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# The Oxford Handbook *of*
# PUBLIC POLICY

University's premier location for public debates each evening. Seating 750, in a cross between a New England town meeting hall and the Greek *agora*, the Forum provides for the Kennedy School and other University students what has been called an "extra course." A regular visitor to the Forum will encounter, and often have an opportunity to question, scores of heads of state and former presidents and prime ministers, political candidates, and policy advocates of all stripes.

Lesson 10: *the centrality of the management team cannot be overemphasized.* To the extent that people can become part of such a team, they multiply the effects of any dean. The temptation is to imagine that one can do it oneself or do better than one's colleagues. But even if one's performance was consistently better than other members of one's team in any specific task, the multiplication that comes from a second person and third and fourth far exceeds what any single person can do him- or herself.

Lesson 11: *in any ambitious pursuit, mistakes are inevitable.* We can think of Type 1 and Type 2 errors—sins of omission and commission. I think the sins of omission are more common in academic administration and that we should worry less about the mistakes of commission. I certainly tried to err on the side of commission—and committed my share.

Lesson 12: *on the press, I never truly figured out how to deal with it.* Over time, we created a Center for Press, Politics, and Public Policy, in order better to understand the role of the press in government. Its role in the building of a school of public policy could also be much better understood. A popular song advises: "Don't piss into the wind." Few of those engaged in trying to build schools of government have taken that advice. Obviously, this has been a hostile environment for government from Nixon and Watergate to Carter, who was perhaps the most viscerally anti-government of recent presidents, and Reagan. As was so often the case, Ronald Reagan said it best in his inaugural address: "Government is not the solution to the problem; government is the problem."

The Kennedy School never effectively targeted this hostility or found any way to deal with it. Nor, unfortunately, has the profession.

Finally, lesson 13 is *the satisfaction of institution building.* Most deans complain a lot. I certainly did. But through that experience, and looking back, one has to be grateful for the satisfactions provided by the opportunity to build and shape an institution whose impact extends beyond one's own reach and perhaps even beyond one's own time.

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# CHAPTER 4

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# TRAINING FOR POLICY MAKERS

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## YEHEZKEL DROR

This chapter discusses training for policy makers by focusing on a politically incorrect subject, namely training of rulers in grand-policy thinking. But the analysis and recommendations apply with some adjustments to all types and levels of policy makers.

The importance of rulers and their quality is widely recognized, but needs and possibilities for improving them are not only ignored, but taboo. If rulers would in the main perform well this would not matter much. However, it is enough to observe governments and their heads in action to reach the conclusion that even the best of rulers often fail to cope adequately with increasingly fateful choices. And the few very good rulers, too, make grievous mistakes the costs of which are constantly increasing because of the growing future-shaping power of human action. Therefore, steps to improve the performance of the highest strata of policy makers are imperative.

The performance of rulers depends on a range of intrinsic and extrinsic variables. The required qualities are multidimensional, ranging from moral character to political skills. Ways to improve them vary, from improving governance systems within which they operate as a whole to trying to improve their characters, stimulate their "emotional intelligence" (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee 2002), and restructure advisory systems. However, given institutional rather than revolutionary leadership, where other qualities are crucial, grand-policy training may often be a very cost-effective approach.

The required performance of rulers and their relative importance depend on situations. However, a core function of all rulers is to fulfill a major and often critical role in decision making and in particular grand-policy crafting.

Governmental decisions can be divided into relatively routine decisions dealing with current issues, which are not expected to make much of a difference; and what

I call "grand policies" which aim at massive effects on the future. Grand policies consist of various combinations of single critical choices and long-term strategies. Critical choices are illustrated by dropping the nuclear bombs on Japan, approving a large infrastructure project, or joining the European Union. Long-term strategies include moving from a command to a market economy, giving priority to the young in public health services, trying to promote democracy in the Middle East, and efforts to become a learning society.

Most choices need improvement. However, grand policies exert more influence on the future and are more intricate. Therefore, a high priority task is to upgrade grand-policy crafting qualities of rulers. Doing so depends on availability of knowledge on which effective grand-policy training of rulers can be based. The basis thesis of this chapter is that such knowledge is available, in part readily so and in part in raw form which can be reprocessed. This proposition will be supported by presentation of a prototype core curriculum for grand-policy training of rulers together with selective references to pertinent knowledge and some comments on training modalities.

# 1. CORE CURRICULUM

The proposed core curriculum is equivalent in content to a preferable model of cognitive capacities of a high-quality ruler in his grand-policy crafting roles. It includes twenty closely linked and in part overlapping themes or subjects, presented concisely, together with select references as mentioned and comments on mentors and didactics adding to what has been postulated above.

A special form of "grand policies" deals with institution building and structural change. Going back to classical views of rulers as "law givers," revamping institutions and building new ones is a major modality of "grand policy." Illustrations include constitution writing, building new governance structures such as the European Union, changing global governance, and building a market economy. Throughout the training, this grand-policy form should be taken into account with attention to the importance of institutions (North 1990) and institutional design (Goodin 1998) within the various subjects.

## 1.1 Separating Politics and Policy

The first imperative is the capacity to make a clear analytic distinction between policy and politics. These closely interact, often overlap, and in part cannot be separated even analytically. The absence of different terms for "politics" and "policy" in most languages other than English reflects the difficulties of that distinction. Furthermore,

modern democratic politics often pushes rulers in the direction of subordinating policy to politics and marketing, with rulers often giving priority to "blowing of bubbles" over weaving the future. But grand-policy quality depends on the ability of rulers to differentiate between policy and politics and giving priority to policy requirements before making unavoidable compromises with political reality. Training should clarify and emphasize this distinction.

However, political feasibility must not be neglected. A grand-policy option which cannot be implemented in the foreseeable future because of lack of essential political support or other crucial resources is not one to be chosen, though crafting it as a contingency policy to be realized when conditions change is often to be recommended. Therefore, political feasibility and ways to increase it should be included in the curriculum within the broader context of feasibility testing and policy resources amplification as a whole—but without going into the substance of power mobilization and political marketing.

Here, training is sure to run into a difficulty. Participants will wish to discuss politics and marketing. There is no lack of good literature dealing with policy making in its political context which can be referred to (Stone 2001). Having mentors who know politics and who demonstrate this knowledge from time to time, but without being distracted from the main curriculum, can help a lot.

## 1.2  Value Clarification and Goal Setting

Grand policies are value based, goal directed, and goal seeking. If the values are superficial and slogan-like and the goals are misperceived then choices will be counter-productive. Hence the importance of improving value clarification and goal setting. However, value judgement is a subjective process entrusted by the basic norms of democracy to elected politicians, subject to legal review and sometimes public override. Improving their value judgement and goal setting must not undermine their prerogative and duty to make legitimate value judgements, but rather help them clarify their values and operationalize their goals.

This raises a serious moral problem concerning training of evil rulers which will make them more effective in doing evil (Kellerman 2004, ch. 10). Therefore mentors need a professional code by which to train. Given Western democracies this is not an acute problem, though one to be kept in mind.

Relevant issues to be taken up in grand-policy training include, for instance:

1. Moral and political tensions between following values and desires of the public as against advancing values which the ruler, after full consideration and soul searching, regards as normatively and realpolitically correct (including the tangential issue of how far educating the public to higher values is part of his mission).

2. Tragic choices between meeting present needs as against trying to take care of future generations, including coping with the congenital defect of democracy of future generations not voting now, though heavily impacted by present decisions.

3. Relations between moral intentions, rule-based value judgements (including legal approaches), and consequentialism.

4. Serving individuals as supreme values by themselves as against advancing the thriving of societies.

5. Psychological and moral contradictions between intensely believing in select values and knowing that one's beliefs are largely a product of personal circumstances which one did not choose, such as the period, culture, and family into which one is born.

6. Related, the tension between looking on values as a sociocultural fact and believing in them. And between trying to adopt a cold stance and an attitude of clinical concern on one hand and intensely striving to realize values to which one is deeply committed on the other.

7. Taking into account future unpredictable values, including providing open options for future generations to realize whatever values they may have, as against trying to fortify present values against change.

8. The dilemma between clarifying the value and goal priorities on which a decision is based as against maintaining coalitions and mobilizing support by keeping values and goals ambiguous and opaque.

9. The increasingly acute dilemma between advancing the interests of one's country and taking into account the good of humanity as a whole, what I call *raison d'humanité* (Dror 2002, ch. 9).

10. The problematic of applying value judgements and goal priorities to specific situations as an iterative process.

11. On a different level, but at least to be posed: the personal dilemma between fulfilling one's mission and advancing values on one hand and taking care of one's career on the other.

Such subjects are to be taken up with the help of a broad set of value clarification and moral reasoning approaches. Examples include the following:[1]

- Socratic dialogue, helping self-clarification of values.
- Select basic normative frames, such as religious, Kantian, and utilitarian.
- Soft psycho-didactics, facilitating differentiation between motifs and drives on one hand and values on the other.
- Exposition of often neglected value and goal dimensions, such as preferences in time stream, attitudes to risks, and elasticity as a goal.
- Philosophic discourse posing categorical imperatives, clarifying values (such as in political philosophy), and presenting ways of helping value judgements.

[1]  See Boyce and Jensen 1978; Levi 1986.

- Logical and behavioral contradictions between values.
- Sensitivity testing to identify and clarify value choices and goal priorities necessary in specific choice contexts.
- Concept packages provided by jurisprudence and philosophy helping to enrich value thinking and deal with value conflicts, including use of decision rules.
- Discourse on especially problematic value judgement situations, such as "moral bad luck" (Statmen 1993) and "tragic choice" (Calabresi and Bobbit 1979).
- Welfare economics ideas and theorems salient to value consideration, such as Pareto optimum and the Arrow paradox.
- Construction of value and goal taxonomies and hierarchies.
- Goal-costing and microeconomics methods for considering costs–benefits of alternative value and goal mixes.
- Critical clarification of substantive values of high importance in many grand-policy spaces, such as human rights and duties, equity, reducing poverty, environmental values, animal rights, "fairness," communitarianism, "just war," and so on.

Training in value clarification and goal setting is very demanding, in terms of contents and interface with senior decision makers alike. Resistance to being told how to think on values and goals can be overcome by focusing on helping participants to make their own judgement, without presuming to tell them what their values should be. Helpful are uses of court judgements and, especially, literary texts with discussion of the ethical issues raised in them (Nussbaum 1995).

## 1.3  Creatively Weaving the Future

Grand policies are instruments aiming at—to use a striking term coined by Plato in *The Statesman*—"weaving the future" through creatively combining present contradictory materials and processes into making a better future. More specifically, grand policies try to reduce the probability of bad futures, to increase the probability of good futures, as their images and evaluations change with time, and to gear up to coping with the unforeseen and the unforeseeable.

To introduce a different metaphor, in grand-policy crafting rulers perform as both composers and conductors, with composing being much more difficult, original, personal, and important than conducting, however essential the latter is to realization of the compositions, giving them varied interpretations, and adjusting them to changing situations.

The metaphor is revealing, though a ruler is very different from a composer in working within organizations and composing and conducting in union as well as

competition and also conflict with peers, advisers, organizations, and societies. The freedom of innovation enjoyed by a great composer creating on his own is larger by many orders of magnitude than the constrained space of creation open to rulers. Still, creation is at the core of grand-policy crafting, all the more so in our epoch when rapid change makes the wisdom of the past into the stupidity of the future, and invention of new options fitting radically novel situations and values is a must. The ruler should in part operate as a creator (as well as transformer and change agent) and his mind pictures and "inner visibility" (Panek 2004) are of profound import-ance, on a minor scale "on line with the mind-music Beethoven heard when he was deaf" (Gelernter 2004). If the ruler himself cannot be a real creator, at least he should facilitate policy option creativity and be eager to consider and absorb new ideas after open-minded but critical evaluation.

To go one step further, high-quality grand-policy crafting in an epoch of trans-formations requires visions up to elements of utopian thinking. This is crucial for revolutionary rulers, but also increasingly essential for institutional rulers—who, whether they like it or not, face quasi-revolutionary situations sure to characterize the twenty-first century. Grand-policy training cannot make rulers into visionary leaders. But training can achieve awareness of the importance and nature of the future-weaving mission of rulers with its creative elements.

On a more operational level, to be emphasized and illustrated is the scarcity of promising options for main policy issues and therefore the practical need for option invention, to be sought, encouraged, and pushed by rulers. No less important is the negative necessity to engage in iconoclasm of policy orthodoxies. "More of the same," however politically convenient and organizationally attractive, is frequently worse than doing nothing. Encouraging rulers to be skeptical about accepted "solu-tions" is therefore an important part of the training.

## 1.4 Time Horizons

Grand policies aim at long-term impacts. But this general statement needs specifi-cation so as to help rulers to adopt preferable time horizons adjusted to the features of different policy spaces.

Four main criteria are relevant:

1. Value preferences which postulate the relative importance given value-wise to results at different points in the future, with care to be taken to avoid errors such as discounting results in time stream as if one deals with old-fashioned portfolio investments.
2. The life cycles of relevant policy spaces and the time needed for a decision to reach its main impact.
3. Predictability, with uncertainty and inconceivability usually increasing with the length of time horizons.

4. Political and personal cycles, to assure sufficient time for a grand policy to have a meaningful impact.

For most grand policies medium- and long-range effects should be aimed at, ranging from about five years to multiple generations. The life cycles of most grand policies usually have a similar range. But predictability rapidly decreases, with the outlook beyond five years and more becoming increasingly uncertain and dense with inconceivability. And political and personal cycles in democracies range from four to ten years.

It is the contradictions between long-term values and long implementation cycles on one hand and unpredictability and short political and personal cycles on the other which constitute a main cause of the fragility of grand policies. Uncertainty sophistication, as discussed later, can help, as can political stratagems and governmental structures facilitating policy continuity. But the dilemma is serious, often undermining the very significance of grand policies and making them less attractive to rulers.

Training can expose these problems, suggest treatments, and illustrate coping practices, such as multiphased time horizons divided into five-year intervals with a maximum, in most cases, of twenty-five years. Other possibilities include increasing policy continuity between governments by building consensus and institutionalizing grand policies.

Relevant experiences and ideas are available in literature dealing with planning and strategy (Ansoff 1979; Steiner 1997).

## 1.5  Thinking-in-History

The basic reasoning of grand-policy crafting is one of intervening with historic processes so as to achieve desired impacts on the future. This requires, first of all, "thinking-in-history" with emphasis on macro and deep history. Required are mapping of the evolutionary potential of the past as evolving into the future, designation of policy spaces where interventions are necessary to prevent the bad and achieve the good, identification of main drivers of the future, and pinpointing of a subset of such drivers which can be influenced by deliberate governmental action and thus serve as policy instruments.

All this should be seen within an overall view of human history as shaped by a dynamic mixture, which is changing non-linearly, between necessity, contingency, mutations, and random events—as influenced by human deliberate or unintended interventions.

This formulation fully exposes the presumptuous nature of grand-policy crafting and the dangers of unintended and bad results even when choices are based on the best knowledge and the highest cognitive qualities that human beings can achieve. Therefore, it is only the near-certainty that ongoing historical processes may well result in very bad and also catastrophic futures and the expectation that

well-considered governmental, selective, and carefully considered interventions with historical processes have a good chance to avoid some of the bad and achieve more of the good that justify grand-policy crafting and implementation.

The proposed view of historic processes and the conjecture on the potentials for the better of grand policies are foundational for training. Foci of attention include:

1. The dependence of all choice on assumptions concerning causal relations between what is done now and what will happen in the future.
2. The both doubtful and complex nature of such assumptions, requiring on the emotional and personality levels a good measure of skepticism combined with decisiveness; and on the level of cognitive processes a lot of uncertainty sophistication as epitomized in the perception of choices as "fuzzy gambles," discussed later.
3. The moral and realpolitical imperative to seek the best possible groundings for grand policies, in terms of reliance on whatever salient knowledge is or can be made available, serious pondering, and optimal reasoning and choice processes.

Participants should be provided with at least a window into thinking-in-history and its requirements of lifelong reading and both abstract and applied thinking. A preliminary step is to alert them to the dangers of wrongly applying history to current issues, as first pointed out by Nietzsche. These include wrong reliance on historical analogs (May 1972; Neustadt and May 1986) and fixation on surface events without understanding their embedment in deeper processes.

Some classical writings do try to base statecraft on the study of history, as illustrated by the meditations of Machiavelli and *The Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides. These should be referred to, with participants asked to read, if possible before the training activity, one or two books providing a vista of long-term history (Denemark et al. 2000; Gernet 1996), a text or two on the dynamics of history (Hawthorn 1991), and another book or two in philosophy of history and historiography (Braudel 1980). More realistic when maximum reading requirements are limited is demonstrating thinking-in-history and exercising it by application to select grand-policy spaces.

## 1.6  Understanding Reality

Understanding reality as in between the past and the future is of paramount importance while being very error prone. To improve the "world in the mind" (Vertzberger 1990) of rulers so as better to fit reality and its dynamics is therefore a main training task.

It is inherently impossible for human beings to take a "view from nowhere" (Nagel 1986). But the propensities to misread reality because of cultural and personal blinders and motivated irrationality (Pears 1984) can be counteracted and