This is a cogent and well written exposition of the complex nature of the public policy process. It is a process shot through with differing values and self interest. Yet, as the book rightly argues seeking policy solutions to complex problems is a crucial part of the political realm. A key strength of the book is the way it combines theoretical analysis and a discussion of some of the key policy challenges of today.

Hugh Atkinson, London South Bank University, UK

In Public Policy and Private Interest Jim Chandler gives the public policy textbook a much needed make-over. Chandler covers a wide range of thinkers, concepts and debates expertly and with a welcome lightness of touch. The book will be an invaluable text for any undergraduate or masters level public policy course.

Jonathan Davies, De Montfort University, UK
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Public Policy and Private Interest

*Public Policy and Private Interest* explains the complexities of the policy making process in a refreshingly clear way for students who are new to this subject. The key topics it explains are:

- how policy originates, is refined, legitimised, implemented, evaluated and terminated in the forms of theoretical models of the policy process;
- which actors and institutions are most influential in determining the nature of policy;
- the values that shape the policy agenda such as ideology, institutional self-interest and resource capabilities;
- the outcome of policies, and why they succeed or fail;
- the main policy theories including the very latest insights from network theory and post-modernism;
- how national policy is influenced by globalisation.

The text is fully illustrated throughout with a broad range of national and international case studies on subjects such as the banking crisis, the creation of unitary authorities and global environmental policy and regulation.

Combining both a clear summary of debates and theories in public policy and a new and original approach to the subject, this book is essential reading for students of public policy and policy analysis.

**J.A. Chandler** is Emeritus Professor of Local Governance in the Faculty of Organisation and Management at Sheffield Hallam University, UK. He has published extensively in the field of public policy and administration with a particular emphasis on local governance.
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*J.A. Chandler*
Public Policy and Private Interest
Ideas, Self-interest and Ethics in Public Policy

J.A. Chandler
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Preface

This study is intended to complement many of the current standard texts on public policy by taking a more subjective rather than a positivist approach to the processing of public policy. There are many texts in print concerning public policy which provide excellent material for developing an understanding of theories in the sub-discipline of public policy. Why then write a further text book on the subject? Although this study sets out the major theories relating to the study of public policy from the conscious development of this study in the 1930s to the present day, it also seeks to widen the theoretical and subjective approach to the discipline and bring the study closer to the wider disciplinary interests of the social sciences.

An underlying argument in this study is that many discussions on public policy have become too self-referential and inward looking and therefore become rather detached from wider sociological and political theory. Too often studies of the subject refer to analysis drawn from a rather limited palette of evidence and theories that have grown around policy studies as opposed to the more all-encompassing range of social studies theories. Perhaps of greatest concern is that policy studies as a subject area has paid too little attention to policy outcomes especially in regard to the extent to which subjective values shape their output and content. This tendency too often neglects to relate policy analysis to ideological values and even less to issues concerning self-interest and ethics. The policy studies genre is also largely focused on liberal democratic systems as opposed to policy making within autocratic frameworks that, as shall be discussed in this study, make up many of the institutional structures that form the basis of liberal democratic political systems. There is also a tendency in many texts on public policy to be shaped predominantly on critical discussion of theories that have been established specifically within the framework of policy studies rather than the wider theoretical models of social, political or economic behaviour within the broad social sciences. Thus, for example, theories of the state, social revolt and revolution or political alienation are rarely fully incorporated into the sub-discipline of public policy. Many writers in the post-modern traditions such as Foucault or critical realists such as Habermas, who have much to say relating to public policy, also tend to be overlooked.

A few comments may be useful concerning the use of examples in this study and its design. I have provided within the text examples and case studies illustrating public policy practice in liberal democracies and autocracies in boxes. I have largely concentrated in the discussions on policy making within liberal democracies on examples from the United States and Britain. This is to concentrate on regimes that are likely to be most familiar to the potential readership of this study and on political systems.
with which I have most familiarity. Both countries also are exemplars of differing approaches to the institutional structuring of liberal democracies that are in turn based on differing ideological value systems. Such a style also avoids scattering examples among a wide range of liberal democracies that may have few common features.
Acknowledgement

Many thanks are due to the many individuals who have contributed to my ideas that have formed the basis of this study and have also helped in my research. This also includes Sheffield Hallam University which continues to provide me with access to the research facilities following my retirement from full time lecturing. Particular thanks go to colleagues who have read versions of the book and provided me with comments on its progress. These include Neil Barnett, Dr Robert Jones, John Kingdom and Ralph Spence. Dr Becky Jubb was particularly helpful in the design of some of the diagrams in the study. I must also thank my wife Krys and family members who encourage me to continue writing.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACF</td>
<td>Advocacy Coalitions Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>Before the Common Era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSE</td>
<td>Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (‘Mad cow disease’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBI</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISIS</td>
<td>Islamic State of Iraq and Syria</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-government Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service (United Kingdom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFSTED</td>
<td>Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUANGO</td>
<td>Quasi-Autonomous Non-government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament (United Kingdom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMD</td>
<td>Weapons of Mass Destruction</td>
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1 Introduction

There are many sound texts on the policy process that discuss the theory and practice of how policy problems emerge on to the agenda of governments and how these governments deliberate and refine a solution to issues that leads to a policy outcome. Such studies also discuss how policy once promulgated is put into practice and evaluated and how it may then evolve or be terminated. The importance of any public policy is, however, for most citizens not primarily about how it is made but the consequences of its content to them as individuals. In liberal democracies, our decision on how to vote is dependent largely on the policies put forward by contending political parties. For many of us the choice we make is based on self-interest for our own well-being and that of our family or closest friends. It may also encompass a wider altruistic concern for the well-being of humanity in general. Self-interest and even more certainly altruism are often guided by established beliefs and inclinations that can be bound up as ideological and ethical values, that is, established systems of thought concerning how ideally society should be shaped.

Beliefs, emotions and values are personal to the individual. These preferences are not subject to scientific verification based on evidence, but on the experience and genetic make-up of each individual, that creates their view of the world and, more crucially, what they desire within that world. As shall be explained later this personal view of the world is not a subject that in any logical scientific sense can be judged to be right or wrong. Our policy preferences are, as a result, not so much based on positivist certainties but on our subjective values that, whilst they may be rational for us as an individual, may be irrational for others. As such, subjective beliefs are not subject to being regarded as true or false even though they may for many be either admirable or repulsive.

Policy emerges through the struggles between those in positions of power to secure their preferences. It is argued in this work that the content of public policy is a reflection of the combination of ideological and ethical values and self-interest. Usually, policy is the result of compromises made within groups rather than by any single individual. This struggle to control the process is fought within the institutional setting of governments, whether they are termed democratic or autocratic, but it is not so much the institutions that are central to how policy is made. It shall be argued in this study that the distance between democratic and autocratic policy making is not as sharply defined as many would like to believe.

The Chinese Republic within thirty years moved from being a command economy communist state to a nation guided by capitalist values without any major change in the institutional structures of its government (Moise, 2008). Similarly in Britain, a social democratic state in which the central and local governments owned a large slice of the
productive industries of the state and the majority of social care services has been changed since the 1980s into a regime in which the private sector dominates the productive and social care services even though there has been little change within the constitutional arrangements of the United Kingdom. What has changed is the ideological and ethical values of those who governed these regimes.

At the heart of liberal democracies and autocracies are small conclaves of politicians, businessmen, financiers and media moguls who dominate most political systems and struggle against one another to ensure their values determine the content of the policy process. In this context these systems do not differ that greatly from the policy making that can be observed in autocracies as powerful barons struggle to either depose or gain the attention of the ruling monarch. The satirical content of sit-coms such as ‘Yes Minister’ or ‘The Thick of It’ is not too dissimilar to the power games illustrated in Hilary Mantel’s (2009; 2015) novels of the rise and fall of Thomas Cromwell in Tudor England. This is, however, not to argue that liberal democracies are no different from oligarchies. Liberal democracies are generally far more liberal than autocracies by allowing freedom of ideas and assembly but in the long term economic freedom creates within such states serious inequalities in the resources necessary to gain power which ensures they are less than democratic in the sense that popular opinion is the dominant driver of the policy process.

Due to the irrationality of our subjective values and emotions, let alone the complexity of the policy process and the lack of certainty concerning the information we have of our world, the most powerful positivist rational thinkers require luck as well as judgement to achieve results that favour their personal view of how the world should be shaped. Such a view contrasts with the development of policy studies from the 1930s that originally sought to discover methodologies that could through scientific analysis find the optimum answer to any policy problem. The development of policy studies by the 1950s began to move away from such false optimism and discussed how policy ideas arrived on the political agenda, were refined by governments, on occasion implemented and then either gained widespread acceptance, remained controversial issues or were abandoned. This approach was, nevertheless, still guided by broadly positivist thinking that the social sciences could forward theories of how policies developed by considering evidence based on the observation of how the many elements within the policy making process were played out in differing institutional settings and in relation to differing policy subjects. Public policy must, however, be valued not only in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of its outputs or the differing institutional hurdles it must surmount before it can be implemented and evaluated. Policy must also be considered in terms of whether decisions are fair and just for those individuals whose behaviour must be guided by that policy and made in the interest of the majority rather than that of the policy makers. The positivist approach cannot fully explain why the policies take the forms that they do, nor whether the decisions collectively make any sense in terms of effectiveness, let alone morality or justice. A complete discussion of policy making must analyse the extent to which subjective ideological views on society and morality colour the policy process and also the extent to which self-interest rather than the interest of citizens determines the content of policy and the structure of power that determines its direction. It is, therefore, the subjective element of the policy process that will be placed in the foreground of this study, in order to view policy making and development from an alternative perspective.
Defining public policy

Policy making is an activity that seeks to generate order out of the chaos of both natural events and the unintended accidents that result from uncoordinated and self-interested human actions. James Anderson (1975: 3) succinctly defined the policy process as ‘a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern’. An essential feature of policy, as opposed to the wider issue of politics, is that it is about the planning, implementation, and consequences of deliberate efforts to resolve problems or seize opportunities affecting a country or a society, or, outside the realm of the public sector, a business or even a family. Policy involves attempts to rationally resolve conflict and politics can be defined as the study of conflict.

At the root of policy making is, therefore, the application of human rationality. Rationality should not, however, be identified with the search for an ideal truth and a commonality of ideas and behaviour. If everyone had exactly the same values in life there would be no need to study policy and indeed the idea of policy would be meaningless. A termite hill is full of the interacting beasties that are biologically programmed to take on specific roles within their colony and have little reasoning power to be able to diverge from the routines they have evolved over millions of years. Their genetic programming is to build a lasting and stable colony. The capacity for humans, and indeed some animals and birds, that have different objectives and wants from other members of their species, means that policy is shaped from the cooperation, struggles and compromises between self-conscious individuals with very different ideas as to what is important both to them and to others. Policy thus concerns the emotional intelligence that we learn to use in order to secure an acceptable standard of life to enable us to live and work together (Fischer 2009: 191–2). The seventeenth century philosopher Thomas Hobbes, following his experience of the English Civil War, argued that, although we might be said as humans to have rights to do as we please, if we use these rights without concern for others we will as individuals be in constant conflict with one another. As a consequence ‘the life of man: (is) solitary, poore, nasty brutish and short’ (Hobbes 1965: 65). Policy making is the element of the political, social and economic activity that seeks to prevent the chaos that could exist in society if we did not work together to plan how we should co-ordinate our activities. Bernard Crick (1962: 141) argued that politics ‘is a way of ruling in divided societies without undue violence’ but it is policy that ensures through deliberation that this may be achieved.

Whilst public policy is a political phenomenon it must not be simplistically seen as only the clearly legitimised output of governments as codified in legislation, official government papers or statements from political leaders. What is said by specific politicians or bureaucrats may not signify their real intentions and emotions. Many policy aims, especially those connected with personal self-interest such as the desire to reach the highest levels of political power, are frequently and for obvious strategic reasons, never stated. Hidden within the accretion of policy outcomes are often decisions that were once controversial but have now engraunched in the values and actions of members of a civil society that they are not noticed as elements of public policy. There are also many levels of society connected with policy development and processes that simmer below the surface of civic society that can eventually boil over in volcanic eruptions of revolt against established policy decisions or the whole social order determining those who can advocate or as policy gate keepers steer the policy system.
The public element in public policy

Policy is developed by businesses, social groups and even in families but the analysis of public policy making is focused largely on how governments or sub-government agencies develop, refine, implement and validate their strategies. Some definitions of public policy, such as the widely quoted but all-encompassing statement by Thomas Dye (1995: 2), that it is ‘what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes’ are, therefore, rather wide of the mark. Certainly policy studies must consider governments’ impact, but many dramatic political events are not in themselves policy decisions and many policies, however well planned, do not have the outcome that was intended.

The First World War did not, in itself, begin as an act of policy. None of the combatant nations began 1914 with the policy intention that they would wage war on one another. Each had individual foreign policies that were the outcome of their deliberations on where the best interest of their nations lay in terms of alliances and defensive arrangements but when faced with a sudden diplomatic crisis these arrangements were so lacking in any harmony that the differences in policy led to an unplanned and unwanted conflict (Hobsbawm 1987: 322–4).

In contrast the Second World War is arguably a consequence of policy, at least as far as Germany was concerned, as the National Socialist Government of Adolf Hitler established a strategy to increase the territorial boundaries of the German State. This consciously adopted policy may not have been developed with the ultimate aim of fighting wars but the consequences certainly led to the 1939 to 1945 conflict, at least in Europe (Bullock 1990: 525–6).

Public policy is concerned with the making and the outcome of deliberations by governments and government agencies. There are within private sector businesses or not for profit non-government organisations (NGOs) complex frameworks for making policy, which, in many respects, parallel the operations of public bodies. General Motors, Barclays Bank or the charity OXFAM must, just like the British government, devise policies in order to fulfil their objectives. The development of their policies follows the patterns of progression and can be analysed using the same models that are discussed in this study. In some respects, however, the study of business policy making or business strategy is a more simplistic process than that faced by a national government. Given that the prime goal for many private businesses is to make a profit, such organisations are not faced with the more complex task of balancing a range of aims and objectives, such as ensuring a growing economy whilst securing social equity, security for citizens and preservation of freedom.

Whilst governments forge public policy, they are not independent entities whose actions emanate from a closed circle of politicians and bureaucrats. Even the most centralised of autocracies are organisations shaped in their actions by the impact of the external world on their values and interests. Within open pluralist liberal democracies the actions of the government are a reflection of the interplay of an array of decision makers of whom many may not be public sector employees let alone be in the core executive of central government. The structure of a pluralist society is by definition composed of many centres of influence in relation to specific areas of human activity that are designed to support private rather than the general interest. The concerns of
these agencies must be co-ordinated with the many other segments of society if they are to prosper. Privately owned businesses, for example, whilst not part of government, can have a major influence on public policy. The economist Milton Friedman argued that the only duty of a business manager is to make a profit for his or her shareholders and ensure they keep to the law and the established customs of the country in which they operate (Friedman 1970). This is an extraordinarily insular view of the role of business in policymaking as Friedman assumes that governments make laws and that law making is not the role of a business. A moment's reflection on the policy making process in the United States should reveal that multi-national businesses are constantly lobbying the Presidential Office or Congress for changes in the law to secure their interests and that businesses are a major source of funding to secure the election of Presidents and Congressmen.

Decisions to repair the damage caused in 2008 by the failure of multi-national banks were not resolved solely by deliberations within the governments of the most industrialised states but emerged after intense discussion and debate between the chief executives of major banking houses and their national governments in order to forge a policy that could rescue the liquidity of world finance (Brown 2010: 50–66).

Apart from businesses there are a wide range of agencies that are neither privately nor publicly owned that help determine policies that affect us, the public. These include the many NGOs, sometimes referred to as third sector organisations, that are active in pluralist societies. Some of these bodies can be described as charities involved partly with the support of volunteers in altruistically raising funds to secure aid for the under-privileged, destitute or unprotected. Many interests represent members of professional or business organisations. An increasingly important influence on national governments are major global institutions of governance such as the United Nations or the International Monetary Fund. As shall be shown throughout this study, this is not a book solely about decision making within government but it is also about decision making that affects what governments and their public agencies decide.

The breadth and scope of policy as a concept

Public policy can be viewed as operating on a number of levels although in reality each level at its boundaries slowly merges into the next level. On the smallest scale, that can be termed the micro level, policy is concerned with techniques for resolving specific issues, for example, how to secure a balanced budget within a publicly owned hospital. It may at its widest, or macro, level be depicted as involving issues on a large and all-encompassing scale, such as global strategies to combat climate change. Both micro and macro level theories are constantly relevant to the study of public policy but the study may best be described as occupying a meso-level of analysis, which relates to the middle ground of social activity. As a study pitched at a micro level, policy making is not centrally concerned with small scale decision making. A policy must not be confused with any sort of decision no matter how trivial. Policy frequently involves decisions on complex issues that may engage the mobilisation of a range of agencies, public, private and voluntary as well as a commitment by individual citizens. If policies are to work as a whole, they must often encompass a considerable number of separate
political decisions, many taken at a micro level. To be effective, these must be compatible with one another and closely interlinked. As a deliberate set of decisions a policy is not normally a spur of the moment intention but a strategy for action that may often evolve and change. Policies are decisions that are intended to guide action for the foreseeable future and can be visualised as containers in which are packed many smaller boxes of decision making which contribute to the policy as a whole.

The decision made by the Coalition Government in Britain in 2013 to develop a high-speed rail network was a major and potentially very costly policy decision. It is also a decision that will involve over time many contributory policy decisions such as determining contracts for building the rolling stock or for a local community whether its members contest compulsory purchase orders for land.

At the opposite extreme, policy studies does not seek to develop over-arching macro-theory to explain and justify a whole range of social actions. As such, policy should not be confused with ideology even though, as is argued in this book, it can be greatly affected by ideological concerns. Many people, and in particular the movers and shakers of political action, have, at some time in their career, developed or attached themselves to an ideological viewpoint that sets out the framework that guides the direction of their decision making. In normal political discourse, ideology is, however, differentiated from policy. Policy decisions, as opposed to ideological positions, relate to more specific problems that concern a particular issue. Ideology may guide the policy maker as to how they should deal with the problem, but an ideological position is a set of ideas that shape the values and preference of the decision maker and is not usually focused on a specific issue.

Governments, with increasing urgency during the last twenty years, have to address how they are to fulfil the demands for energy within a state on a sustainable non-polluting basis. An ideologically ‘deep green’ political actor will address this policy very differently from a New Right ideologist who believes that economic market forces will ensure technology will be found to resolve the problem. Deep green ideology leads to a resolution of the problem through radical cutting back of our rate of consumption of the Earth’s resources that may involve the promotion of much more austere life styles (Dobson 2007: 42–6). A New Right market orientated ideologist is likely, in contrast, to consider that there is no need to develop public policy on sustainability and they should continue to lavishly consume the Earth’s resources to satisfy our personal needs and desires since the unfettered economic decisions of individuals will determine the best answers for all concerned.

Policy studies are concerned to develop theories on how such decisions are made and how they evolve once they are put into practice rather than being an explanatory narrative of how a specific policy came into being and its subsequent history. Many historical studies concentrate on a particular policy issue and dissect all aspects of how that policy came about or was implemented. Although regarded as a great, if controversial, study of history A. J. P. Taylor’s (1969) account of the origins of the First World War is in a sense a meticulous analysis of how a number of governments chose the path to
conflict. Taylor did not, however, ask in general how policy is made or attempt to build up theoretical generalisations on how policy develops or is evaluated. In contrast, Graham Allison (1971) analysed the history of the Cuban Missile Crisis, but through that study drew out general theoretical ideas about how policy is made during key periods of conflict between nations. Such a study is sometimes referred to as policy analysis. Within this envelope are divisions that have emerged as writers seek to discuss more specific activities within the policy process. These include policy implementation that studies how policies once formed and legitimated by government are put into practice. A further widely used sub-division is policy evaluation that considers how effective a policy may be in terms of its efficiency, its capacity to meet its objectives or, though less frequently, its ethical consequences. Other studies may also concentrate on how a policy emerges on to the political agenda, or analyse the institutional framework in which public policy is processed.

Public policy, given its association with government, is often classified in university syllabuses or publishers’ lists of textbooks as a sub-division of the discipline of political studies. However, the content of policy decisions is not solely a matter of politics, that is the resolution of conflict, but will frequently be concerned with economic and social ideas and may often require an understanding of basic scientific and engineering matters. Indeed as will be discussed in the following chapter, early studies of policy were in part aimed at removing the awkward political element based on self-interest in decision making in the hope that dispassionate scientific rigour could be applied to the resolution of policy issues. However, as Michael Hill (2014: 4) observes ‘suggestions for taking “politics” out of policy making disregard the fact that politics is much more than simply the interplay of politicians’. The study of public policy like most divisions within the social sciences, including politics, is inter-disciplinary in that it requires an understanding of the many functional divisions in the social sciences, and on occasion the humanities, through philosophy and ethics, as well as the physical sciences.

There is, however, a central political dimension in the study of public policy. Since policy making usually, but not necessarily, involves conflict and the necessity to make compromises within a society, the resultant outcome of such differences involves the resolution of power relationships within society. The distribution of power within any society is, however, based on the sociological arrangement and beliefs within a society. It is also related to the material resources held by individuals and groups and hence policy has within it an essential economic element. Related to these factors is an individual’s knowledge and understanding to enable them to enforce their views on others or convince them of their ideas. However, within any study of the social sciences that is aimed at developing understanding that can achieve practical outcomes that shape society and as a consequence how we, as individuals, conduct our lives, it is also necessary to understand how we ought to behave as humans. As such, public policy must have a central concern with philosophical understanding and in particular the branch of philosophical discourse concerning ontology, that is the meaning of being and life, and hence the moral and ethical dimensions of how individuals should behave to each other and to the natural creation that surrounds them.

The structure of the book

This study differs from many texts on public policy by emphasising at its starting point that the central essence of public policy making is the expression of prevailing patterns
of moral and ethical attitudes in society. Policy outcomes are the result of clashes between individuals and groups that have differing beliefs on how a social system ought to be organised and how, if at all, it ought to evolve. As shall be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, education, particularly in Western culture, has become dominated by positivist modes of thought which require explanations of behaviour based on scientific paradigms of thinking that assume that the world we perceive is similar to that perceived by others. Even though we may consciously seek to deceive others for our own advantage, from a positive perspective, the world as it appears to us represents a universal truth. In contrast to this paradigm, this study begins with discussions on what may be termed, in contrast to the positivist stance, a subjectivist view, that is, a position in which we should not believe that the aims, hopes and objectives of individuals are any more valid and therefore true than those that are wholly opposed to them.

The grounding for this position will be developed in Chapters 2 and 3 and creates a rather different starting and finishing point to understanding public policy from many standard texts on the subject. It will emphasise that policies originate not from some problem that appears to be forced on a society from some external physical event or social movement, but from the capacities of individuals, often working uneasily with others, to put into practice their beliefs and motives for securing their self-imagined position within the society or societies that they feel is important to their well-being. These emotions and motives have for simplicity been divided into ideology (Chapter 4), that is systematic beliefs in the physical and social structure of society, then attitudes concerned with self-interest (Chapter 5), that is our concern to develop ourselves and those close to us and finally the role of ethics (Chapter 6), that is beliefs concerning how we ought to behave to one another. These passions may overlap but often can be imperatives that create serious dilemmas for individuals and group development. They create within societies what may broadly be termed their political culture, that is the sum total of how they may be characterised by conflict or by a dominant mode of thought and hence common attitudes to what may be seen as a policy problem or an opportunity for developments that require policy judgements. This groundwork for the origins of public policy is discussed in Chapter 7.

The development of the following chapters shifts its focus from considering the motives and beliefs that originate policy to the issue of power and the institutional, social and economic resources that enable certain groups to secure many of their social aims for their well-being. As a corollary many others may lack the capacity to secure what they may believe is their hopes for life and must accept subordinate positions in society that allow the policies of others to determine their experience. To a large extent this structuring of society in terms of securing policies that are beneficial or destructive is based, as discussed in Chapters 8 to 10, on the power relationships in any society and especially within nations and the apparatus for world governance. The first of these chapters reviews policy making systems in the many variants of autocratic and oligarchic states while Chapter 9 reviews the extent to which policy making in liberal democracies can also be viewed as in the main an oligarchic process. How far do individuals living in differing circumstances with unequal access to resources of wealth or knowledge and subjective understanding become subordinated to the success of small elites who develop their greater hold over resources of power to dominate policy making to secure their own interests? In this context, Chapters 9 and 10 discuss the extent to which liberal democracies that claim to operate the most ethical and equitable
arrangements for society can in practice achieve these goals in contrast to more overtly autocratic societies. These chapters, therefore, critically review twentieth and twenty-first century positivist views on the working of liberal democracy and conclude that liberal democracies may be more liberal in terms of human rights and freedom than autocracies but many aspects of their policy making structures and behaviour are, in terms of democracy, not too far removed from autocratic practice.

Chapters 11 to 14 continue the debates on power, motives and policy through analysing the policy process. Chapter 11 considers how policy innovations originate and become an active issue on the agenda of governments. Integral to the practice of policy is also the issue of how far public policy can be evaluated, which is discussed in Chapter 12, given that most policies require evaluation as to their possible effectiveness before rather than after their implementation. The reality of policy advocacy is, however, rarely if ever a matter of scientific method and, in as much as it is rational, it is rational for some but by no means all in society. Politicians, it will be argued, in many cases are not concerned to scientifically evaluate in a dispassionate positivist manner policy outcomes rather than attempting to validate policies in the context of their self-interest and ideological values. The following chapter considers how policy ideas that have entered the purview of governance are refined and legitimated or, as is often the case, swept into the long grass. Chapter 14 then considers policy implementation and hence the fortunes of policies once they are legitimated and Chapter 15 continues this theme by discussing the cycles of evolution through which public policies progress or fade away. Following the discussion of the policy process, Chapter 16 considers how far and in what sense can any policy be said to have been a success or a failure. The penultimate chapter then analyses whether, on the basis of the discussion on policy attitudes and power, there is any possibility that we can craft better forms of understanding that may create more democratic and fair structures for public policy outcomes within a foreseeable future. The key area for debate is the claims of subjectivist writers that in theory at least it may be possible to develop through the acceptance of an ethical practice for discourse and discursive resolution of policy conflicts a more fair and humane approach to decision making. In the final chapter the central arguments of the book will be summed up in a conclusion.


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