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Goals, Means, and Methods

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PUBLIC POLICY Goals, Means, and Methods

Dedicated to Brenda and Robert for taking the relay baton of social service and public interest law

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PREFACE

The purpose of *Public Policy: Goals, Means, and Methods* is to unite numerous ideas that were developed over a number of years regarding public policy analysis. In analyzing public policy from an evaluation perspective, it is necessary to have in mind: (1) a goal or goals that one is seeking to achieve, (2) proposed means for achieving those goals, and (3) methods for analyzing the extent to which the proposed means achieve the goals and for deciding what to do with that information. Public policy analysis may be logically divided into three parts corresponding to goals, means, and methods, and that is how this book is basically organized.

The first part of the book deals with basic concepts in public policy analysis. The second part covers the general goals with which policy analysts are likely to be concerned, such as efficiency, effectiveness, equality, freedom, and fair procedure. The third part discusses general means for achieving those kinds of goals, such as using positive and negative incentives, decreasing discretionary abuses while preserving flexibility, balancing public and private sector implementation, and structuring government for greater goal achievement. The fourth part provides the methods for determining relations between means and goals, and for deciding which means or combination of means to adopt. The fifth part presents the public policy profession as a career for undergraduate students, graduate students, practitioners, and others.

The framework of goals, means, and methods may seem to correspond to substance, process, and techniques. But substance tends to emphasize specific policy problems like agriculture, crime, defense, economic regulation, education, energy, environment, foreign policy, health, housing, labor, minorities, population, poverty, science policy, and transportation. Goals, on the other hand, cut across specific policy problems, and include effectiveness, efficiency, equity, public participation, predictability, and procedural fairness. Similarly, process emphasizes the movement of a problem from the agenda-setting stage through the formation of a policy and on to its implementation. Discussion of the means for achieving given goals tends to be less descriptive than that and is oriented more toward improving the process, focusing on cross-cutting issues such as incentives, discretionary

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abuses, public versus private sector implementation, and structuring government for greater goal achievement. Techniques frequently deal with low-level matters such as the appropriate measures of statistical significance, correlation, measurement, and other aspects of developing specific research designs. Here the concern for methods is on a higher level of generality and emphasizes the deducing of policy change effects, the optimizing of alternative public policies, the simplifying of statistical analysis and decision science in light of nonmonetary and unknown variables, and the importance of an interdisciplinary perspective.

I am grateful to a number of former and present graduate students with whom I have worked in developing some of the chapters. They include Marian Neef (who helped develop Chapters 7 and 11), Robert Geraci and Kathleen Levy (who participated in the development of Chapter 8), and Bradley Malis, who helped develop many chapters in his role as research assistant. The following reviewers also made helpful suggestions: Dennis C. Pirages, University of Maryland; Robert T. Nakamura, Dartmouth College: Walter Rosenbaum, University of Florida; Jay A. Sigler, Rutgers University, Camden College of Arts and Sciences; Jeffrey R. Orenstein, Kent State University; William N. Dunn, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh. Thanks are also owed to various funding sources which helped cover the cost of data gathering, data processing, and manuscript drafting, such as the Public Policy Committee of the Ford Foundation, the National Institute of Justice, the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission, and the University of Illinois Research Board. Thanks are further owed to the people I have worked with over the years in drafting this book and related materials, such as Judy Conover, Kay Matthews, Charlotte Proemmel, Alexis Smith, Karen Vaughn, and Julienne Wade. Credit is especially given to Joyce Nagel, who has been helpful in numerous ways on this book and other previous books and articles, starting with the November 1957 issue of the Northwestern Law Review.

My hope is that future work may develop more applications of policy analysis methods to determine relations between means and goals. These applications are likely to result in improvements in methods, means, and goals to the benefit of the public policy field and society in general.

Stuart S. Nagel

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