

Great Policy Successes: How Governments Get It Right in a Big Way at Least Some of the Time. *Or, A Tale About Why It's Amazing That Governments Get So Little Credit for Their Many Everyday and Extraordinary Achievements as Told by Sympathetic Observers Who Seek to Create Space for a Less Relentlessly Negative View of Our Pivotal Public Institutions*

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Why this book, why now?

For those wanting to know how public policy is made and how it evolves from aspirations and ideas expressed in speeches and documents to tangible social outcomes (or lack thereof), the 1970s produced some classic accounts, which are now established in academic curriculums and the canon of academic research world-wide. The two best known works from this foundational set of policy studies are Pressman and Wildavsky's *Implementation* (with its iconic epic subtitle emulated here) and Peter Hall's *Great Planning Disasters* (emulated in the main title). The former was an intensive, book-length case study of how a federal employment promotion policy launched with a great sense of urgency and momentum played out on the ground with very limited success in Oakland, California. The latter volume presented a well-written collection of public policy failures from around the Anglosphere: 'positive' planning disasters (adopted planning projects that run into cost escalation, underperformance, withdrawal of political support, or unintended consequences so big as to completely dwarf the intended aims), and 'negative' planning disasters (instances where pressing public problems were not addressed on account of political stalemate).

Taken together, these studies were emblematic of an era in which the alleged 'ungovernability' of Western societies and their welfare states was a dominant theme (Crozier et al, 1975, Rose, 1979, Offe, 1984). Having seized a much more prominent role in public life following World War II, Western governments were ambitious to achieve planned change, but internal complexities and vagaries of democratic political decision making often thwarted those ambitions. Generations of public policy and public administration students were steeped in pessimistic diagnoses from these classic studies. Waves of similar studies in the 1990's (Butler et al, 1994; Bovens and 't Hart, 1996; Gray and 't Hart, 1998) and the 2010s (Allern and Pollack, 2012; Crewe and King, 2013; Light, 2014; Schuck, 2014; Opperman and Spencer, 2016) followed. These works further imply that governments are up to no good, incompetent, politically paralysed and/or chronically risk overreach much of the time (e.g. Scott, 1998; Schuck, 2014).

And yet in many parts of the world, across many public policy domains, the bulk of public projects, programs and services perform not so badly at all, and sometimes even highly successfully (Goderis, 2015). These cases are chronically underexposed and understudied. Major policy accomplishments, striking performance in difficult circumstances, and thousands of taken for granted everyday forms of effective public value creation by and through governments are not deemed newsworthy. They cannot be exploited for political gain by oppositions and critics of incumbent office-holders. Curiously, academic students of public policy have had almost nothing to say about them (cf Bovens, 't Hart and Peters, 2001; McConnell, 2010; Moore, 2013), despite vigorous calls to recognize the major and often hidden and unacknowledged contributions of governments to successes claimed by and widely attributed to now revered companies like Google (Mazzucato, 2013).

We cannot properly ‘see’ let alone recognize and explain variations in government performance when media, political and academic discourses alike are saturated with accounts of their shortcomings and failures but next to silent on their opposites. The dominance of the language of disappointment, incompetence, failure, unintended consequences, alienation, corruption, disenchantment, and crisis in public and academic discourse about government, politics and public policy is not inconsequential (Hay, 2007). On the contrary, it risks creating self-fulfilling prophecies in the way we look at, talk about, think, evaluate, and emotionally relate to public institutions. The current ascent of ‘anti-system’ populists speaks volumes, and the message is hardly reassuring. The ‘declinist’ discourse of the current age has permeated our thinking about government and public policy. It prevents us from seeing, acknowledging and learning from past and present instances of highly effective and highly valued public policymaking.

This book wants to help turn that tide. It aims to reset the agenda for teaching, research and dialogue on public policy performance. This is done through a series of close-up, in-depth case-study accounts of the genesis and evolution of stand-out public policy accomplishments, across a range of countries, sectors, and challenges. Through these accounts, we engage with the conceptual, methodological, and theoretical challenges that have plagued extant research seeking to evaluate, explain, and design successful public policy.

There are many ways to ‘get at’ these questions. Existing conceptual and comparative studies of public policy success (Bovens et al, 2001; Patashnik, 2008; McConnell, 2010) suggest that achieving it entails two major tasks. One entails *craft work*: devising, adopting, and implementing programs and reforms that have a meaningful impact on the public issues giving rise to their existence. The other entails *political work*: forming and maintaining coalitions of stakeholders to persuasively propagate these programs. This political work extends to nurturing and protecting elite and public perceptions of the policy’s/program’s ideology, intent, instruments, implementation and impact during the often long and tenuous road from ideas to outcomes. Success must be experienced and actively communicated, or it will go unnoticed and underappreciated. The present volume aims to shed light on how these two fundamental tasks – program and process design; and coalition-building and reputation management - are being taken up and carried out to effect highly successful public policymaking.

The volume proposed here follows in the footsteps of Hall and Pressman/Wildavsky by presenting case studies of highly successful public policymaking from around the world. Descriptively, these cases are important in their own right – rich narratives about instances of policy success in a variety of contexts can help to increase awareness that government and public policy actually work remarkably well at least some of the time. Analytically, the editors will emulate powerful exemplars in the study of successful, high-performing, highly reputed public organizations (Selznick, 1949; Kaufman, 1960; Carpenter, 2001; Goodsell, 2011) and use ‘soft induction’ to identify commonalities and mechanisms at play and present these as a foundation for future policy designers and researchers.

‘Great’ policy successes: conceptualization

To arrive at a uniform conceptualization of ‘policy success’ that is to be deployed by each of the case authors, we make two basic assumptions.

Firstly, we surmise that **policy assessment is necessarily a multi-dimensional, multi-perspectivist, multi-criteria process**. At the most basic level we distinguish between the *performance* of a policy – where success is essentially about designing smart programs that will

really have an impact on the issues they are supposed to tackle and delivering those programs in such a manner that they produce social outcomes that are valuable - and the *legitimacy* of a policy – the extent to which both not only the social outcomes of policy interventions but also the manner in which they are achieved are seen as appropriate by relevant stakeholders and accountability forums in view of shared values and norms of the larger political and social systems in which they are embedded (March and Olsen, 1989; Fischer, 1995; Hough et al, 2010).

The relation between these two dimensions of policy evaluation is not straightforward. There can be (and often are) asymmetries. Moreover, there is no shared normative (and informational) basis upon which different actors in governance processes assess their performance, legitimacy, and endurance (Bovens et al, 2001). Many factors influence the beliefs and practices through which people form judgments about governance. Table 1 combines these two dimensions:

		Legitimacy	
		+	-
Performance	+	Success	Tragedy
	-	Farce	Fiasco

Table 1: Performance versus legitimacy assessment

Table 1 suggests two ‘symmetrical’ and straightforward types of outcomes: wholesale successes that deliver the goods *and* are well-reputed, or complete fiascos that have neither of these qualities. But it also opens up space to acknowledge the existence of a-symmetrical, more ambivalent assessments: the ‘tragedy’ in which a programmatically successful policy for one reason or another does not enjoy much public or political support (and is therefore vulnerable to being paired back, chopped and changed or terminated); and the ‘farce’ in which a policy that chronically underachieves the social outcomes it was supposed to generate, and yet enjoys strong public and/or political support (i.e. of ideologically committed or rent-seeking ‘dominant coalitions’ in the policy subsystem), which increases the odds of its persistence.

McConnell (2010) added to this mix a more fine-grained distinction between three dimensions of public policymaking upon which a policy needs to be assessed:

- *Programmatic assessment* – This is ‘classic’ evaluation research’s focus on a policy’s goals, the theory of change underpinning it and the selection of the policy instruments it deploys choice – all culminating in judgments about the degree to which a policy achieves valuable impacts.
- *Process assessment* - The focus here is on how they processes of policy design, decision-making and delivery are organized and managed, and whether these contribute to both its problem-solving capacity and stakeholder’s support for what it tries to achieve and how it tries to do so.
- *Political assessment* – This dimension assesses the degree to which policymakers and agencies involved in driving and delivering the policy are able to build and maintain fungible political coalitions supporting it, and the degree to which their being associated

with it enhances their reputations. In other words, it examines both the political requirements for policy success and the distribution of political costs/benefits among the actors involved in it.

Our second assumption in this volume is that **the success or otherwise of a public policy, program or project should be studied not as a snapshot but as a film**. A policy's success is therefore also to be assessed in terms of how performance and legitimacy develop over time as a policy advances from proposal, design, and delivery to impact; and the extent to which the assessment of the policy – i.e. about its process, impact and political legitimacy - evolve over time. Contexts change, unintended consequences emerge, surprises are thrown at history: successful policies are those that adapted to these dynamics through 'dynamic conservatism' in program (re)design and learning-based program delivery, and through political astuteness in safeguarding supporting coalitions and maintaining public reputation and legitimacy.

Building upon both these assumptions we propose the following definition of a ('great') policy success:

A policy is a complete success to the extent that (a) it demonstrably creates widely valued social outcomes; through (b) design, decision-making, and delivery processes that enhance both its problem-solving capacity and its political legitimacy; and (c) sustains this performance for a considerable period of time even in the face of changing circumstances.

Based on this conceptualization we advance an assessment framework that will provide case authors with a set of perspectives and criteria to consider in analysing their cases. Articulating specific elements of each dimension of success—programmatic, process, and political—in unambiguous and conceptually distinct terms, this framework lends a structure to case authors in both contemporaneous evaluation and dynamic consideration of policy developments over time.

Programmatic assessment: Purposeful and valued action	Process assessment: Thoughtful and effective policymaking practices	Political: Stakeholder and public legitimacy for the policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-developed and empirically feasible <i>public value proposition</i> and <i>theory of change</i> underpins the policy • <i>Achievement</i> of (or considerable momentum towards) the policy's intended and/or of other <i>beneficial social outcomes</i> • Costs/benefits associated with the policy are <i>distributed equitably in society</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design process ensures carefully considered <i>choice of policy instruments appropriate to context</i> and in a manner that is perceived to be correct and fair • The decision-making process results in firm political commitment and <i>adequate levels of funding, realistic time lines, and administrative capacity</i> • The delivery process effectively and adaptively deploys (mix of) policy instrument(s) to <i>achieve intended outcomes with acceptable costs</i>, and with limited unintended negative consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A relatively broad and deep political <i>coalition</i> supports the policy's value proposition, • Association with the policy <i>enhances the political capital</i> of the responsible policy-makers • <i>Association with the policy enhances the organizational reputation</i> of the relevant public agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree to which programmatic, process, and political <i>performance is maintained</i> over time • Degree of <i>convergence in perceptions of the policy's value proposition</i> over time • Degree to which the policy confers <i>legitimacy on the broader political system</i> 		

Table 2: A policy success assessment map

Author guidelines

The volume will feature cases covering a broad range of issues and sectors, drawing from countries around the world. The case narratives should give readers an insight into ‘how it happened’; the thematic analysis should give readers an authoritative yet accessibly worded account of ‘what to make of it’ and ‘why it happened’.

The chapter word limit is fixed (and non-negotiable!) at 9000, including references.

The book will have to have the look and feel of a monograph: focused, coherent and consistent.

We therefore ask each author to *use the central definition and Table 1’s categories* to describe in which respects, to what extent, and in what context (temporal, cultural etc), the policy under study in their case can be considered a ‘great policy success’.

Furthermore, to increase the book’s accessibility and teachability, and facilitate thematic comparisons across cases we ask case authors *to address the following analytical questions* derived from the above framework, and broadly use the following section structure and word limits to structure their chapter (or engage with the editors to explain why the unique features of their case require different analytical categories and/or sequencing of the narrative):

A policy success? (1500 words)

1. What is this case about and why is this policy included in this volume? What, in other words, is its fundamental ‘claim to success’ in terms of the definition and the assessment dimensions of table 1 above?

Contexts, challenges, agents (2000 words)

2. What was the social, political, and institutional context in which the policy (program, project, initiative) was developed?
3. What specific challenges was it seeking to tackle, what if any specific aims did it seek to achieve?
4. Who were the policy’s main drivers and stewards, and how did they raise and maintain support for the policy?

Design and choice (2000 words)

5. How did the policy design process – the progression from ambitions and ideas to plans and instruments – unfold, and what (f)actors shaped it most?
6. How did the political decision making process leading up to its adoption – the progression from proposals (bills, proposals) to commitments (laws, budgets) – unfold, and what (f)actors shaped it most?

Delivery, legitimacy and endurance (2000 words)

7. How did the implementation process – ‘what happens after a bill becomes a law’ (Bardach, 1977) – unfold, and what (f)actors shaped it most?
8. How did the legitimacy of the policy – the political and public support garnered -- unfold, and what (f)actors shaped it most?
9. How did changes over time in the operating or political context (such as government turnover, fiscal positions, critical incidents) affect:
 - a. The policy’s central features
 - b. Levels of popular support, or perceived legitimacy

Analysis and conclusions (1500 words)

10. What, overall, can policy analysts and policy actors (of different ilk) learn from this instance of policy success?
 - a. How have the lessons learned evolved over time? Has this case always been a 'success,' and if not, what changed?
 - b. How likely is this case to remain a 'success' in the future? What are potential future problems with this policy case, or a similar class of cases?
11. What unique factors may limit how broadly the lessons from this case can be applied (in terms of political, social, or economic context, or policy domain, etc.)?

Timeline

Authors will be asked to meet the following deadlines, to ensure completion of the volume by the end of year 2018.

5 April 2018 – Provide a complete draft of each chapter.

15-17 April 2018 – Having completed first drafts, all authors will be hosted in Utrecht on April 15-17. Following this conference, all authors will receive feedback in preparation for a final round of revisions to be completed over the summer.

15 August 2018 – Submit final drafts.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 – Public policy *successes* – really?

Mallory Compton and Paul 't Hart

In this chapter, the editors make the case for positive policy evaluation¹. We survey classic and contemporary public policy and governance research and debates to demonstrate how they are slanted towards fault-finding, the language of disappointment, failure and crisis. We reflect on the contributions and the limitations of this state of the art, and argue that it needs to be complemented by a more sustained and systematic conceptualisation and empirical study of highly (and perhaps improbably) successful public policy endeavours. To be sure, since the mid-nineties there has been a strong interest in tracking ‘good/best’ practices so that these could be customised and transplanted to other contexts. The literature on policy transfer shows that this has met with limited success. Much of this work has lacked a systematic analysis of (a) the socially constructed, potentially contested, and dynamic nature of these ‘best practices’; (b) the nature of and interaction between contextual, design and process factors and mechanisms driving these practices. This volume tries to address both these limitations by offering a series of more grounded, in-depth, and reflective case studies, as well as a systematic analysis of what as a batch encompassing different jurisdictions, polities and sectors, they can teach us about theory and practice of positive policy evaluation. This chapter ends by outlining the analytical protocol used in this project, and debating the methodological strengths and limitations of the brand of positive policy evaluation applied in this volume.

Chapter 2 – The success of Finnish comprehensive school? It’s complex!

Jaakko Kauko

For a decade, Finnish education has basked in international glory claimed to be among the best in the world. This reputation is largely due to the country’s success in the Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA), run by the OECD. The aim of the chapter is to critically examine this purported policy success of the Finnish comprehensive school from the perspective of complexity theories. By drawing on different research and statistical data, the chapter critically analyses the extent to which the Finnish comprehensive school can be seen as a success story in terms of performance. Using the well-reported history of the comprehensive school, it teases out the milestones of its development, while pointing to contingencies and path-dependencies along the way, which have led to its legitimate position. It also reviews scholarly accounts in contrast to the political debates. Finally, the chapter sums up the complex development of comprehensive education and discusses the question under heated debate: what, if anything, can we learn from it?

Chapter 3 – Waiting for Gordon: how New Labour succeeded with NHS Policy

Adrian Kay

Although health policy was not an original feature of the attempt by New Labour to break from ‘old’ Labour politics in the UK, the alignment of political priority and policy analysis in government produced a successful period in the UK National Health Service. This chapter investigates the case of the historically significant decline in waiting times for NHS services in

¹ Following, e.g., S.B. Nielsen, R. Turksema & P. van der Knaap (Eds.), *Success in evaluation: Focusing on the positives*, New Brunswick/London: Transaction Publishers 2015

the decade after 2000; queues which were often at least 18 months dropped to no more than 18 weeks by 2010. Unlike welfare state politics generally in the UK, the NHS has always enjoyed great political legitimacy. This chapter reveals how this anchored a notable process improvement in the reform of a well-entrenched, 50-year old NHS system in the early 2000s, where previously abandoned programs were recombined in a strong emphasis on commissioning alongside a significant boost in public expenditure agreed by the initially reluctant Minister of Finance, Gordon Brown. The chapter investigates how this process improvement in turn resulted in significant improvements in access to NHS services over the subsequent decade and presented a sequenced pattern of governing success; from politics to process to program.

Chapter 4 – Tobacco Control in the UK: Transformation from laggard to leader

Paul Cairney

The UK has one of the most comprehensive set of tobacco controls in the world. For public health advocates, its experience is an ‘evidence based’ model for tobacco control across the globe, and for alcohol and obesity policies in the UK. In Scotland, policymakers often described the ‘smoking ban’ as legislation so innovative that it helped justify devolution. These broad and specific experiences allow us to identify and explain different types of success. The UK’s success relates to smoking ‘denormalisation’ and reduction, and the explanation comes partly from the ways in which policymakers framed tobacco as a public health epidemic and produced a policy environment conducive to policy change. The ‘smoking ban’ success relates to the implementation and behavioural change that is lacking in most other countries. The explanation comes from the ‘window of opportunity’ for specific policy change, and the design of the policy instrument backed by the prioritisation of its delivery by key public bodies. The overall lesson, particularly for advocates of evidence informed policymaking, is that evidence only ‘wins the day’ when it helps reframe debate, produce a conducive policy environment, and actors exploit ‘windows of opportunity’ for specific reforms. In most countries, this did not happen.

Chapter 5 – The spectacular health care performance in Singapore

M. Ramesh and Azad Bali

Singapore’s healthcare system ranks among the best in the world in terms of infant mortality rate, longevity, disability adjusted years, and so on. What is most remarkable, however, is that it achieved these fine outcomes at less than half the costs as comparable countries. The achievement of high healthcare outcomes at low costs is what constitutes ‘success’ in the case of Singapore. While the factors underlying the success are wide-ranging, a lot of the credit must be rightly attributed to the government’s policy. In this chapter, the evolution of the policy measures since Independence will be tracked, along with their impact on improving healthcare services while containing costs. The measures have evolved with epidemiological and technological shifts as well as the rising expectations of a more prosperous and contestable society. The future continuation of the salutary trajectory will depend on the technical merits of the policy measures in the face of changing circumstances as much as their political legitimacy.

Chapter 6 – Bolsa Família: Brazil’s world-renowned poverty reduction program

Luis Henrique Paiva, Tereza Cristina Cotta, and Armando Barrientos

The first experiences with conditional cash transfers (CCTs) took place in the mid-1990s in Brazil, at the local level. They were later adopted at the national level in Mexico (in 1997, with

the Prospera programme), in Brazil (by 2001, with several CCTs), as well as in other Latin American countries. In 2003, the Bolsa Família programme unified previous national CCTs and massively expanded their number of beneficiaries. It managed to reach almost a quarter of the Brazilian population and became the most progressive cash transfer made by the state. Over time, numerous evaluations measured the programme's impacts on the reduction of poverty and inequality and the improvement of education and health indicators. Domestically, these impacts, together with strong support by researchers and multilateral organizations, eventually translated this 'good policy' (quality design and implementation) into 'good politics' (political support from beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike, and public commitment to the programme's maintenance by all relevant political forces) (Lindert and Vincensini 2010). The Bolsa Família 'model' is now adopted in 67 different countries (World Bank 2017).

Chapter 7 – Copenhagen's five finger plan: A remarkable bottom-up grass-roots success

Jacob Torfing

The metropolitan region of Copenhagen in Denmark has successfully avoided urban sprawl through a comprehensive public plan initiated more than 70 years ago. Given the well known challenges to urban planning, it is surprising how successful this so-called finger plan has been in governing the process of expansion and development to both satisfy public planners and private citizens. Formulated in the optimistic post-war years, 1945-47, when the pressure on land use outside the city centre was still limited, the plan was initiated by the private Urban Planning Lab. In today's terminology, this was a bottom-up grass-roots initiative which maintained support from local, regional and national decision makers. Higher than expected growth in population, economy, and transportation infrastructure has been achieved through robust adaptation. Now considered by many to be one of the greatest Danish planning achievements in history, it was included in 2006 on the national list of celebrated cultural icons. The chapter will analyse the conditions for and adaptive development of the finger plan. The analysis of the factors driving the successful formulation and implementation of the finger plan will pay attention to the question of timing, the professional process management, the political coalition building, the strength of metaphors and the ability to adapt to changing conditions.

Chapter 8 - Germany's Labour Market: How the sick man of Europe managed an economic miracle

Florian Spohr

Germany has become one of the most competitive economies in the world. Only a decade and a half ago it was widely derided as stagnant, and ridden by political paralysis in reforming its labour market policies. However, in 2002, the discovery of manipulated statistics in the German Employment Agency opened a window of opportunity to break the stalemate in corporatist policy-making. In response, the government convened a commission to design a labour market policy reforms: the Hartz Committee, named for its chair, Peter Hartz. Including experts, politicians, and members from interest groups in the commission enabled the government to promote the 'Hartz Reforms' on the basis of expertise and compromise. Their focus was on creating incentives for seeking employment. Job search assistance and monitoring gained importance, whereas ineffective job creation and early retirement schemes were abolished or reduced. These activating reforms successfully tackled structural unemployment and increased the overall employment rate. Their success in strengthening economic resilience was demonstrated during the 2008 economic crisis, when in combination with other measures such

as the extension of short-time work, and controlled unit labour costs, they have led Germany's labour market through the deep recession.

Chapter 9 – ‘Marvellous Melbourne’: making the world’s most liveable city

Jenny Lewis and Emma Blomkamp

Melbourne has been named the world's most liveable city for almost a decade on a number of global rankings. Leaving aside problems of such indicators, Melbourne has transformed from an economic basket-case of industrial decline in the 1980s into a vibrant and cosmopolitan world city. Central to this transformation been a set of determined moves by the city and state governments to change the city centre from an inhospitable place into a desirable location to work, live and play. In this chapter, more than two decades (1980-2015) of city planning and policy development are charted to explain Melbourne's remarkable economic resurgence and cultural revitalisation. This is not a straightforward tale of policy success, however. Strained relations between the state and city governments, changing technologies and industrial trends, and at times hostile reactions to the creative visions of the city's architects have threatened policy success. Informed by extensive research and consultation, the city government nevertheless stimulated housing and retail development, and activated public space. Strategic interventions by the state government to stimulate the economy in key areas of strength, combined with the city government's people-centric approach to liveability, have effectively made the city more amenable, creative, smart and sustainable.

Chapter 10 – ‘The law is blind, it eats even its owner’: Understanding Policy Successes in Botswana

James A. Robinson

Despite having innumerable disadvantages; being landlocked, natural resource dependent, surrounded by white settler colonies and almost completely neglected during the colonial period, Botswana became one of the fastest growing economies, not just in Africa, but in the world after independence in 1966. The prime reason for this was successful economy policy, particularly with respect to diamond extraction that provided a huge source of rents that were managed in an intertemporally rational way and invested in public goods and the economy. I explain how these policies were adopted, why they worked so well and how these features fit within the broader political economy of Botswana after independence which allowed the country not just to adopt good policies but to build the institutions necessary to implement them.

Chapter 11 – New Zealand’s Economic Turnaround: How Innovative Policy Catalyzed Economic Growth

Michael Mintrom and Madeleine Thomas

In the early 1980s, global events and New Zealand's government response drove the country towards economic collapse. Debt, inflation, and unemployment grew. To address the crisis, several legislative reforms in the style of new public management were passed between the mid-1980s and early 1990s. The currency was floated, price and income controls were relaxed, state owned enterprises such as the national airline were corporatized, government accounting was scrutinized, and outputs rather than inputs were monitored in government departments. These reforms transformed New Zealand into a country that holds transparency and accountability in high regard. The economy recovered, and the population flourished and gained better access to a

wider range of goods and services. In this chapter, we analyse the reasons and the circumstances that led to the success of New Zealand's economic reforms. Furthermore, we discuss what economic vulnerabilities remain for New Zealand. We also consider the extent to which the New Zealand model offers lessons for other countries.

Chapter 12 – Estonia's digital transformation: Invisible versus Hiding Hand

Rainer Kattel

Estonia's transition to free-market capitalism and liberal democracy is marked by three distinct features: economic success, digital transformation of its public sector, and a rapid increase and persistence of social inequality in Estonia. Indeed, Estonia has become one of the most unequal societies in Europe (by GINI index; also, e.g., its HIV growth rate, drug-related deaths are topping respective European 'charts'). Economic success and increasing social inequality can be explained as different sides of the same coin: a neoliberal policy mix opened markets and allowed globalization play out its drama on a domestic stage, creating winners and losers. Yet, Estonia has been highly successful in its digital agenda. Particularly interesting is how the country's public sector led the digital transformation within this highly neoliberal policy landscape. This article sets out the answer these questions. It is argued that while within economic policy, Estonia did indeed follow the famed invisible hand in rapidly liberalizing markets, while in ICT, Estonia seems to have followed an entirely different principle of policy making. In this domain, policy has followed the principle of the hiding hand, coined by Albert Hirschman: policy makers sometimes take on tasks they think they can solve without realizing all the challenges and risks involved -- and this may result in unexpected learning and creativity. The success of Estonia's e-government has much to do with the principle of the hiding hand: naiveté and optimism propelled initial 'crazy ideas' (Mart Laar, Prime Minister in 1992) in the early 1990s to become ingrained in ICT policy, enabling creation of multiple highly cooperative and overlapping networks that span public-private boundaries. Following the hiding hand, however, also institutionalized weaknesses: a reliance on few charismatic individuals, less focus on implementation and user experience, and more focus on brand and enthusiasm. Evidence for this argument comes from more than 20 interviews with leading politicians, policy makers, ICT activists, ICT entrepreneurs and third sector representatives carried out between September 2016 and June 2017.

Chapter 13 – The 'Social Warfare State': Americans' making of a civic generation

Mallory Compton

The Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, also called the G.I. Bill or the 'New Deal for Veterans,' constituted one of the most expansive 'social' policies in US history. In one deft move, a bipartisan coalition passed a surprisingly and under-appreciated progressive social agenda providing training vouchers, family allowances, up to a year's worth of transitional unemployment payments, and low-interest, federally guaranteed loans for homes, farms, and businesses to nearly 8 million citizens. Every W.W. II military service member was made eligible, regardless of race or ethnicity, thereby by offering 75% of the young male cohort in post-W.W. II America unprecedented access to higher education, social support, and homeownership. Beyond boosting higher educational achievement by 20% (Stanley 2003), the policy had a range of economic, human and social capital outcomes, and is viewed as having boosted social mobility for a generation, creating the 'civic generation' (Mettler 2002). The initial program was so successful and popular that it has been routinely expanded and renewed for veterans in the seventy years since; it endures as a core component of compensation for service members today.

Chapter 14 - The Dutch Delta Approach: how the Dutch successfully reinvent their fight against the water

Arwin van Buuren

The Netherlands is an extreme example of a country highly susceptible to both sea-level rise and river flooding. After the disastrous flooding of 1953, the Dutch established a legal framework for flood protection and realized a series of impressive delta works. A powerful institutional regime of autonomous regional water boards, a well-developed expert community and Rijkswaterstaat (the executive agency of the ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment) maintained this framework making Netherlands one of the best protected delta areas of the world, and an international hallmark for delta management. More recently, the Dutch reformulated their ‘delta approach’ in order to adapt to the possible but uncertain impacts of climate change. In this chapter we unravel the factors that could explain the longstanding policy success and the reinvention of this policy. Reinventing successful policies is not self-evident, because path-dependency often prevents learning and change, and core competencies easily become core rigidities. In hindsight, the Dutch Delta Program – an external vehicle to come to a revision of the Dutch delta approach – can be seen as a device to successfully combine exploitation (sustaining the successful elements of the former flood management regime) and exploration (developing new strategies and avenues to deal with new challenges related to climate change).

Chapter 15 – Best Kid in Class: Sweden’s commitment to environmental protection

Jon Pierre, Simon Matti, and Sverker Jagers

Sweden has been a consistent early adopter and over-implementer of environmental legislation, despite facing significant value trade-offs and lobbies from its entrenched industrial interests. It has embarked upon and continued down a path of progressive environmental reform regardless of the political complexion of its governments. What has driven and enabled this consistent, and successful, record of reform?

Environmental policy is a huge policy area. Focusing on a limited number of specific environmental policy issues, this paper explores the political, policy-related and institutional underpinnings of the successful policy. We outline a framework drawing on the ‘five Is’—ideas, institutions, interests, individuals and international factors—and ad three Cs—critical events, context and constituencies—in order to specify the causes of successful environmental policy programs. The paper also briefly discusses the Swedish ‘best in class’ strategy as a means of forming opinion in international and regional arenas where policy success gives credence and example.

Chapter 16 – The Norwegian Petroleum Fund as Institutionalized Self-Restraint: The role of public leadership in shaping successful reform

Bent Sofus Tranøy, Ketil Raknes, and Camilla Bakken Øvald

In economies abundant with natural resources, public leadership tends to lessen public value, diminishing assets that could benefit the population at large. The Norwegian macroeconomic regime, balancing current spending with long-term interests, compares favourably to most other cases of large resource-driven income streams. While Norway had the institutional capability to reform, this policy is also an example of successful public leadership creating large public and social value. In this paper we explore the role of public leadership in establishing the Petroleum Fund, and the relationship between political and administrative leadership. We find that deft

political leadership was vital in the three main government decisions that shaped Norwegian economic policy. In fact, the role of heroic leadership in the Fund's history was larger than expected, although the key factor was a series of constructive interactions between political leaders and astute public managers.

Chapter 17 – The Montreal Protocol: a global governance success story

Charles Parker and Frederike Albrecht

The Montreal Protocol—the regime designed to protect the stratospheric ozone layer—has widely been hailed as the gold standard of global environmental governance and is one of few examples of international institutional cooperative arrangements successfully solving complex transnational problems. Although the stratospheric ozone layer still bears the impacts of ozone depleting substances (ODSs), the problem of ozone depletion is well on its way to being solved due to the Protocol. In this chapter, we examine how the Protocol was designed and implemented in a way that has allowed it to successfully overcome a number of thorny challenges that most international environmental regimes must face: how to attract sufficient participation, how to promote compliance and manage non-compliance, how to strengthen commitments over time, how to neutralize or co-opt potential ‘veto players,’ how to make the costs of implementation affordable, how to leverage public opinion in support of the regime’s goals, and, ultimately, how to promote the behavioral and policy changes needed to solve the problems and achieve the goals the regime was designed to solve. The chapter concludes that while some of the reasons for the Montreal Protocol’s success, such as fairly affordable, available substitutes for ODSs, are not easy to replicate, there are many other elements of this story that can be utilized when thinking about how to design solutions to other transnational environmental problems.

Chapter 18 – Understanding policy success: what can be learned?

Mallory Compton and Paul ‘t Hart

In this chapter, we synthesize and interpret the findings of this collaborative research project. We revisit the key themes driving the 15 case-study questions that formed the heart of the analytical protocol presented in chapter 1 in light of the case studies’ results as well as the experiences of the researchers in conducting this form of positive policy evaluation. We assess what has worked and what did not work well in capturing as well as explaining policy successes. We will revisit and revise pre-existing analytical frameworks and empirical propositions about policy success, such as Bovens et al (2001) and McConnell (2010) , as well as the methodological toolkit of positive policy evaluation (e.g. Bremmer et al, 2015). In the final part of the chapter we will offer building blocks for a practice-oriented theory of policy success, concluding with a discussion of the most promising or urgent avenues for future research.

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