While the document includes other means of assuaging potential for conflict, including human

education campaigns, securing garbage and limiting other food attractants such as bird feeders and greasy barbecue grills, the majority of the text is dedicated to the hunt. Anti-hunt environmental activists argue that responsibility lies with humans in mitigating conflict (Hackett, 2018). They argue that if humans carry responsibility for conflict, rather than simply the number of bears, management should ratchet down hunting in favor of a more reflexive outlook which considers human behavior and settlement patterns. Management of bear populations in the wild should address the ultimate—rather than proximate—causes of conflict.

Activists have claimed that DFW's science was faulty or intentionally misrepresentative, and accused the state government of either plotting with or bending to the interests of hunters (BEAR Group, 2023). Considering DFW's funding largely comes from excise taxes stemming from hunting gear and related purchases – that is to say, money from hunters – it seems to be in DFW's interests to promote a policy that champions hunting so as to secure ongoing sources of revenue for their agency, activists argue (Laundre, 2019). Rather, they suggest, a policy driven by non-violent alternatives to bear population management is warranted, with changes in human behavior which lead to fewer human-bear conflicts.

The Bear Education and Resource (BEAR) Group, an appendage of the Animal Protection League of New Jersey, along with the New Jersey branch of the Sierra Club have been the primary detractors of the hunt. They advocate for a moratorium while non-violent alternatives are explored. On the other side, the New Jersey Outdoor Alliance (NJOA) is an outdoor group that advocates for maintaining the policy. Safari Club International (SCI) has provided support as well. All groups focus messaging on influencing public opinion, while they are politically engaged with lawmakers in attempting to push legislation which will amend, stop or maintain the bear hunt. NJOA and SCI are aggressive in their messaging, yet the established institutions and powers in the state are generally supportive of the policy and not amenable to major change. Most important for this study, though, is the government itself. The government is not entirely an external, neutral, non-player. As the analysis will show, DFW and FGC (the holders of the monopoly) largely support hunting. Members of the state Legislature differ in their views – with some in favor and others against – and put forward bills accordingly. State Governors have also varied in their views and are considered in the analysis at hand.

While the conflict over hunting policy has been ongoing since 2003, it intensified in 2015 when DFW renewed its Comprehensive Black Bear Management Plan. Hunting occurred annually from 2010-2017, widening to semi-annually in 2016. Intense opposition to hunting occurred throughout this time, but did not achieve change. This time period is the focus of this study. A new era ensued starting in 2018 when Phil Murphy became governor of New Jersey. Characterized by policy whiplash, Murphy first instituted a partial ban on hunting by prohibiting it on state lands only via executive order (Murphy 2018). Then in 2020, he announced an end to hunting by way of the Fish & Game Council, removing the black bear management policy from the state Game Code. (Murphy 2020). However, in a 2023 about-face, hunting returned in light of possible increases in bear populations and encounters with humans (Rodas 2023). This era, rife with conflict but much less settled than the time period in question, constitutes a separate chapter in the saga and requires its own analysis.

Framings and questions in the study

It is appropriate to describe the pro-hunt position as holding a "policy monopoly" during this era (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). To understand what the monopoly looked like and how it held, this study takes three previous works as its starting point. One is a classic policy study and the other two are relatively recent pieces in political ecology. First is Baumgartner and Jones' (1993) *Agendas and instability in American politics*. The authors' central concept, the policy monopoly, exists when "a definable institutional structural is responsible for policymaking, and that structure limits access to the policy process [and], a powerful supporting idea is associated with the institution, connected to core political values, and communicated through image and rhetoric" (p. 7). Institutional structure, in this case a governmental, research/analytical, and decision-making apparatus, enables a certain set of groups and ideas to undergird policy decisions; those with different positions have less access to the process and influence over the outcomes. In addition, values inform the monopoly's supporting ideas. The groups in power share an understanding of what is the problem and what the appropriate policy response is. Contrary opinions are less influential. Building on this, "the ways in which issues are defined have strong implications for what groups are considered legitimate to make decisions" (p. 31). This means the assumptions about problems and solutions influence which groups make decisions and have their voices heard in the first place; there is an exclusionary element to the monopoly predicated on who adheres to what narrative. In this case, the insider group holding the monopoly and maintaining the policy status quo is the Fish and Game

Council – broadly the Division of Fish and Wildlife as an arm of the state government – and pro-hunt interests including state legislators who support it. Anti-hunt groups and state legislators who disagree with hunting are disempowered outsiders, trying to break the monopoly and influence change.

Power is critical in a policy monopoly. The second key study is Ahlborg and Nightingale (2018), who identified four places from which power emerges. This article focuses on one of them: how "…dominant actors shape resource governance projects based on different knowledges and according to certain 'logics' around what is true and desired…" (p. 391). They "…act in response to constitutive pressures such as constraining institutionalized rules and practices, expectations and assumptions based in dominant discourses, expert knowledges and sectoral 'business as usual'" (p. 392). The authors describe this as relatively static and structure-based. But power needs to be exercised in a policy monopoly, which fits with political ecology's view of power as relational (p. 383).

Third, Svarstad *et al.* (2018) argued that political ecology contains three approaches to power: actor-oriented, neo-Marxist, and Foucauldian. They suggest combining those, noting each one's importance will differ from one situation to another (p. 352). This study classifies the bear management case as actor-oriented and Foucauldian. In actor-oriented approaches, "The main aspect is that power is seen as being *exercised* by actors, in contrast to the view in which it is perceived as a force that may pass through people without consciousness or accountability" (*ibid*, italics original). Foucauldian approaches integrate discourses (societies' views and words on issues), governmentality (the ways governments influence citizens' behaviors), and biopower (influence over physical lives) (pp. 356-358). The present study connects these with Ahlborg and Nightingale's first location of power, plus Baumgartner and Jones' policy monopoly.

Returning to bears in New Jersey, this article asks: "What are the components and dynamics of the policy monopoly held by the pro-hunt coalition from 2010-2017?" It identifies the monopoly's "identifiable institutional structure" and "powerful supporting idea." The former is the first theme in the results of the study: "Agencies' practices flow from power-laden interpretations, influencing access." The latter is the second theme: "Humans should shape (anthropocentric) nature-society interactions." But this study goes further by identifying two additional, emergent themes: "Certain knowledge claims get default institutionalization", and "Agencies can decide what voices to accommodate." These are important because they result from the first two, demonstrating how a monopoly plays out in the conflict. When describing a policy monopoly case, identifying how its components operate sheds light on why a monopoly holds despite opposition to it. *Both* the third and fourth themes follow *both* the first and second themes.

This study argues that the reason why the New Jersey bear policy emphasized hunting, and why that did not change during the years in question despite strong pushback, was because culture and values manifested as discursive power which took institutional forms. Cultures and values were then perpetuated by multiple institutions directly and indirectly, which limited the potential for policy change. The study weaves in ideas about the human dimensions of wildlife because the literature on that topic explores human-animal relationships in the context of professional management. It is unclear – and I believe inconsequential – whether policy actors who perpetrate the monopoly are conscious of it at all, much less intentional about maintaining it. Each faction's positions contain legitimate elements; the reasons why the monopoly derives from one position and not another are what drive the questions at hand, rather than the issue of which position is legitimate. Therefore, I do not seek to discredit DFW's decisions, question the veracity of their research, or imply bad faith. Rather, the purpose of this article is to better understand the flow of power and interplay of actors so that decision-makers and stakeholders can better communicate and co-determine when a policy should or should not change, and in what ways.

2. Theoretical framework: Culture, values, and power in wildlife management

Conflicts regarding access to and management of wildlife occur when multiple ecological knowledges, discourses, social constructions of nature, and power asymmetries come into play. Nursey-Bray stated, "while there are dominant conversations about hunting and management, there is not a singular worldview from which all completely operate" (2009, p. 450). In her study, parties initiated a management process based on a series of discursive tradeoffs instead of collaborating; it became a contest between cultures. Blaser (2009, p. 11) explained that political ecology takes a "multi-culturalist" understanding of one nature and many culturally

situated perspectives of it, but … "there are many kinds of 'natures.'" This produces conflict, but power is a major arbiter of which understanding gets implemented in policy.

Institutions are central to policy conflict and the flow of power. For this reason, Paul Robbins (2002) argued that "we should study centralist institutions of power as ethnographic objects on par with local communities and organizations" (p. 1510). Findings can reveal how institutions work – especially if that differs from the machinations of external stakeholders – and what the policy consequences are. In their study of the Missouri Ozarks, Rikoon & Albee (1998) showed how local communities and government agencies had completely different ways of perceiving, understanding and evaluating nature (p. 206). In their case, the Park Service wanted to restore the Ozark area to a 'natural' (pre-white) state while discounting the ways that horses, deemed "unnatural" to the area, had become embedded both in the ecology and the local culture. When there are differences, the uneven distribution of power means that agencies' preferences are more likely to become policy. Jean Hillier (2017) showed how the work of management agencies legitimizes specific views and assumptions, which in turn informs what management activities look like. In this sense, agencies' worldviews construct nature and wildlife in the first place, and policy strategies suited to those constructions then follow. But Hillier reminds us that there is not necessarily a "right" ecosystem or "right" assemblage of species (p. 7).

While it is the case that "those with immediate control over allocation [meaning managers] hold a certain power, while those hoping for access wield their own social and political powers in persuading managers to make decisions in their favor," wildlife management conflicts are not simply a matter of opposing interest groups trying to convince the agencies to decide in their favor (Boucquey 2020, p. 174). Rather, groups can overlap. Since wildlife management agencies coalesced in the early 20th century in ways that aligned with hunting as a primary management tool, this tends to be the main policy response, disproportionately empowering hunter user groups as a result. Administrative decisions thus occur within larger contexts, including institutional culture and modes of operation. "Thus the advantage to defining a problem in a way that resonates with those in power is that one's solutions become 'logical fixes' to the identified problem (while often foreclosing competing options), and therefore are more likely to influence the outcome of an issue" (p. 175).

While a policy monopoly implies a top-down flow of power, there are many players involved and they can challenge that monopoly. "When power is understood as a relational, productive force that generates contradictory effects within the same actions, we can show how resource governance processes can empower and create new relations of domination at the same time" (Ahlborg & Nightingale 2018, p. 382). The multidirectional relationships of actors—some with more power than others—are important in understanding how a policy monopoly endures and what might lead to change. Svarstad *et al.* defined actor-oriented power as when "actors exercise power through actions to achieve particular intentions (intentionality), actions take place between two or more actors (relationality), and actions produce an intended result (causality)" (2018, pp. 352-3). Their Foucauldian approach includes discursive power and biopower (p. 356-358). These address how assumptions and thoughts on a topic, and influence over lives, figure into the exercise of power, and are particularly relevant to wildlife management policy monopolies. Power takes multiple forms and flows amongst numerous policy actors, but it largely leads to a single outcome.

Wildlife itself is also an actor in power relationships, which contain real or constructed spatial boundaries. Drawing on Foucault, Collard discussed the concept of "biopower", which is how physical bodies are subject to and wield power. Looking at cougars, she argued that biological control over them is a form of biosecurity, establishing space for "safe life" [for humans]; cougars are rendered killable when they violate this space (Collard 2012, p. 25). But she reminded the reader that wildlife has agency too. Consequently, one must recognize cougars' role in these dynamic relationships. Ojalammi and Blomley argue that law plays a role in establishing the distinction between nature and society. Citing Braverman, they state: "although law may seek to confine animals to the 'proper place,' humans and non-humans may 'subvert such modalities…defying and creating new laws in action that push toward a more nuanced human-animal relationality'" (2015, p. 53). In other words, human-animal relationships – and the laws which contextualize and frame them in the first place – can change.

Human values also play a role in perspectives on wildlife and management decisions. Teel *et al.* define values as "abstract beliefs that transcend specific situations and guide the evaluation of actions and policies" (2010). The authors identify two major types. "Domination" is:

…human mastery over wildlife…The stronger people's domination orientation toward wildlife, the more likely their attitudes and actions will prioritize human well-being over wildlife, they will find actions that result in death or other intrusive control of wildlife to be acceptable… (p. 107)

"Mutualism," on the other hand, "…has fostered perceptions of social inclusion that extend to human-animal relationships…views it [wildlife] as capable of relationships of trust with humans…and as life forms deserving of rights and caring" (p. 109). These values are not static. The authors argue that increases in urbanization, education, and income have precipitated shifts in relationships with animals from Domination to Mutualism (p. 110). Bruskotter *et al.* (2017) also explained that modernization leads to changes in societal values. Granted, these changes are multigenerational and context-dependent (Manfredo *et al.*, 2017). But when they change faster than institutions, conflict can ensue.

Decision-making tends to be relegated to formal agencies. In so doing, "traditional reliance on biological information and professional judgment still predominate. [But agencies] need to integrate social science information into the policymaking process" (Don Carlos *et al.*, 2009, p. 650). This is because members of the public are stakeholders. Wildlife in North America is considered a public resource; management needs to account for social license (Zinn *et al.*, 1998. The inclusivity and nuanced understanding of the public's perspectives can help reduce intractable policymaking.

Johnson and Sciascia (2013) identified how people are willing to tolerate animals such as bears based on real or perceived risks. Then, the level of tolerance for them can alter based on the changes (social and behavioral) that accompany modernization (Bruskotter *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, risk of harm by animals is partly a social perception and not solely a product of technical expertise (Gore *et al.,* 2005). "Management may be reactive to *perceived* conflicts", whereas negative attitudes might not be related to how much damage a species creates (Fernandez-Gil *et al.*, 2016, p. 1). This is important because, as Fernandez-Gil and colleagues note, "culling implicitly assumes carnivore abundance is the key driver of the amount of damages" (*ibid*). If reducing the potential human-wildlife conflicts stemming from the possibility of animals interacting with humans in potentially dangerous ways is the ultimate goal of management, then considering what constitutes risk from a social science perspective joined with scientific and technical data is vital to developing policy that is both effective and acceptable to the public.

3. Methods

This study takes an approach to content analysis that seeks to draw out the values and ways of thinking that underlie claims, written documents, and policy objectives (Lune & Berg, 2017). While phrasing is important, "in discourse analysis, of interest is not just the words used but the social construction and apprehension of meaning created through the discourse" (p. 181). Those constructions and meanings convey power and influence outcomes of policy conflicts as much as words and scientific data do. Lindsay Prior pointed out that "content analysis can also blend into discourse analysis, a form of analysis that examines how objects and relations between objects are represented and structured by means of text and talk" (2008, p. 112). Variables such as the possession versus lack of power, or the effort to maintain a policy versus trying to change it, play a role in how policy actors represent their values. Last, the content analysis is both deductive and inductive, as they are not mutually exclusive. Patton (2015) described the move from deduction to induction as first "…verifying theories and propositions based on qualitative data… [and then] after or alongside the deductive phase, analyzing data in terms of theory derived sensitizing concepts…" (p. 543). Thus, the two types of analyses occur simultaneously, and by proceeding this way one can consider the wide-ranging aspects of the two major components of a policy monopoly, and how it operated in this case.

The data consists of 22 policy documents: 10 legislative items, 4 court cases, and 8 administrative documents regarding rules and regulations or statements/letters between agency heads. They span from 2010, when Governor Christie took office, to 2017, right before Governor Murphy took office. More bills were introduced during this period, but often the same bill got reintroduced if it initially did not pass; I considered those as one. While none became law, they are still important to the study because they reveal the values and concepts present in the policymaking process.

The analysis produced four themes. What is replicable is the process of coding, looking for patterns, and distilling those into broad concepts. This is typical content analysis and works with other data sets on different

topics as well. Others might find different themes and notice different combinations of codes. That is not a shortcoming, but a product of the richness of the data and the reality of qualitative analysis. Following the conclusion of the study, a table lays out the themes and major codes. The four themes are

1. An "Identifiable Institutional Structure": Agencies' Practices Flow from Power-laden Interpretations, Influencing Access
2. A "Powerful Supporting Idea": Humans Should Shape (Anthropocentric) Nature-Society Interactions,
3. Certain Knowledge Claims Get Default Institutionalization, and
4. Agencies Can Decide What Voices to Accommodate.

The first two themes are deductive since the theory is applied directly to the data to better understand the latter. The other themes are inductive in that they emerge out of the analysis. The third and fourth themes do not follow the first and second themes respectively, but both elaborate on the first two.

4. Results and discussion of themes

An "identifiable institutional structure": Agencies' practices flow from power-laden interpretations, influencing access

In their analysis of power, Ahlborg and Nightingale draw our attention to "world views and assumptions underlying the project interventions regarding what is the problem/situation, what ought to be protected/sustained/changed/achieved and how this is to be done" (2018, p. 391). The standards and practices according to which the Division of Fish and Wildlife operate stem from historic laws and statutes, which they frequently cite in explaining their approach to wildlife management. For example, the 2010 and 2015 Comprehensive Black Bear Management Policies states that "The Fish and Game Council is mandated by the New Jersey Legislature to protect and conserve game birds, mammals, and fish and to provide adequate supply for recreational and commercial harvest" (Vreeland, 2010, p. 4; FGC, 2015b, p. 1). These mandates, which arise out of laws established in 1945 and 1948, combine with associated worldviews and standards of practice that create an identifiable institutional structure that results in a common set of policies. Detractors struggle to puncture that with their objections.

In response to written public comments opposed to hunting, the Fish and Game Council pointed out that the "Council is authorized and required by regulations to manage wildlife in New Jersey as a renewable resource…" (FGC, 2015a, pp. 242-244). Objections carry little weight for two possible reasons. First, they run contrary to the long-running institutional practice. Second, the institutional practice has come to conceptualize what it means to fulfill statutory requirements; certain approaches are legitimate, while others are not and are therefore excluded. That said, it is important to note that the

> Council recognizes comments received in opposition to hunting represent the philosophy of people who may be opposed to killing and/or use of bears, including recreational hunting as a management tool. However, rulemaking represents Council's best efforts to fulfill its statutory mandate to manage the state's animals (*ibid*).

FGC situates bears in a relationship with humans in which they must be managed – one of numerous possible relationships based on different understandings of nature(s). Blaser (2009) pushes us to consider that there are many natures. People do not necessarily think this way, and so it is a difficult idea to communicate. People talk past each other because their ways of being and seeing nature(s) are different and thus not so immediately reconcile or subject to an easily drafted bear management plan. FGC made important acknowledgments of other groups' values, but rejecting them reveals that the institutions are not designed to accommodate them in their management policymaking process.

The institutional structure also focuses on "user groups" when considering how to manage bears. This means that certain human interests influence how to conceptualize management. The 2010 Management Policy declares that the "Council maximizes and equitably distributes recreational opportunity to user groups by opening and closing seasons, setting season lengths, bag limits, and manners of take" (Vreeland, 2010, p. 4). Since this passage was talking about hunting and describing it recreationally, one cannot conclude that using hunting as a management tool to control the bear population is an end in itself. Rather, it is tied to a certain group of people's recreational interests. As Doebeli *et al.* (2021, p. 294) put it, "the way a state sees nature is tied up with how it values and manages it." In this case, it sees bears predominantly as resources. Other groups such as hikers and wildlife watchers – who view bears differently – do have the opportunities to perform those actions and encounter bears, but those are less valuable as management objectives. As such, those groups' voices carry less weight in management decisions.

Hunter groups get further support as the main groups with access to bears. The management policy explained that "historically, managed hunting has been an effective system for protecting black bear populations because it has enlisted a clientele interested in the continued abundance of the resource, and it transfers the killing of a species which can become a public nuisance or threat from the general public to a smaller group of people [hunters]" (p. 26). Non-hunter groups are also interested in bears' continued abundance, but the historically ingrained structure is evident here in that bears are once again referred to as a resource. Furthermore, the narrow focus on a smaller clientele excludes other voices from legitimate participation in the management process. Indeed, the policy explains that "hunting engenders a conservation-minded constituency group, hunters, who ensure the continued abundance of the species of interest, and who support and are willing to pay for research, habitat protection, and conservation necessary to meet that end." This is "consistent with a broader, longstanding colonial way of seeing nonhuman nature" (Doebeli *et al.*, 2021, p. 300). This kind of policy process insufficiently accommodates others who desire bears' continued abundance as well, and are willing to pay and take necessary – though different – actions to meet that end.

To be fair, wildlife managers are aware that there are factions who disagree with the hunting approach. Yet bear conservation is still a process in which the animals are resources with benefits to be maximized while reducing nuisance activity, rather than as charismatic creatures which should be left alone, as many anti-hunt activists prefer. It is important to account for a range of social contexts and different peoples' interests and how they see their relationships with wildlife (Teel *et al.*, 2010). But the 2010 Management Policy explained that "wildlife managers, confronted with conflicting public perceptions of bears as both a nuisance and a valued game animal, are faced with a dilemma: how to maintain healthy populations while minimizing conflicts" (Vreeland 2010, p. 23). This reflects a particular, historically ingrained view of both bears and stakeholder humans. Focusing on a domination angle, it maintains the policy monopoly along with its structure and views while omitting other views and people.

Numerous portions of a court case in which judges summarized the Fish and Game Council's reasons for hunting related to the concept of maximizing resources. These include the following statements:

> …despite integrated efforts, serious complaints of bear-human interaction have not abated as the bear population continued to expand; hunting can alleviate damage and nuisance incidents…; the black bear population is large enough to sustain a hunt without endangering the population as a whole…; the 2003 and 2005 hunts showed bears could be harvested safely…; no other viable method exists to reduce or slow the growth of the black bear population, including fertility control and sterilization… (APLNJ v DEP, 2010)

These all speak to a paradigm in which wildlife management is a process of human intervention from specific groups to balance the number of bears to keep conflict low. Foreshadowing the next section, this is a power-laden process resulting from a singular understanding of what is the problem and solution (Baumgartner &Jones, 1993). It flows among multiple actors, both institutional and non-institutional, but produces specific outcomes and resists others. Furthermore, the institutional structure includes an interplay between agencies and courts. This dynamic fulfills the first pillar of a policy monopoly. Next, human-bear conflict and the use of space feed into the second aspect of the monopoly.

A "powerful supporting idea": Humans should shape (anthropocentric) nature-society interactions

In their discursive category, Svarstad *et al.* explained that participants "exercise power through the establishment of discourses on issues and narratives of specific cases in ways that are suitable to themselves" (2018, p. 356). But this does not necessarily occur consciously and nefariously; it could arise out of a situated set of experiences and values. In this case, a series of assumptions and narratives bolster the policy monopoly because they establish the goals at which the policy aims. A powerful supporting idea, that humans should shape nature-society (and human-black bear) interactions, and anthropocentrism drives those interactions – informing the other pillar of the black bear management policy monopoly.

Human interests and use of space, make this a Domination value, taking precedence in policymaking. For that reason, DFW believes it should shape interactions between humans and bears. For example, the 2010 Management Plan states that the "Council finds DFW should reduce and stabilize the bear population at a level commensurate with available habitat and consistent with reducing risk to public safety and property" (Vreeland, 2010, p. 5). Then the Policy justified hunting as the means to achieve this, due to the previously discussed historically ingrained institutional approaches. The assumption that there is an achievable bear population based on available habitat is a narrative occurring in the context of an already human-shaped landscape; the amount of available habitat is largely a product of human activity taking place on the landscape in the first place (Robbins, 2012). So, if the context shifts, the number that is a "suitable" bear population can shift too.

Granted, the FGC recognized that human activity has been important, observing that "the increase of human development in New Jersey, concurrent with the black bear population increase, has resulted in an increase of conflicts" (Vreeland, 2010, 17). In this quote, the role looks like a straightforward function of human population increase. But there is more to it. Indeed, "Council recognizes that the desirable bear population level will be influenced over time by many dynamic factors such as the amount of available bear habitat, human population growth and resulting development, changes in human tolerance for bears…brought about by education and willingness to change lifestyles to live in bear country" (p. 29). Education and willingness to change lifestyles can accompany "modernization" (Bruskotter *et al.*, 2017). Consequently, black bear management includes public education campaigns, recommendations regarding bear-proof garbage receptacles, and other steps people can take to reduce the potential for negative interactions. However, humans' use of space remains privileged and bear populations remain labeled as the prime causal agent of problems.

All factions agree on seeking to reduce the possible risks humans face from bear activity. DEP Commissioner Bob Martin characterized it as a public safety issue, for which the state is responsible (DEP News Release, 2011). But residents' perceptions of bears and the risks they might bring, coupled with the ways people might react to seeing a bear, are also factors in whether a conflict occurs (Don Carlos *et al.*, 2009). More to the point, it is the *means* by which risk reduction is achieved which is a major point of disagreement. Since non-hunting options are indeed in the management plan, one perspective does not completely embody the policy outcome (Svarstad *et al.*, 2018). Instead, the process includes a degree of negotiation. Still, the policy monopoly's powerful supporting ideas of Domination values plus a sense of risk bend it towards hunting – especially since the structure enables that value. Other groups' attempts to exercise power are in turn constrained by that structure, which is less able to accommodate other supporting ideas.

While the documents mentioned here acknowledge that humans influence the landscape, a portion of the powerful supporting idea in this monopoly discourse is that nature and society are separate and should stay so. There is an acknowledgement of the forces of modernization but a Domination viewpoint holds, rather than a Mutualist one (Bruskotter *et al.*, 2017; Teel *et al.*, 2010). In its news release, DFW explained that they are "seeking to stabilize and reduce the state's black bear population to eventually be maintained at a density that minimizes conflicts, provides for a sustainable population within suitable bear habitat, and minimizes movement of bears to unsuitable habitat in suburban and urban areas" (DEP News Release 2011, p. 1). This excerpt delineates the assumption that there is bear habitat in one place and human habitat in another – social construction of property and subsequently a *de facto* law – and bears ought not to transgress these boundaries (Ojalammi & Blomley, 2015). The power asymmetry between humans and bears is evident in the absence of any explicit statements that humans ought not to venture into bear habitats. Elsewhere, the combination of bear population numbers and bear movement resurface. FGC wrote that

> …human-black bear conflicts are increasing as the bear population grows and expands its range into new and inadequate habitats, including urban and suburban areas…[They] attack and kill livestock and pets, damaging agricultural crops, damage and enter homes, and directly threaten humans. (FGC2015a, p. 253)

These are problematic occurrences that also feed into the previously discussed risk issues. But they are founded on a powerful supporting idea of bears invading human territory.

Sometimes there are other reasons, including economic ones, that motivate the desire to keep bears and humans separate. In 2014, Assemblyman Bob Andrzejczak (D-01) introduced bill A3120, which called for a bow and arrow hunting season for deer and "for other such game animals that the Council deems appropriate…during summer months on privately owned cultivated land" (Andrzejczak 2014, p. 2). Though it did not pass into law, the bill's motivation was to help farmers deal with wildlife populations at a crucial point in the growing season. Hence, protecting crops from damage – and the financial losses which might ensue – requires keeping bears and wildlife writ large out of human landscapes. Therefore, humans shape nature-society interactions, and do so in an anthropocentric way. Again, the bill proposed doing so by hunting, per the first portion of the policy monopoly.

There are occasions when both sides of the debate acknowledge that humans and bears will inevitably interact. Thus, rather than trying to keep them separate, smoothing those interactions seems the better course. The 2015 Bear Management policy stated that "Residents, campers, and outdoor enthusiasts within bear country can reduce or eliminate negative interactions with black bears by simply adjusting their activities…. Residents who live in urban areas [who frequent bear areas] are in need of education just as much as those who live in prime bear habitat" (FGC 2015b, p. 12). Two important lessons emerge from this statement. First, humans can play an active role in reducing conflict between humans and bears, rather than focusing on bear population numbers. Second, this passage explicitly mentioned "bear habitat" and pointed out that people spend time there, either temporarily for recreational purposes or permanently as residents. This acknowledged that humans have a responsibility too since they are in bears' "space." On the other hand, here again is the power asymmetry. It is problematic behavior for a bear to transgress the nature-society border and venture into human space, which requires forceful responses as it renders them killable (Collard, 2012). Yet, humans may transgress the border into bear space.

An Assembly Resolution passed in 2016 opposing the expansion of the black bear hunting season also addressed the idea of whether human and bear spaces are separate. Diane B. Allen's (R-07) A127 pointed out that, while there is suitable habitat for them in the forested Northwest of the state, bears are "highly adaptable and can live among human development" (Allen, 2016, p. 2). That being the case, anti-hunt factions instead advocate for those public education measures and more dedicated efforts to address activity such as securing trash against bears, which can help people "coexist" with them. This is a different tack from enforcing the nature-culture binary. Nonetheless, this idea is far less powerful than the other, and the policy monopoly endured during this era.

Certain knowledge claims get default institutionalization

In their discussion of actor-oriented perspectives, Svarstad *et al.* explain that "…the exercise of power by actors is seen as constrained as well as enabled by various types of structures" (2018, p. 353). Anti-hunt factions continually pushed back against the monopoly, but institutions directly or indirectly enforced it in multiple ways. This section considers how the court cases from 2010-2017 both enabled the institutional structure and supporting idea of the monopoly, and constrained attempts to break the monopoly.

The first way courts reinforced and institutionalized the monopoly in this era was that, in cases where activists challenged hunting (for scientific, political, or moral reasons), the issue occasionally got relegated to questions of procedure. In 2010, the Animal Protection League of New Jersey and associated anti-hunt activist organizations brought the DEP to court over the upcoming new hunting season. Activists argued that DEP acted arbitrarily, capriciously, and in bad faith. They stated that the latter:

Drafted and accepted the CBBMP in an arbitrary and capricious manner when they published false statements, misrepresented data from previous bear hunts, fabricated a cultural carrying capacity finding, contradicted their own data within the CBBMP, ignored their own data on the effect of hunting on the bear population, and inflated bear complaint statistics… (APLNJ v DEP, 2010, p. 9).

But the judges clarified that, instead, the issue under consideration was whether to apply a stay to the hunt. Thus, the court case addressed policy and procedure, not bear hunt science. It is important to "consider not only what decisions are made but how the state deliberates, decides, and justifies its decisions, as well as how nature is known and represented within these deliberations" (Doebeli *et al.*, 2021, p. 295). The court did not rule on the Division of Fish and Wildlife's data or address APLNJ's accusations, which could have led to a drawn-out case. In a procedure-only debate, there was no legitimate reason to stop the hunt.

A second role of courts in perpetuating the policy monopoly stemmed from the fact that the burden of proof [to demonstrate that the current policy is harmful and thus should be changed] falls on the activists. *APLNJ v DEP 2010* stated, "appellants must demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence irreparable injury unless the stay [on the hunting season] is granted" (p. 9). Part of the reason this is the case is that, institutionally, courts grant agencies the "presumption of reasonableness" in their decision-making. Ahlborg and Nightingale explained that "movements of power in space produce tangible material and institutional forms, which themselves enable and constrain actors in a continual process of emergence, all of which is infused with power" (2018, 382-383). Power produced the institutional form, which exercises the power. The ruling in another case the following year declared that the agency findings were not arbitrary and capricious, but "represent a considered view on one side of an honest disagreement" (APLNJ v DEP 2011, p. 16). The disagreement is insufficient to overturn an administrative agency's decision, the ruling continued, because "given the strong presumption of reasonableness to which the agency is entitled, appellants have failed to establish that respondents' predictions were, in fact, fabricated" (*ibid*). Thus, there is a relationship between the burden of proof and the assumption of reasonableness.

This relationship was made explicit when it occurred in another wildlife-related case at this time which did not directly pertain to bear hunting but involved the same parties in the overall conflict. In *APLNJ v FGC 2016*, the activist organization tried to end the Fish and Game Council's use of steel jaw leg traps. After describing the technical details of the traps and citing numerous studies, the court declared that "an agency's regulations are presumed valid and reasonable," and therefore the court defers to them (p. 8). The disagreement between the parties, they concluded, is not sufficient to overcome that presumption (p. 12).

The third way in which courts indirectly perpetuated the monopoly, promoting the presumption of reasonableness in decision-making, was one of the most significant. In *APLNJ v DEP 2010*, the judges referenced a 1963 case in declaring that "we will affirm a decision of the DEP if it is supported by the evidence, even if we may question the wisdom of the decision or would have reached a different result" (p. 9). This is because they defer to the agency, as they recognize it is specifically equipped to evaluate the data. The court determined that it is not their role "to micromanage an agency but to recognize that unless the agency's action is inconsistent with its legislative authority, we will act with restraint and not intervene" (p. 10).

The judges recognized that there are multiple interpretations of the data, but by default, they yielded to the agency's interpretation. Acknowledging that "respondents also conducted significant scientific investigation…relying on experts including biologists, statisticians, [and] wildlife personnel," they declared that "simply disagreeing, even if based on contrary expert opinions, is insufficient to overcome *the presumption of reasonableness* ascribed to the Commissioner's findings" (p. 11, emphasis added). A disagreement in the interpretation of the data, they explained, is not a basis for a policy challenge. In another case the following year, addressing similar conflicts and challenges, the ruling expounded: "if a subject is debatable, the agency determination must be upheld…. The most that here is revealed is that men can earnestly disagree" (APLNJ v DEP 2011, p. 7). But the disagreement was not composed of two evenly legitimate sides; certain knowledge claims got default institutionalization.

One may consequently assess the court decisions as either having been made in error or having been politicized. That is not necessarily the purpose here. Rather, it is to point out that the ways the institutions are structured and function, the assumptions, and the patterns of decision-making make it difficult for outsiders to

change the policy. "State-sponsored environmental decision-making processes work to construct certain hierarchies of legitimacy out of the shifting, diverse field of land use and knowledge construction practices; these hierarchies, in turn, shape what forms of land relationships and knowledge construction practices constitute legitimate foundations for action" (Tollefson & Panikkar, 2020, p. 1171). This was a way in which the definable institutional structures and powerful supporting ideas manifested in and perpetuated the policy monopoly. As a result, these bear management practices continued, despite strong opposition throughout the era.

Agencies can decide what voices to accommodate

Svarstad *et al.* defined "discursive power" as that "exercised when actors produce discourses and manage to get other groups to adopt and contribute to the reproduction of their discourse" (2018, p. 356). Those discursive claims then serve to legitimize policy assumptions. The more entrenched those become in institutional practice, the more difficult it is for other discourses to gain traction and lead to policy change. The combined identifiable institutional structure and powerful supporting idea manifested in agency responses to the members of the public challenging the policies, wherein DFW was able to decide which voices to accommodate.

One of the ways this occurred was that the DFW argued against public comments. For example, anti-hunt activists and some members of the public sympathize with bears as individuals, whereas pro-hunt groups focus on the species. Therefore, the former abhor any bear death, whereas the latter are willing to view those as being in the service of the whole population's health. The FGC wrote that "hunting results in the death of individual bears, but no significant negative effects on bears as a species is expected to result" (Vreeland 2010, p. 25). But actors with power can establish discourses and narratives that favor them (Svarstad *et al.*, 2018). Then it becomes a self-reinforcing monopoly that is difficult for groups with less power to penetrate. Groups with less power also establish narratives favorable to themselves; the difference lies in which ones are more likely to win out.

Agencies also responded to arguments that oppose hunting by suggesting there is no other choice. "No other method of black bear population control has been identified and implemented….Hunting is considered one element of an integrated approach to manage bear populations" (Vreeland 2010, p. 25). Herein lies another difference in objectives. There is a difference between bear population *control*, for which hunting is cast as the only effective response, and bear *management*, for which an "integrated" response – consisting of a multifaceted strategy including garbage management, public education, etc. – is suitable. Both sides can conflate the two (though it is unclear whether they do so intentionally or not), and when that happens the outcomes are in favor of the agencies and status quo, not the detractors seeking change. As Tollefson and Panikkar put it, "The contested epistemic understandings of residents, expert consultants, and state and federal regulators further reveal the role of regulatory processes in constructing and maintaining boundaries of epistemic legitimacy" (2020, p. 1166). That being the case, it can be challenging to identify and integrate other choices into policy if the institutional structures and supporting ideas have traditionally been associated with one kind of policy response for so long.

This is not to say that it is a clear binary. Senator Ray Lesniak's (D-20) bill S2702 would have required, amongst other things, that the Division of Fish and Wildlife "develop and implement…a five-year non-lethal black bear population control program" (Lesniak 2016, pp. 1-2). In this way anti-hunt factions can still support population control as long as it takes alternative approaches. Nonetheless, as previously mentioned, DFW often pushed back on this by arguing that no other methods are effective.

Many arguments during the public comment period disapproved of hunting. FGC made clear that it

> recognizes that people in New Jersey express opinions on both sides of the hunting issue. Council recognized the concerns of citizens and adopted a conservative approach to population reduction by regulated hunting in order to assure the public that the long-term viability of the bear population was maintained" (FGC, 2015b, p. 45).

This looks like an olive branch. FGC seemed to attempt to fulfill its statutory mandate and enact policies that comport with its institutional structures and supporting ideas while accommodating the concerns stemming

from others' different values. But for anti-hunt groups, it tends to be absolute; no hunting is permissible under any circumstances. This could stem once again from the value system which identifies with individual bears rather than the species. In this light, FGC's assurances of the viability of the bear population fall on deaf ears. The consequence is that, rather than the negotiated outcomes of multiple groups exercising power that Svarstad *et al.* described, it is in fact closer to the "total fulfillment of the will of only one actor" (2018, p. 353). Thus it seems that attempting to break a policy monopoly with its complete opposite is an ineffective strategy.

The focus on individual bears could be an underlying factor in activist groups labeling the process a "trophy hunt." In response, FGC stated "commenters didn't define what this is (it would usually target large adult bears); the season allows for the harvest of bears of either sex and at any age" (FGC, 2015a, p. 270). The commenters probably meant "trophy hunt" broadly: for recreation and mounting a head on a wall, rather than in any technical sense. This evokes emotional imagery which emerges from Mutualist value systems (Teel *et al.*, 2010). But since activists did not articulate that clearly, FGC either sidestepped the issue by reverting to technical explanations or missed the point. Either way, this is an instance of different values leading people to talk past each other, exacerbating the conflict and sewing mistrust.

Another way that agencies decided what voices to accommodate or not was, when presented with scientific arguments from anti-hunt factions, to argue against, dismiss, or take the opposing position regarding those. In 2010, the attorney for the activist organization BEAR (Bear Education and Resource) Group wrote a letter to the DEP Commissioner requesting a stay on the hunt scheduled for that winter. She cited a study and statistics indicating a hunt would be the wrong decision, including complaints about bears being counted incorrectly, that hunting does not reduce complaints but rather only non-lethal approaches do, hunting could increase the bear population, and other issues regarding public opinion and what people want (Lin, 2010). In a response letter, DEP Commissioner Bob Martin opened by declaring that the request "does not provide any basis to stay the hunt, nor does it raise any legitimate questions about its inclusion [in the management policy]" (Martin, 2010, p. 1). Martin's response pointed out that Lin's issues had already been addressed at an earlier meeting or through the public comments period in the New Jersey Register. Regarding newly raised data issues, he explained that a review of the numbers confirmed their position and that the department had changed its procedures and classification systems which accounts for some of the discrepancies.

This response was the proper procedure. But the problem is that the agencies and activists ascribe to different value systems, which lead to different ideas as to what role the data should play in the policy; arguing based on the numbers will not bring victory to activists because the agencies, after determining for themselves what the data means, have the power to design policy accordingly. Whereas, activists' understanding of the data gets dismissed. As Baumgartner and Jones (1993) put it, "policy monopolies usually follow a single understanding of the underlying policy question" (p. 25). As a result, one way of framing the problem and its subsequent solution predominates.

5. Conclusion

Understanding a policy monopoly requires identifying the identifiable institutional structures and powerful supporting ideas specific to the case in question (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). Then, taking it a step further by elaborating on how the monopoly consequently plays out can deepen our understanding of how policy monopolies come to be, operate, and do or do not change. This study sought to do so by using Ahlborg and Nightingale's framework as an entry point, to "explicitly ask *where* is power located" (2018, p. 396). In this case, it is located in the "knowledges and ontologies shaping resource governance processes" (p. 391). Then the study followed the flow of power among actors and their discourses within institutional contexts to reveal the ways in which certain ideas gain traction and maintain influence on policymaking while others do not (Svarstad *et al.* 2018). This paints a fuller picture of what happens inside a policy monopoly and fleshes out its inner workings.

From 2010 to 2017, prior to a disputed period which followed and may be ongoing, pro-hunt factions held a policy monopoly over black bear management in New Jersey. Its identifiable institutional structure emerged out of a history of management agencies taking particular approaches in performing their tasks, under certain assumptions, and in certain administrative contexts. Its powerful supporting idea was influenced by a value system that viewed nature and humans in particular ways, which informed the questions policymakers asked and the answers at which they arrived. Importantly, these two factors of the monopoly were interrelated.

But how was it that these made the monopoly hold? Two additional factors flowed out of both of them as anti-hunt factions fought back unsuccessfully. First, other governmental institutions upheld and enforced the agencies' practices and assumptions. Second, the agencies themselves were able to play an active role in defending and furthering their position; they were able to bear down and dig in.

These factors enable a different explanation of events and motivations than are common in discourses and disputes regarding wildlife management. By and large, agencies lean on their expertise while considering outsiders' perspectives in ways such that those perspectives and values can be worked into plans but do not necessarily reorient them. Instead recognizing the built-in patterns in which wildlife professionals operate can enable the questioning of long-held dogmas and recognizing that their policy decisions – and arguments from others pertaining to alternative policies – are informed by divergent values in conjunction with scientific data. That could help agencies adapt both to possibly changing ecological conditions and certainly to changing social values; a necessary factor considering managing a public resource like wildlife requires social license (Zinn *et al.*, 1998).

On the other end of the debate, anti-hunt groups' lack of trust in wildlife agencies intertwines with their status as outsiders to the process in which they hold insufficient power, and hence feel excluded from the decision-making process. This manifests in accusations of bad faith, leading to further conflict, but this study suggests the dynamic is more complex. Recognizing that legitimate expertise and scientific knowledge underpin the black bear management plans, crafted by participants operating under certain logics, can help facilitate communication by moving the conversation away from thorny debates over interpreting science and the mistrust that comes with that and towards contextual conversations about different values regarding how humans should live with bears: Domination, Mutualism, or something else (Teel *et al.*, 2010)? Then can come inclusive discussions on how to craft ecologically informed policy that accommodates those values. Understanding the inner workings of power in policy settings can help actors better cooperate to communicate visions and goals across ontologies and through institutional settings. This can enable more inclusive and collaborative policymaking, enabling for cooperation while either maintaining the status quo or making change.

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