EDITED BY

MICHAEL
MORAN

MARTIN
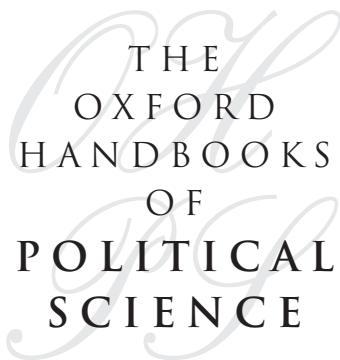REIN

ROBERT E.
GOODIN

The Oxford Handbook *of*
PUBLIC POLICY

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

PUBLIC POLICY

Edited by

MICHAEL MORAN,
MARTIN REIN,
and
ROBERT E. GOODIN

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLIC POLICY

THE OXFORD HANDBOOKS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

General Editor: Robert E. Goodin

The *Oxford Handbooks of Political Science* is a ten volume set of reference books offering authoritative and engaging critical overviews of all the main branches of political science.

The series as a whole is under the General Editorship of Robert E. Goodin, with each volume being edited by a distinguished international group of specialists in their respective fields:

POLITICAL THEORY
John S. Dryzek, Bonnie Honig & Anne Phillips

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS
R. A. W. Rhodes, Sarah A. Binder & Bert A. Rockman

POLITICAL BEHAVIOR
Russell J. Dalton & Hans Dieter Klingemann

COMPARATIVE POLITICS
Carles Boix & Susan C. Stokes

LAW & POLITICS
Keith E. Whittington, R. Daniel Kelemen & Gregory A. Caldeira

PUBLIC POLICY
Michael Moran, Martin Rein & Robert E. Goodin

POLITICAL ECONOMY
Barry R. Weingast & Donald A. Wittman

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Christian Reus Smit & Duncan Snidal

CONTEXTUAL POLITICAL ANALYSIS
Robert E. Goodin & Charles Tilly

POLITICAL METHODOLOGY
Janet M. Box Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady & David Collier

This series aspires to shape the discipline, not just to report on it. Like the Goodin Klingemann *New Handbook of Political Science* upon which the series builds, each of these volumes will combine critical commentaries on where the field has been together with positive suggestions as to where it ought to be heading.

Contents

PART IV PRODUCING PUBLIC POLICY

PART V INSTRUMENTS OF POLICY

CONTENTS   vii

CONTENTS   vii

PART VI CONSTRAINTS ON PUBLIC POLICY

PART VII POLICY INTERVENTION: STYLES AND RATIONALES

PART VIII COMMENDING AND EVALUATING PUBLIC POLICIES

About the Contributors

....

Graham Allison is Douglas Dillon Professor of Government, Director of Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, and Faculty Chair of the Caspian Studies Program at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Eugene Bardach is Professor of Public Policy in the Richard and Rhoda Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley.

Johanna Birckmayer is a Senior Research Scientist at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) in Calverton, Maryland.

Davis B. Bobrow is Professor of Public Policy and International Affairs and Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh.

Mark Bovens is Professor of Legal Philosophy and of Public Administration at Utrecht University and Research Director of the Utrecht School of Governance.

Bea Cantillon is Professor of Social Policy, and Director of the Centre for Social Policy, University of Antwerp.

Tom Christensen is Professor of Political Science, University of Oslo.

Neta C. Crawford is Associate Professor (Research) in the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University.

Peter deLeon is Professor of Public Policy at the University of Colorado, Denver.

John D. Donahue is Raymond Vernon Lecturer in Public Policy and Director of the Weil Program in Collaborative Governance at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Yehezkel Dror is Professor of Political Science at Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and Founding President, The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute. He received the 2005 Israel Prize in Administrative Sciences for his theoretic and applied work on strategic planning.

John S. Dryzek is Professor of Social and Political Theory and Political Science at the Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University.

Amitai Etzioni is University Professor at George Washington University.

John Forester is Professor of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University.

Richard Freeman is Senior Lecturer in the School of Social and Political Studies, University of Edinburgh.

Barry L. Friedman is Professor of Economics at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University.

Archon Fung is Associate Professor of Public Policy, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

William A. Galston is Saul I. Stern Professor of Civic Engagement at the School of Public Policy, University of Maryland, and was Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy during the first Clinton administration.

Robert E. Goodin is Distinguished Professor of Social and Political Theory and Philosophy at the Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University.

Maarten Hajer is Professor of Public Policy and Political Science, University of Amsterdam.

Dirk Haubrich is Research Officer in Philosophy at the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford.

Colin Hay is Professor of Political Analysis at the University of Birmingham.

Matthew Holden, Jr. is Henry L. and Grace M. Doherty Professor Emeritus in the Woodrow Wilson Department of Politics, University of Virginia.

Christopher Hood is Gladstone Professor of Government, University of Oxford.

Ellen M. Immergut is Professor of Political Science at Humboldt University, Berlin.

Helen Ingram is Professor of Planning, Policy, and Design and Political Science, and Drew, Chace, and Erin Warmington Chair in the Social Ecology of Peace and International Cooperation at the University of California, Irvine.

Mark A. R. Kleiman is Professor of Public Policy and Director, Drug Policy Analysis Program, UCLA School of Public Affairs.

Rudolf Klein is Emeritus Professor of Social Policy, University of Bath.

Sanneke Kuipers is Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Public Administration, University of Leiden.

David Laws is a Principal Research Scientist in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Giandomenico Majone is Professor of Public Policy Emeritus, European University Institute.

James G. March is Professor of Education and Emeritus Jack Steele Parker Professor of International Management, of Political Science, and of Sociology, Stanford University.

Theodore R. Marmor is Professor of Public Policy and Management and Professor of Political Science, Yale University.

Michael Moran is W. J. M. Mackenzie Professor of Government, University of Manchester.

Johan P. Olsen is Research Director of ARENA Center for European Studies and Professor of Political Science, University of Oslo.

Edward C. Page is Sidney and Beatrice Webb Professor of Public Policy, Department of Government, London School of Economics.

Frances Fox Piven is Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Sociology at the Graduate School and University Center, CUNY.

John Quiggin is Australian Research Council Federation Fellow in Economics and Political Science, University of Queensland.

Martin Rein is Professor of Sociology in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

R. A. W. Rhodes is Professor of Political Science, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University.

Anne L. Schneider is Professor in the School of Justice Studies, Arizona State University.

Colin Scott is Reader in Law at the London School of Economics.

Tom Sefton is Research Fellow at the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), London School of Economics.

Henry Shue is Senior Research Fellow in Politics, Merton College, Oxford.

Kevin B. Smith is Professor of Political Science, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

Lawrence Susskind is Ford Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Director of the Public Disputes Program in the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School.

Steven M. Teles is Assistant Professor of Politics, Brandeis University.

Paul 't Hart is Senior Fellow in the Political Science Program, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, and Professor of Public Administration at the Utrecht School of Governance, Utrecht University.

Karel Van den Bosch is Project Leader at the Centre for Social Policy, University of Antwerp.

Carol Hirschon Weiss is Beatrice B. Whiting Professor of Education Policy, Harvard University.

Richard Wilson, Lord Wilson of Dinton, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, was Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service from 1998 to 2002.

Christopher Winship is the Diker-Tishman Professor of Sociology and a member of the faculty in the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Jonathan Wolff is Professor of Philosophy, University College London.

Oran R. Young is Professor at the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of California (Santa Barbara) and co-director of the Bren School's Program on Governance for Sustainable Development.

Richard J. Zeckhauser is Frank Plumpton Ramsey Professor of Political Economy at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

PART I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

....

THE PUBLIC AND ITS POLICIES

....

ROBERT E. GOODIN

MARTIN REIN

MICHAEL MORAN

THIS *Oxford Handbook of Public Policy* aspires to provide a rounded understanding of what it is to make and to suffer, to study and to critique, the programs and policies by which officers of the state attempt to rule. Ruling is an assertion of the will, an attempt to exercise control, to shape the world. Public policies are instruments of this assertive ambition, and policy studies in the mode that emerged from operations research during the Second World War were originally envisaged as handmaidens in that ambition.[1] There was a distinctly "high modernist" feel to the enterprise, back then: technocratic hubris, married to a sense of mission to make a better world; an overwhelming confidence in our ability to measure and monitor that world;

[1] In recommending continuation of wartime research and development efforts into the postwar era, Commanding General of the Army Air Force H. H. ("Hap") Arnold had reported to the Secretary of War in the following terms: "During this war the Army, Army Air Forces and the Navy have made unprecedented use of scientific and industrial resources. The conclusion is inescapable that we have not yet established the balance necessary to insure the continuance of teamwork among the military, other government agencies, industry and the universities." Just hear the high modernist ring in the bold mission statement adopted by Project RAND in 1948, as it split off from the Douglas Aircraft Company: "to further and promote scientific, educational and charitable purposes, all for the public welfare and security of the United States of America" (RAND 2004).

and boundless confidence in our capacity actually to pull off the task of control (Scott 1997; Moran 2003).

High modernism in the US and elsewhere have amounted to rule by "the best and the brightest" (Halberstam 1969). It left little room for rhetoric and persuasion, privately much less publicly. Policy problems were technical questions, resolvable by the systematic application of technical expertise. First in the Pentagon, then elsewhere across the wider policy community, the "art of judgment" (Vickers 1983) gave way to the dictates of slide-rule efficiency (Hitch 1958; Hitch and McKean 1960; Haveman and Margolis 1983).

Traces of that technocratic hubris remain, in consulting houses and IMF missions and certain other important corners of the policy universe. But across most of that world there has, over the last half-century, been a gradual chastening of the boldest "high modernist" hopes for the policy sciences.[2] Even in the 1970s, when the high modernist canon still ruled, perceptive social scientists had begun to highlight the limits to implementation, administration, and control.[3] Subsequently, the limits of authority and accountability, of sheer analytic capacity, have borne down upon us.[4] Fiasco has piled upon fiasco in some democratic systems (Henderson 1977; Dunleavy 1981, 1995; Bovens and 't Hart 1996). We have learned that many of tools in the "high modernist" kit are very powerful indeed, within limits; but they are strictly limited (Hood 1983). We have learned how to supplement those "high modernist" approaches with other "softer" modes for analyzing problems and attempting to solve them.

In trying to convey a sense of these changes in the way we have come to approach public policy over the past half-century, the chapters in this *Handbook* (and still more this Introduction to it) focus on the big picture rather than minute details. There are other books to which readers might better turn for fine-grained analyses of current policy debates, policy area by policy area.[5] There are other books providing more fine-grained analyses of public administration.[6] This *Handbook* offers instead a series of connected stories about what it is like, and what it might alternatively be like, to make and remake public policy in new, more modest modes.

This Introduction is offered as a scene setter, rather than as a systematic overview of the whole field of study, much less a potted summary of the chapters that follow. Our authors speak most ably for themselves. In this Introduction, we simply do likewise. And in doing so we try to tell a particular story: a story about the limits of high ambition in policy studies and policy making, about the way those limits have been appreciated, about the way more modest ambitions have been formulated, and about the difficulties in turn of modest learning. Our story, like all stories, is contestable. There is no single intellectually compelling account available of the state of either policy making or the policy sciences; but the irredeemable fact of contestability is a very part of the argument of the pages that follow.

---

[2] For a remarkable early send up, see Mackenzie's (1963) "The Plowden Report: a translation."
[3] Pressman and Wildavsky 1973; Hood 1976; van Gunsteren 1976.
[4] Majone and Quade 1980; Hogwood and Peters 1985; Bovens 1998.
[5] The best regular update is probably found in the Brookings Institution's "Setting National Priorities" series; see most recently Aaron and Reischauer (1999).
[6] Lynn and Wildavsky 1990; Peters and Pierre 2003.

1. POLICY PERSUASION

We begin with the most important of all limits to high ambition. All our talk of "making" public policy, of "choosing" and "deciding," loses track of the home truth, taught to President Kennedy by Richard Neustadt (1960), that politics and policy making is mostly a matter of persuasion. Decide, choose, legislate as they will, policy makers must carry people with them, if their determinations are to have the full force of policy. That is most commonly demonstrated in systems that attempt to practice liberal democracy; but a wealth of evidence shows that even in the most coercive systems of social organization there are powerful limits to the straightforward power of command (Etzioni 1965).

To make policy in a way that makes it stick, policy makers cannot merely issue edicts. They need to persuade the people who must follow their edicts if those are to become general public practice. In part, that involves persuasion of the public at large: Teddy Roosevelt's "bully pulpit" is one important lever. In part, the persuasion required is of subordinates who must operationalize and implement the policies handed down to them by nominal superiors. Truman wrongly pitied "Poor Ike," whom he envisaged issuing orders as if he were in the army, only to find that no one would automatically obey: as it turned out, Ike had a clear idea how to persuade up and down the chain of command, even if he had no persuasive presence on television (Greenstein 1982). Indeed Eisenhower's military experience precisely showed that even in nominally hierarchical institutions, persuasion lay at the heart of effective command.

Not only is the practice of public policy making largely a matter of persuasion. So too is the discipline of studying policy making aptly described as itself being a "persuasion" (Reich 1988; Majone 1989). It is a mood more than a science, a loosely organized body of precepts and positions rather than a tightly integrated body of systematic knowledge, more art and craft than genuine "science" (Wildavsky 1979; Goodsell 1992). Its discipline-defining title notwithstanding, Lerner and Lasswell's pioneering book *The Policy Sciences* (1951) never claimed otherwise: quite the contrary, as successive editors of the journal that bears that name continually editorially recall.

The cast of mind characterizing policy studies is marked, above all else, by an aspiration toward "relevance." Policy studies, more than anything, are academic works that attempt to do the real political work: contributing to the betterment of life, offering something that political actors can seize upon and use. From Gunnar Myrdal's *American Dilemma* (1944) through Charles Murray's *Losing Ground* (1984) and William Julius Wilson's *Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), policy-oriented research on race and poverty has informed successive generations of American policy makers on both ends of the political spectrum, to take only one important example.

Beyond this stress on relevance, policy studies are distinguished from other sorts of political science, secondly, by being unabashedly value laden (Lasswell 1951; Rein

1976; Goodin 1982). They are explicitly normative, in embracing the ineliminable role of value premises in policy choice—and often in forthrightly stating and defending the value premises from which the policy prescriptions that they make proceed. They are unapologetically prescriptive, in actually recommending certain programs and policies over others. Policy studies, first and foremost, give *advice* about policy; and they cannot do that (on pain of the "naturalistic fallacy") without basing that advice on some normative ("ought") premises in the first place.

Policy studies are distinguished from other sorts of political science, thirdly, by their action orientation. They are organized around questions of what we as a political community should *do*, rather than just around questions of what it should *be*. Whereas other sorts of political studies prescribe designs for our political institutions, as the embodiments or instruments of our collective values, specifically *policy* studies focus less on institutional shells and more on what we collectively *do* in and through those institutional forms. Policy studies embody a bias toward acts, outputs, and outcomes—a concern with consequences—that contrasts with the formal-institutional orientation of much of the rest of political studies.

These apparently commonplace observations—that policy studies is a "persuasion" that aspires to normatively committed intervention in the world of action—pose powerful challenges for the policy analyst. One of the greatest challenges concerns the language that the analyst can sensibly use. The professionalization of political science in the last half-century has been accompanied by a familiar development—the development of a correspondingly professional language. Political scientists know whom they are talking to when they report findings: they are talking to each other, and they naturally use language with which other political scientists are familiar. They are talking to each other because the scientific world of political science has a recursive quality: the task is to communicate with, and convince, like-minded professionals, in terms that make sense to the professional community. Indeed some powerful traditions in purer forms of academic political science are actually suspicious of "relevance" in scholarly enquiry (Van Evera 2003). The findings and arguments of professional political science may seep into the world of action, but that is not the main point of the activity. Accidental seepage is not good enough for policy studies. It harks back to an older world of committed social enquiry where the precise object is to unify systematic social investigation with normative commitment—and to report both the results and the prescriptions in a language accessible to "non-professionals." These can range from engaged—or not very engaged—citizens to the elite of policy makers. Choosing the language in which to communicate is therefore a tricky, but essential, part of the vocation of policy analysis.

One way of combining all these insights about how policy making and policy studies are essentially about persuasion is through the "argumentative turn" and the analysis of "discourses" of policy in the "critical policy studies" movement (Fischer and Forrester 1993; Hajer 1995; Hajer and Wagenaar 2003). On this account, a positivist or "high modernist" approach, either to the making of policy or to the understanding of how it is made, that tries to decide what to do or what was done through vaguely mechanical-style causal explanations is bound to fail, or anyway be radically incomplete.

Policy analysts are never mere "handmaidens to power." It is part of their job, and a role that the best of them play well, to *advocate* the policies that they think right (Majone 1989). The job of the policy analyst is to "speak truth to power" (Wildavsky 1979), where the truths involved embrace not only the hard facts of positivist science but also the reflexive self-understandings of the community both writ large (the polity) and writ small (the policy community, the community of analysts).

It may well be that this reflexive quality is the main gift of the analyst to the practitioner. In modern government practitioners are often forced to live in an unreflective world: the very pressure of business compresses time horizons, obliterating recollection of the past and foreshortening anticipation of the future (Neustadt and May 1986). There is overwhelming pressure to decide, and then to move on to the next problem. Self-consciousness about the limits of decision, and about the setting, social and historical, of decision, is precisely what the analyst can bring to the policy table, even if its presence at the table often seems unwelcome.

Of course, reason giving has always been a central requirement of policy application, enforced by administrative law. Courts automatically overrule administrative orders accompanied by no reasons. So, too, will their "rationality review" strike down statutes which cannot be shown to serve a legitimate purpose within the power of the state (Fried 2004, 208–12). The great insight of the argumentative turn in policy analysis is that a robust process of reason giving runs throughout all stages of public policy. It is not just a matter of legislative and administrative window dressing.

Frank and fearless advice is not always welcomed by those in positions of power. All organizations find self-evaluation hard, and states find it particularly hard: there is a long and well-documented history of states, democratic and non-democratic, ignoring or even punishing the conveyor of unwelcome truths (Van Evera 2003). Established administrative structures that used to be designed to generate dispassionate advice are increasingly undermined with the politicization of science and the public service (UCS 2004; Peters and Pierre 2004). Still, insofar as policy analysis constitutes a profession with an ethos of its own, the aspiration to "speak truth to power"—even, or especially, unwelcome truths—must be its prime directive, its equivalent of the Hippocratic Oath (ASPA 1984).

2. Arguing versus Bargaining

Our argument thus far involves modest claims for the "persuasion" of policy studies, but even these modest ambitions carry their own hubristic dangers. Persuasion; the encouragement of a reflexive, self-conscious policy culture; an attention to the language used to communicate with the world of policy action: all are important. But all run the risk of losing sight of a fundamental truth—that policy is not only