

Programme OPERA – ENTRETIENS

Entretien – santé n°31

Pour citer cet entretien : Lepont, Ulrike, Entretien santé n°31, Programme OPERA (*Operationalizing Programmatic Elite Research in America*), dirigé par W. Genieys (ANR-08-BLAN-0032) (*insérer hyperlien*).

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Interviewer: After your studies, you...

Responder: I got my PhD in 1981. I went to Wellesley College where I taught in Massachusetts for ten years. I came to Washington on a sabbatical. I become (ten year) of a department chair and all his staff and so I negotiated a two years sabbatical. I cam in Washington in 1989 for two years; there was Clinton election in 1992 and what happened is that after he won the election in the middle of my two years sabbatical, my research director – I was in an agency in Washington, the Department of Health and Human Services, they have a lot of agencies and one of them is the Agency for Health Policy and Research and it's a place for fellows to come to government and use data and spend one year or two. So my research director detailed me to OMB, which is in the White House complex because he knew I would be helpful to them mostly because I had taught. Because if you have taught you can explain things better than the human average and so, I became a briefer of the politicians. I briefed Clinton, the cabinet, people like that... And I became a part of a group of about 20 people, called the Clinton team. I was part of the team that was doing estimates for costs and so fort. I was not part of the political team but I waxed the political team to do their disaster! Yes, I would say, I waxed the America's fail! And because I was so close to them, it hurt me. I was ashamed, I was embarrassed, I was like "America should do better", "oh my god". So, loss hurt me until this March. We have to make up for this; it's like loosing a war, then you get another chance. After the Clinton debacle, I decided not to go back to academia. I decided to stay in Washington, I knew that Washington needed help. I knew that I was so committed to try to make a reform happen, I could do far more here than back in academia. I decided to go to Urban Institute, which is a think tank that is sort of Center-left. They had been very helpful to the Clinton administration. They had done a lot of estimations and sure estimations of what the costs would be. I thought they were good people and they are! I went to them from 1994 to around 2000. And then I went to Mathematica, which is another think tank, in a little center, Health System Change headed by Paul Ginsburg. And Ginsburg recruited me as vice president and what I liked in this move is that Ginsburg wasn't so much an academic quantitative person, but he was someone who's going around ant talks to real people in a real health care system. So I learned a lot about health care systems – actually we don't have one health care system, we have 3000 health care systems, local systems. He had really a good way to studying differences and similarities among these local systems. He had a grant to study 12 communities. There are fairly large and not small towns where you can really study small towns but town is smaller than 2000 as well. These 12 community gave me a good

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inside into the interface between real world and the academic world; and if you don't understand the real world how hospitals really do their business, you don't understand, if you don't understand the way labs organize themselves, you never gonna make a good policy. So I became a strong advocate of paying attention to the real world in addition to what academics study. Because academics can only study what we can measure. So what we can't measure, we give up but real world is often unmeasured, so cannot see what's going on! So it was a great experience. But the treef is the treef communities a couple of times, there's not so much to learn, it's kind of boring.

So I swift think tank in 2005 and went to New American Foundation. New America is another kind of think tanks; it doesn't have many PhD, it doesn't do what we would call primary research. It's really about journalism, good journalism. It's about trying do nature the next generation of good young who can become public intellectuals if you do this right. I found a really wonderful blend of people who understand how to affect the media. Because the media matter in the manner you interpreted the United States. They taught me how to policy; and they gave me freedom what I wanted to do. And so, because of all that experience in Washington, I published papers in public staff; I'll give you my view if you want. I have been around so long, I have become someone who senators would turned to. I helped Ron Wriden, senator of Oregon, Bob Beenit. They had a big proposal - what we call the bipartisan proposal; it's 17 co-sponsored: 9 Republicans, 8 Democrats, depending on how you can manage your choice but had been a bipartisan support before the election. We thought there was a real chance therefore that we could order bipartisan support before the election. Because among the American elites, among all the senators, they understand that we have to do a health reform. The politics became tough and you can talk of that if you want, but anyway, then, it was much more about the policy. And what we wanted is that the republican agree on the principles that you have to require people to get insurance, you gonna insurance market work better, you got the subsidies for low incomes what you are seriously talking about costs. We were quite happy having 17 co-sponsors in the Senate and 43 in the House. And maybe 4 Republicans, or 2, but a couple.

And then, the election. And the election began thepoor of the country. America is not ready for a skin color meritocracy. I mean third of the population is not ready. So what you have here – are you familiar with the concept of world-view, the way you think about the all world as opposed to facts. People world-view has been challenged by the observed fact that Obama is darker and smarter than I am. It's something a lot of people wouldn't think it was possible! It's like, "it can't be true; he must be not born here, he must be a Muslim radical spy, he must be a secret communist; they don't accept that he's American. And that's the under-line, the unspoken part of the vitrial in the Tea-party staff. They don't even know. They would never tell you it's right. But I can promise you, race is there. I know because my brother exhibited, it's just given to me to watch. I am from Marcansal in South, so I understand. When I was born, the country was very different but when Obama was elected, they started to use the word and they had never used the word for 20 years. Something is touching something very deep. That is going on in our country. I speak about this stuff all people of the country and I get this stuff almost every single time. I feel almost sorry for them, I can't help them. They're confused, they're like the native American when the White people came and took the country: "what happens?". And that why there're so shoked. They're lost the memo that America is becoming the monterly show.

It's like changing the benefice of White people...

They feel threaten. And the economy is almost depression. And they're scared in my view and Obama is the symbol of all of that.

You told us that you are from Arkansas. Bill Clinton is from Arkansas.

I didn't know him. I certainly – as my research director at HHS knew – wanted him to succeed. Because Arkansas is one chance in the century because we are a very small backyard. It would be like somebody from part of France becoming president. You want him to succeed. I personally was for Person from Massachusetts but, I tried hard to help him because you know, he made well.

About your involvement in the Clinton reform: What was your role? You were in OMB...

I was in OMB in charge of developing costs estimates for the options that the president and the Congress considered. So, the OMB provides analyzes to the government and for congressional analyze. The Congressional Budget Office provides the official estimates of official legislations. But often, a lot of work goes on before you get the official legislation. Our job was to give the politicians the options: if you do this, it will cost that, if you do that it will cost this. So we did primarily much non staff, that sort of staff, starting in May of 1993 and we didn't finish early until August of 94.

Did you publish something with CBO or?

We didn't publish with CBO, we argued with CBO. At the professional level, at the economic level, we would talk to each other about how to estimate this, what to assume, what's this, what could be using – methodology. We would talked methodology with them. But they have their own... their leadership is to be insulated from the White House. The White House cannot fire them. So they're independent and they're make their own judgment. Their analysts presented them with options just like we presented our guys with options and they made choices. We are not smart as the French or the British, we don't have one source, we have at least two argument competing about everything. Obsviously, as we are talking each other, we are very good to know what the position of the other side will be. The other side was not friendly to Clinton. That legacy is part of what shaped Doug CBO (15'40) today, because he had to show the world that he didn't work for the White House, he was independent. But at the same time, as I said earlier, I think it's fair to say that all the elite in the US know that we have to do that now. So I think CBO tries to be helpful and they try to signal : “if you propose this, we will give you so much for saving, so much for costs, if you propose that...”. So they try to signal to the White House: “exclude this, include that, and you will get the number you want!”. In 1993, we didn't have that good relationship.

How do you explain this difficult relationship between the White House and the CBO in 1993?

First of all, I would say, the problem was, the Clinton's was, pharmore / far more interests and the people who ran CBO. And frankly, Clinton was a conservative Democrat compared to the people in charge of Congress at the time, and the head of the CBO in 1993-94 was

more liberal; and so he didn't like some of the Clinton's proposals. Interestingly, over time and it's for 16 years since the Clinton's stopped in 94 and we're talking up 2010, in that time more analysts have become more comfortable with the basic Clinton's structure which is pretty much what we got here: compelling health plan with a new market place with new rules. There are important differences between what we passed and the Clinton's proposal but the basic structure is similar. And I am quite comfortable with that. And the person who's at the head of the CBO now is in my view more modern, market oriented economist and more friendly to that kind of proposal than the one who was there in 1993. All country moved right; for good and hell (?18'10)

And Democratic Party moved also to right...

Oh Yeah! Some are still angry about that.

How do you explain this move to the right. Do you think that experts or politicians gradually converted to ideas of moderate Republicans?

It's fascinating. I would say this way: I think what happened was, you go back in time and the Clinton's period was a time in which it appeared to be the case that the stars were light/ lined. You had Republicans supporting reform, John Cheffy from New Norland' proposal, by the way very similar to the Obama's proposal, with 16 Republican co-sponsors: it had an individual mandate at its core, it had reorganized health insurance market at its core and partially financed with Medicare savings. Almost the same. 16 co-sponsors but none of them was still supporting the bill today. So what happened I would say, is not so much that the analysts changed; we always had similar views – but that politicians and the Democratic party became more comfortable with this framework over time. And the obthrougth rigt haven't been it, seven or eight Republicans remained comfortable; so the idea was that there was a convergence to an agreement on how to do it. There ware still people who preferred the more single-payer government-run system like in Canada, but they were a minority and more and more people, I would say, in Democratic party, the political apparatus, you know politicians, came to see the people would never agree to a government run. So, we, America, are going to do this, it will be this way. It wasn't so much beloved embrace of the market mechanism, this the only to is going to work. Interestingly, as that became clearer and clearer to the Democrats, the Republicans after the election felt that they had to run from it because they didn't want Obama to get this great victory. That is what it was about! Health care became a metaphor for our view of government because Republican wanted to fight over that and not over health care policy. They know the couldn't fight over health care policy, so they just focused on big government.

Do you think the expert helped the Democratic Party to frame this consensus?

Yes.

In which way? Could you explain a little bit?

Well, mostly because we kept writing; this would work. Probably after the Clinton's failure, and then we passed this bill to cover children – that we call S-CHIP – after that, no one talked about health system reform until 2008. So in the run after 2008, politicians in the United-States pretty much had to make a decision to run or not to run by 2006, two years, to raise the

money. And so, 2006 is when they began to form explanatory committees to develop not only their messaging but what policy is going to. What was different in my view this time compared to 92, every single politician in the Democratic Party embraced this kind of market-oriented thing. You had insurance market reform not take over, you had individual mandate at the core of it – you know, Hillary Clinton was very important in the intellectual if you will sealing of the case, of conclusion case. Because every body knew, Hillary knew more than none of the candidates. Trust me, Obama didn't know anything when it started. Hillary coming out with essentially what we adopted was the mainstream Democratic view. I think the unanimity of the advisers across the politicians, just made it clear that the Party is not comfortable with the basic framework. There is still some on the left who wanted the public option, more government rules but they knew that they had no chance. The sort of unanimity of politicians during the presidential campaign reflected the unanimity of the advisers.

Do you think the work of academics like Jacob Hacker, who showed that the health American system is ruled by both the public and the private sector, had an impact on the choice of the market-oriented option?

Certainly, Jacob Hacker was very popular on the Democratic left because he's sort of soften the view... Jacob made possible to talk about private and public together for the left. The Center/Senate never had a problem with that. So Jacob didn't influence the Center/Senate, he influenced the Left. In a sense, he showed the Left how it could be in peace with the market. At the same time, Jacob pushed very hard for more government, for the public option to be a competitor. So in the day, he lost because the Left lost the Center. But Jacob was influential for the Left to make their peace with how they too could see how the market might work, given their rule. In this way it was important. He didn't influence the Senate, he didn't influence Baucus, these guys but the Democratic Left in the House, definitely.

Do you support the public option?

I viewed it as an unnecessary apedage. I developed a version of it that I knew the Center could deal with and that the version proposed in the Senate. It's a version which never force providers to be in it, I would never force providers to take Medicare payment rate which is lower that the market payment rate – I say they have payment market great. I said providers have the right to say no. I designed mine for a very specific purpose. It was to show the right that you can have a public option which is not designed to the industry and the bankruptcy. And to show the Left that you have a public option that do not have to be so government, so regulatory. My view in this proposal which again Chumo adopted in the Finance Committee was to expose the right: if they wouldn't be for my version, they wouldn't be early for competition. They just didn't want anything having to do with government; so my version was acceptable. So Blue dogs liked my version, moderates Democrats liked my version; it became the only thing that had any chance in the Senate. But automatically, ideology, they decided they wanted no public option. Although there are couple of versions....

So were in favor of the public option but you tried to do it acceptable of the Senate.

Correct. I didn't think it was necessary if you guy wanted one I knew one which could pass the Senate! I am all about getting the through Senate. The House frankly would vote for anything in the day because they wanted to do this. The Senate was able to say no, we didn't like some of the details. So I focused on the Senate.

There are two committees. The Finance Committee is more moderate. Did you work more with the Help Committee?

I worked equally with both because some of the members are the same. And we knew that the Help Committee would go first. And I was part of a group that the Help committee staff would call in and talked the options and we develop decisions for each of them. We definitely worked with Help. I probably had more direct contacts with Senators themselves in Finance Committee. But I worked with the staff in the Help committee equally with the staff on the Finance committee. I know more senators on the Finance committee.

Who?

Baucus, Chemor, Lincoln (30'01), Whitin, Mandana Staferno, Birman. On Republican side, Grassly, Snowe, I never met with Anzy but I met with Anzy's people and Ache. Ache and Anzy are both and Help as Birman and Corney.

Who else helped the Help Committee? You said a group of people. Myabe they have a trail; or was it informal?

It's definitely out the record. The people who run the room that I am talking about include John at the Urban Institute, John Burckow who is a retired actuary who was paid a grant that (31'27), Karen Pollitz, she's now in the administration, she was at Georgetown, candy Men, who is also in the administration now, Lindon Blunberg, from Urban, Gary Claxton from the Kaiser family Foundation, couple of other people I didn't talk much. All of us worked for Clinton. There is a valence, isn't it? There is a better car Who lost and try to win again. We were called in by people who worked for Kennedy: John McDunough, David Bowen was his boss. We met probably two or three times a week for couples months, reacted to proposals. Different staffsbut the Kennedy people ran it.

During the whole process?

It started before the election because it became clear that Obama was going to win. Kennedy brought down McDona from Massachusetts in June. He hired in March and he should start in June and Kennedy was diagnosed in May. It was very tragic in many many ways. Just not for the person, that would have been big enough. But he was the only person who could talked to Ache, the Republican. They were very close; their politics were completely different but they were personally close. They talked every day as long as Kennedy could but as he get sicker, he couldn't talk anymore and when they stopped talking, their staffs don't work together so well because staff don't like each other. They couldn't cooperate any more. That is why we lost him. He was hurt that he was not in the circle to talk to Kennedy until the very very end and then he turned anger out of Baucus, and Baucus could not handle it. So, he dropped out of the Finance (34'57). At the time it was really tragic because the only hope we had was Grassly and Baucus. And Grassly was our until August. And he appreciated the bill, that pretty clear. What happened to him : he went home in August and the Tea Party people and he was threatened by a local politician, a state representative, who said "if you go for the Democratic Bill, we will run against you from the right in the primary. Grassly is two years old and he remembers Fulbright, senator of Arkansas: he lost

his last election, 63-66, because he got too far for people in the Arkansas in the Vietnam war. Grassly remembered that and he saw the same anger when he came in August and talked to Baucus and said “No way, I can’t do this”. That why our person died. Because of the Tea party. We didn’t know how interpretate it. Politicians are trying to do with anger. It’s not part of the candidates’ training school. So, when people are angry, no matter if they are a minority, it just scars them. They don’t know what that means, they are not used to it. But people who organize know exactly what they are doing.

There is really something about the Clinton people, experts. They’re back now. How do you explain that and the role of this Clinton generation in this reform?

The thing you need to understand is that, when you fared the World war I and II, the first guy in charge was Majano, you have to use the general you got. We used the people who knew the war! This people knew the war. They knew the technical policy, but also the politics. In the case of the highest ranking Clinton person who was a really health person, Nancy-Ann de Parle. Nancy-Ann not only saw the Clinton war – she was my boss in OMB back to 1993 – but Nancy went on to run the Agency that administers Medicare and Medicaid. And, in her time in this Agency, Congress passed a very big law, the BBA which required a tremendous amount of implementation work. So Nancy is actually the only one on the planet who lived through the Clinton political war and administered the implementation of a big initiative which changed the way you pay providers. Nancy-Ann is the perfect person for where she was in the White House. Even today, because today she is helping direct the personnel selection of who is running in government the implementation. She is the person who Obama needs for the implementation. We need her. She is like the top of the pyramid. Her people are just from acquired expertise.

Do you think that Obama have his own expertise people in thinking in his own reform program? Maybe during the campaign...

Well. During his campaign, his top adviser was David Cutler, an economist from Harvard who was also with us in the Clinton area. He was in the Council of Economists Advisers. Think about that anybody who hold a position today, be adviser to these people, was somewhere in the Clinton world. Anybody who is ambitious, and smart, got in it. So Obama advisers had already worked through the Clinton logic. They were naturally to change it a little bit but not a lot.

But in 1993, people who worked for the reform were new in the field of health policy?

I’d just say this way: There were no one who could play the role that Nancy-Ann just play for Obama. The last time we talked about health system reform in this country was in Nixon time, 1973. And before that Johnson in 1965, and before that Truman in 47, and before that Roosevelt in 35 and before that Roosevelt First in So yes, they were more nervous, untested. But the biggest thing, I think, just observing two of these wars, in the Clinton time there was far less understanding of the role of Congress in policy development. There were far less communication between the policy people and the Congress. As a consequence, the was far more government; so when the Clinton proposal was unveiled it was like: “what is that?” There is no intellectual ownership understand that. It’s like “you broke my ... , I don’t want that. It’s not my instinct, my type of thinking.” Obama and Nancy-Ann knew that: you have to get Congress to own their proposal. To do that, Congress has to develop it. Even now,

people like Nancy-Ann or all the people we have named, we can write a health care program in 30 minutes. But we couldn't say that. It's like a class, it's like education. It's very important. Some of the people here, especially in the Senate, were here in 94. So they learned it before. In this sense, they were just relearning and for them it was much quicker. Grassly, Baucus, Kennedy. But for some, it was the first time. White developed his own plan a couple of years, he was deeply involved about the issue; he did a lot education. The Congress had to come to understand in a more deeper and profound way. I think the committee members did at the end.

You worked only with the Congress during the reform?

Pretty much. The White House wasn't doing any policy development. They were just especially monitoring on how the development was going in Congress. The intellectual effort in the Obama team wasn't as important as it was in the Clinton team. Certainly, the role I played, especially from a think tank position which is easier to play this role, I talked the press a lot. A lot of what you do in that position, you write paper, you publish them and you develop an academic reputation; and if you're nice with the press, they trust you. Nice the press means: answer the questions and tell the truth. If you do that they come to like you and call you back. And then you become a regular source. And I could do it frankly easier from a think tank than from the administration or the Congress.

Why did you specialize in the Senate?

Because I knew the most likely place for the reform to fail would be the Senate. And before the election we had no idea that we'll get 60 votes for Democratic Party. I knew that we needed a bipartisan agreement to get this thing done. Knowing that I needed a bipartisan agreement meant that what the Left-wing of the House wants is never going to happen. So, what a lot of people spent a lot of time on, I didn't because I knew it was not in game; I focused on in game. Remember, I am haunted by the failure in 1993, I am not interested in the frills. It's my last chance, if they fail again, it'll be 15 more years, I'll be 80 years old. That's why I am focused on in game. I am a Democrat, what we call a market Democrat, a Blue dog democrat, a conservative Democrat, a moderate Democrat and there are just more of them in the Senate. I had a working group in the House lead by Jame Cooper for a long time, co-chaired by Mark Castel, from Delaware. So we had a group in the House but it's not the dominant force in the House and we are the dominant force in the Senate. Between Baucus, Grass, Conrad, Lincoln in the Finance Committee, Landrieu, from Louisiana, was in this group, the freshman Mark Warner, Jim Webb from Virginia, Iu Doll from Colorado, from New Mexico, Bennett from Colorado, all those guys are moderate. The moderate is the dominant force in the Senate; so it's just a nicer place where to be. People like me there!

You're extremely connected to the political...

I am old! Have you see this great bear! People know I am too stupid to lie; so I am useful! I have been around for a long time and I tell the truth. They tell me and say "what do you think about this?" and I tell them the truth, I don't lie them! That's pretty rare! And I understand politics much more than the average economist because I have been here so long.

You met all these people during the Clinton reform?

Hum... or in between. Surely people on the Help working on the group, yes during Clinton. But the people in the Congress and their staff, I know them for at least 15 years. I testified. When you testify, the staff interviews you to find out what you 're going to say, what you believe, how you react to this question. So you know them pretty well. And the hearings themselves; during the hearings you're with members and the members pay attention. If they like the way you testified, they call you in. That's pretty well how you get to know them: When they figure out that you know something they want to know. Then they bring you in their world; I am from rural Arkansas, so I am a simple and respectful guy, I am not trying to push them in a particular direction, I answer the questions they ask! I am not paid by any firm to get money; when you're a manager being a think tank guy, you are paid by foundations and how many rose do you sold (50') ; they are very worry about people who seem to have and are actually paid by a drug company or an insurance company or hospitals. They always want to know your function and they should know!

You said that you were part of the Clinton team. Were you in the Task force?

Well, OK, the Task force are politicians ; under need the task force, there were 300 people working, but the first five or six month. After that, there were about 20 of us. Hillary testified before Congress in September 93; we didn't have yet legislation and writing, it was still being done but the contour of the proposals was very clear and she lead it out that September. She did such a great job that the Republican called and end at the early end of the hearings, to get her off television; she was doing too well, she was so great, we were so happy! After the bill was done, we only were 20. We were like the people who go to the Hill to meet with the members and their staffers. When the legislation were there, we negotiated what committees would like, stuff like that. We were 20 to work from November to July. To keep negotiating with the committees.

Who were there?

Claxton, he was at the HHS at the time; lany Blumberg was with me at OMB; Kame the Work was at HHS; Judy Feder; was a part of that rule because he went back from Harvard in the spring; there were a series of senior bureaucrats like from the Treasury, Janet Holtzblatt, Julian Hunter, were two from the Treasury team. On another guy, Richard?. So Treasury, HHS, OMB. Nancy-Ann. It was like Nancy-Ann was driving the Limousine, opening the door and we would do all the meetings. I was a part of the policy team, "how we do this".
.....(54) The political to meet with the people at night. But it didn't happen.

From the failure of the Clinton reform until 2006, the Democratic country wasn't very involved in a new reform for the country.

Right. Because they lost the election in 94. There was a very important event. I can't tell you how important that is. Because it scarred them; and look at what is going now: they're very scarred but they knew – and I tell you, I believe that one reason why the Bill passed is that they became convinced: "If we do nothing, it will be definitely like 94. If we do something, maybe it will be like 94, but if we do nothing it will be like 94". So that scarred issue.

As an expert, what was your role during all these years between the two reforms?

We drank a lot! We did research; I worked a lot on insurance market. There were some insurance reforms in our states. So I could study which states had done the best, this kind of things. We worked on policy proposals. We worked on building a bipartisan consensus, establishing a factual base, we talked people who were sick too. The foundations really kept that alive. The foundations, it's private money that is directed more or less for the public good, as defined the foundations – but anyway (57'59). They usually use it for the right. But they kept them founded. And they really encouraged us to work across party lines because we all thought that the only way to make it happen in America was by bipartisan agreement. So folks like me worked very hard with people from Heritage, or AEI, not Cato, to form working groups and so fort. And that's really probably why it came to be. 57'42 To be faire the Democrats rejected it too because the Democrat Union didn't like it because it was too small.

There was another proposal, the....

Oh yes, it was called the Bipartisan Policy Center. There were four majority leaders: Metrol, Dashle Democrats, Backer and Doll. Metrol became Obama's ambassador for the Middle East. He's over there. He couldn't be part of the four because he is officially paid by the government. So Doll, Dashle and Backer came and did the Bipartisan proposal. And it was far more political. The bipartisan proposal was made to be very close to what was coming out in the Congress, to what Obama had propose during the campaign but also enough conservative to earn Doll and Backer's support. The idea was: if Bob Doll said it's OK – he was co-sponsor with Cheffy in 93 - maybe it would remind Republicans who also sponsored Cheffy, they would come on board and support the bill. That one of the last gasp of. Republicans in Congress didn't care about Bob Doll. Their calculation, as I said, is far more political than health policy. They were afraid if they cooperated with Obama, he'd get this great victory. Then he's a bimbo. They want to make him seem like he's a radical socialist. Even he proposed with their support. By the way, it was an attempt of bipartisan. When it started, it was a great idea by Bob Doll.

I have a question about your career in think tanks. You changed three times and each time for a more advocacy think tank...?

I wouldn't say this way. Urban has the reputation for being liberal to center-left. Moving from there to Mathematica was a move to the right, and a move away from advocacy. Moving from there to New America was a move to free advocacy, yes, definitely. I knew I would be much more in the public area and much more pushing.

It was on purpose?

Yes. The reason I moved to Mathematica, I remember, it was around 2000 and we – I – thought that Republican would be on power for ever, in one way or another. So you have to make peace with them; you know, use bipartisan stuff. And what was happening: I was writing papers and people said me : “I like your paper and I'd like to invite you to testify but I can't because you work at Urban.” So Republican couldn't invite to testify someone who worked at Urban. People from Urban was on thedropoten list. I didn't know that at this time, that all this stuff existed in this style. That really shoked me and then I realized that if I

went to work for Mathematica, I could testify for both sides. You have to do that to establish your legitimacy/ bolifidy.....1'02'50, to talk to both sides. So I did that not because I was not any more advocating for universal coverage but to be in a center much more open to conservatives.

And New America, is it a part of the group in the Democratic Party called the “New Democrats”?

No! It's really independent. New America began because a very smart guy, Jim Fellows saw that Internet was going to kill newspapers. I don't know about France, but in the United States, newspapers make money of classify daise. Internet took this way from them. So I thought: “You guys have to protect young journalists!” People who will become the next John Friedman, Crugman, Henry Dall, they won't gonna have a home! He talked rich people and they sponsored like fellowships. There was 30 people wirting on every subject but them he figured out that if they wanted to have an impact, they needed to have policy guys; and so they asked people like me. I liked him because he gave me a media platform and I learned a lot on how media are playing the game.

Why did you choose to come back to university?

I get old, you know! Think that when you are in a think tank you have to raise you own money! And you constantly think to raise. I could do it now but in five years, ten years? I prefer to teach! They offered me to be here and it's a nice place. There are good people and not so good people. I just hang out with good people! And it's not very far form my home. I began my career teaching in Rosely, which is a very elite institution for very rich people; I think it's a great institution, I love it but it is really in my last 10 years, I should be teaching students in state universities.

I also had a question about your relations with stakeholders because I saw that you created a group...

Oh yeah. What we tried to do there was to signal, frankly to both administrations, and Congress, but also to the media - all of those -, that there were leaders of the health care sector who were willing to say: “we have to do reform”. And we were willing to take the lead in saying “we can make the work what we are”. It was a way to the counter argument that you try to force reform down – there are leaders, particularly in states from West, California, very individualistic, pragmatic, Republican, and they say that: “we have do that, we have to make our system more sustainable and you know how: if you do a new bill, we will support you!”. So it was about sisterning the voices from the acknowledgeable edge of the providers sector to the politicians. They gave politicians the political courage. My last piece in was : “be not afraid”. We can do that! And this guys will create a impression which is true. 2 hundred, 3 hundred hospitals are ready! 3 thousand are not, but that why we

Do you think that the role of a expert, a policy expert, is to be an intermediary between the providers and the politicians?

An intermediary and I even would say, if you know this literature, to be the profit. The role of profit in eatchen times is to imagine a better world. An imaging a better world, you explain

what's wrong with today! You show people how it can be better. It was the role of profit in the eatchen times and it is the role of intellectual today, in my view.

What literature?

Religious. Go back and read the Asea. He describes the dempfaul and he describes their day. It's the water..... bruggdman. He's Christian. There is a Jewish version, but it's the same thing.