

**Symposia Title:** *Sufficient Reason for Institutional Change: Applications of Bromley's Framework in Trade, Natural Resource, and Farm Policy*

This symposium represents three applications of the Bromley framework (See Bromley, D. W. *Sufficient Reason: Volitional Pragmatism and the Meaning of Economic Institutions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006) which sees individuals in democratic market economies envisioning new futures, and implementing policy and institutional changes to realize same. The framework replaces traditional welfare economic based renditions of what policy is all about.

**Organizer:** Gary Lynne, University of Nebraska

**Moderator:** Paul Thompson, Michigan State University

**Applications and Presenters:**

*What We Have Here is a Failure to Communicate? Examining the Differences of Opinion Between Economists and the General Public on Trade Policy Issues*  
- David Schweikhardt, Michigan State University

Surveys have shown significant differences between the opinions of economists and the general public on policy issues, particularly regarding trade policy issues. Economists often respond to such results with calls for improved economic education of the public without considering that values other than efficiency might be involved in such policy decisions and, therefore, affecting public attitudes on such policy issues. This presentation will examine trade policy issues within the framework of volitional decision-making proposed by Bromley and consider the possible causes and implications of such differences.

*Empathy Conditioned Pragmatism: Finding Ways to Resolve Natural Resource Conflicts*  
- Robert Sheeder and Gary Lynne, University of Nebraska

The setting is Tuttle Creek Lake, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reservoir. The problem is, Kansas City is drawing its water from this silt and chemical laden Lake. The overall challenge is how to facilitate a resolution over the “irritation,” as Bromley refers to the impetus for policy change, that is building between upstream farmers and these downstream water users. Using dual-motive, metaeconomic theory integrated with the Bromley framework, we examine the farmer’s tendencies to take action in the empathy-sympathy domain. This tendency is essential to forming a shared other-interest in a new future for the Lake, as the Bromley framework suggests is the focus of policy. This

shared vision tempers the self-interested pursuit of more profit from using less than sustainable farming practices and of more public water, as the irritation and conflict dissipates through changing policy and institutions.

*Settled Beliefs and Institutional Change in Food and Agricultural Policy: Reform Attempts in the 2007 Federal Farm Bill*

- Thomas L. Dobbs, South Dakota State University,  
and W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Going into 2007, proposals for major reforms in U.S. farm policy were coming from groups representing two very different visions for American agriculture: (1) the global competitiveness vision; and (2) the sustainable agriculture vision. However, on one major aspect of reform, there appeared to be a convergence of views. The 'commodity program' subsidies needed to be drastically curtailed, altered, or gradually eliminated. It appeared that a new "settled belief" was emerging. However, at this writing, it appears that the commodity program subsidies will remain in full force when the Farm Bill legislation is finally passed. What does Bromley's framework tell us about the process of institutional change in Federal farm and food policy, and what might it take for true reform finally to come about? That question will frame the discussion in this case presentation.

**Discussants:** Laura McCann, University of Missouri and Paul Thompson, Michigan State University