

# **Critical Policy Studies .....**



# Critical Policy Studies

..... Edited by Michael Orsini and  
Miriam Smith



**UBC**Press · Vancouver · Toronto

© UBC Press 2007

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without prior written permission of the publisher, or, in Canada, in the case of photocopying or other reprographic copying, a licence from Access Copyright (Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency), [www.accesscopyright.ca](http://www.accesscopyright.ca).

15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Canada on ancient-forest-free paper (100% post-consumer recycled) that is processed chlorine- and acid-free, with vegetable-based inks.

### **Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Critical policy studies / edited by Michael Orsini and Miriam Smith.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7748-1317-4

ISBN-10: 0-7748-1317-2

1. Political planning – Canada. I. Orsini, Michael, 1967- II. Smith, Miriam Catherine

JL86.P64C75 2006

320.60971

C2006-905139-9

### **Canada**

UBC Press gratefully acknowledges the financial support for our publishing program of the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP), and of the Canada Council for the Arts, and the British Columbia Arts Council.

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The editors and publisher acknowledge the financial assistance of the Research and Publications Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa.

UBC Press

The University of British Columbia

2029 West Mall

Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2

604-822-5959 / Fax: 604-822-6083

[www.ubcpress.ca](http://www.ubcpress.ca)

.....

# Contents

Figures and Tables / viii

Acknowledgments / ix

- 1** Critical Policy Studies 1  
MICHAEL ORSINI AND MIRIAM SMITH

**PART 1: POLITICAL ECONOMY**

- 2** Political Economy and Canadian Public Policy 19  
PETER GRAEFE

- 3** Policy Analysis in an Era of “Globalization”:  
Capturing Spatial Dimensions and Scalar Strategies 41  
RIANNE MAHON, CAROLINE ANDREW, AND  
ROBERT JOHNSON

**PART 2: CITIZENS AND DIVERSITY**

- 4** Citizen Engagement: Rewiring the Policy Process 67  
RACHEL LAFOREST AND SUSAN PHILLIPS

- 5** Queering Public Policy: A Canadian Perspective 91  
MIRIAM SMITH

- 6** Gender Mainstreaming in the Canadian Context:  
“One Step Forward and Two Steps Back” 111  
OLENA HANKIVSKY



- 7** Political Science, Race, Ethnicity, and Public Policy 137  
YASMEEN ABU-LABAN

**PART 3: DISCOURSE AND KNOWLEDGE**

- 8** Governmentality and the Shifting Winds  
of Policy Studies 161  
KAREN BRIDGET MURRAY
- 9** Agenda-Setting and Issue Definition 185  
STUART N. SOROKA
- 10** Scientists, Government, and “Boundary Work”:  
The Case of Reproductive Technologies and  
Genetic Engineering in Canada 211  
FRANCESCA SCALA
- 11** Between Respect and Control: Traditional  
Indigenous Knowledge in Canadian Public Policy 233  
FRANCES ABELE
- 12** Framing Environmental Policy: Aboriginal Rights  
and the Conservation of Migratory Birds 257  
LUC JUILLET

**PART 4: RISKY SUBJECTS**

- 13** From the Welfare State to the Social Investment State:  
A New Paradigm for Canadian Social Policy? 279  
DENIS SAINT-MARTIN
- 14** Canadian Post-9/11 Border Policy and Spillover  
Securitization: Smart, Safe, Sovereign? 299  
MARK B. SALTER
- 15** The Permanent-Emergency Compensation State:  
A “Postsocialist” Tale of Political Dystopia 321  
MATT JAMES



<b>16</b>	Discourses in Distress: From “Health Promotion” to “Population Health” to “You Are Responsible for Your Own Health”	347
	MICHAEL ORSINI	
	Contributors	365
	Index	369

## ..... Figures and Tables

### FIGURES

4.1	A continuum of citizen involvement	72
9.1	Public opinion: Issue salience and spending preferences	192
9.2	Federal government spending	195
9.3	Consolidated federal, provincial, and municipal spending	196
9.4	Federal legislative activity, all environmental issues	198
9.5	Federal legislative activity, pollution and wildlife protection only	200
15.1	Distinguishing historical redress, medical compensation, and disaster compensation	333
15.2	Disaster and emergency relief contributions	336

### TABLES

9.1	Environmental legislation database	204
13.1	The social investment paradigm	284

## ..... Acknowledgments

This book explores new approaches to policy studies in Canada, focusing especially (but not exclusively) on work by junior scholars who have tackled new topics and theoretical approaches, sometimes borrowed from other disciplines such as geography, law, and sociology. The book seeks to widen the field of what is defined as public policy and to introduce new concepts into Canadian policy analysis. Given this, our most important debt is to an outstanding group of contributors, who wrote wonderful pieces, many of which, we believe, will become widely cited in the public policy literature. We would like to thank the contributors for responding quickly to our many requests for revision. We would also like to acknowledge the work of the anonymous referees for UBC Press who pressed us and our contributors to improve the book. Emily Andrew was a supportive editor throughout and we would like to thank her for her invaluable assistance in shepherding this project to completion. Karine Levasseur assisted in preparing the manuscript for publication and her work is gratefully acknowledged.

Michael would like to thank his wife Victoria and “ankle biters” Emma and Lucca for putting it all in perspective, as well as his parents for continued support.



**Critical Policy Studies .....**



# 1

## Critical Policy Studies

.....  
*Michael Orsini and Miriam Smith*

The public policy world is in a state of flux. Globalization, the transition to a knowledge-based economy, and the rise of new technologies are transforming the policy world as we know it. These changes are catapulting new, substantive issues onto the policy agenda, or, at the very least, transforming the policy problems that have been with us for decades. Mad cow disease, border screening, and global warming are just some of the new policy problems that dominate the daily headlines. The “real world” of policy making, Leslie A. Pal (2005) explains in a recent edition of his popular public policy text *Beyond Policy Analysis*, is increasingly marked by crisis. Policy makers and students of public policy alike need to re-examine their tool kits and reflect on just what policy analysis is supposed to achieve. This volume uses the term “critical policy studies” as a container for an ensemble of approaches and perspectives that we believe are best suited to the changing policy context in which we find ourselves. Critical policy studies is not an ideological straitjacket; rather, it is an orientation to policy analysis inspired by the Lasswellian tradition and by a desire to speak truth to power.

As Maarten Hajer (2003, 175) has recently emphasized, policy making and politics increasingly take place in an “institutional void” where “there are no clear rules and norms according to which politics is to be conducted and policy measures are to be agreed upon.” As he makes clear, this does not mean that traditional political institutions cease to matter: rather, there are policy problems that have necessitated political action of a different order. In some cases, state authority or legitimacy may be at issue; in other instances, the action may take place alongside the traditional state apparatus. What are some of the implications of this new world of policy making? Hajer (2003, 179-80) lays out five: the dispersal of decision making, the “new spatiality of policy making and politics,” a rethinking of standard views of participation and governance, the undermining of scientific expertise, and an expansion of

the context of policy making. Although states nonetheless remain important units of analyses, politics and policy occur at a number of scales, across different spatial horizons. Moreover, a recognition of the importance of the spatial question and the dispersal of decision making requires a re-examination of widely held views of democratic participation and governance. The time-honoured tradition of citizen consultations and hearings, often convened by governments eager to control the agenda or at the very least guide the direction of the discussion, may be insufficient in an age in which citizens demand a greater say in the decisions that affect them. The role of citizens in policy making invariably raises the question of how evidence, whether scientific or experiential, can and should be incorporated in decision making. This dilemma has been made all the more thorny by the profound mistrust and distrust of "science" to provide authoritative answers to complex policy problems, as the recent controversy over vCJD (the human form of mad cow disease), among others, powerfully demonstrates. If traditional policy problems were not complex enough, a host of new themes raises profound questions about nature itself, including the social and ethical challenges associated with genetics and biotechnology, for instance.

In this way, traditional arenas of policy making, such as economic and trade policy, have been cross-cut by the complex pressures of globalization and by the emergence of new political actors who take advantage of transnational access points and the uncertainty of the locus of power to try to circumvent the state. New forms of political agency, such as transnationalism, and the enhanced legitimacy of civil society organizations in policy fields such as the environment and human rights, have undermined the position of traditional state-based power-holders in the policy process.

Government-sponsored policy templates such as social cohesion, social exclusion, civic engagement, and the voluntary sector have been advanced as legitimate responses to the numerous social ills that plague societies. Poverty, in the new formulation made popular by Third Way governments such as Tony Blair's New Labour government in the UK, is recast as a social phenomenon, not solely a material deprivation. Under such a scenario, governments become charged with the task of "facilitating" the fight against social exclusion, sometimes without doing anything to address the underlying socio-economic problems that drive citizens into poverty in the first place. These new templates and the policies attached to them construct a range of ways of connecting citizens to the state and of purportedly bringing citizens into the

policy-making process, but they bring with them their own unique set of challenges. Communities that were once marginal to or frozen out of public policy – such as Aboriginal people, children, the poor, lesbians and gay men, ethnocultural communities, and women – are increasingly viewed as “stakeholders” in public policy debates, not to mention important sources of legitimacy for governments facing an increasingly disaffected electorate. Public policy areas that were once the monopoly of the federal government have been undercut by the rise of cities, regions, provinces, and transnational networks as politics is decentred – and recentred – from the federal state. This phenomenon is more than simply the downloading or offloading of responsibilities from federal governments to provincial or local governments. New governance arrangements that involve a mix of public, private, and voluntary sectors are altering the policy landscape in ways that cannot be captured by a singular focus on downloading.

Like public policy itself, the study of public policy has undergone significant change, and is gaining increased legitimacy in the field of political science. Journals such as *Governance*, *Policy Sciences*, *Policy and Politics*, and the *Journal of Public Policy* publish some of the most interesting scholarship in the field. And as is amply demonstrated by this edited collection, the sub-discipline of policy studies has begun to embrace radically different theoretical and methodological approaches borrowed from other subfields of political science such as historical institutionalism, feminist analysis (Hawkesworth 1994; Burt 1995; Phillips 1996), social movement analysis, and Foucauldian analysis, which have injected new life and vigour into the public policy field. Public policy scholars are also borrowing liberally from other disciplines, including sociology and geography. Indeed, much of the renewed interest in public policy might be traced to the openness of some scholars to think beyond the disciplinary paradigm of rational choice, which has maintained a stranglehold on American political science in recent years.

One of the exemplars of this new approach to public policy is Frank Fischer’s recent book *Reframing Public Policy* (2003), which makes a compelling case for a post-empiricist alternative to the technocratic form of policy analysis which has occupied the mainstream for several years. Post-empiricists such as Fischer, Douglas Torgerson (1996), Maarten Hajer (2005), and John Dryzek (1990) do not necessarily cling to a core set of unshakeable beliefs. Rather, they share a concern with moving beyond objectivist conceptions of reality, especially the fact/value dichotomy. In recent work, this

newfound interest in expanding theoretical boundaries has been accompanied by a renewed commitment by public policy scholars to undertake comparative and global analyses. Further, this juxtaposition of traditional fields of policy analysis is helping to supercede and transcend the old boundaries of policy analysis. In these ways, the volume contributes to critical policy studies and provides an alternative to mainstream approaches and topics.

In the past, classic texts in Canadian and comparative public policy have focused on explaining what the state does and why states vary in the types of policies they undertake (Dobuzinskis, Howlett, and Laycock 1996). Usually, discussions centred on the traditional domains of policy as reflected in the organization of the state and the policy-making apparatus, such as, for example, economic policy, social policy, foreign policy, and agricultural policy. The main theories of policy making were organized around the society/state binary: pluralism and neo-Marxism saw social forces as driving public policy, and state-based analyses explored the impact of factors such as the organization of the state and the role of policy communities in shaping public policy outcomes.

Contemporary theories of public policy challenge this traditional picture in a number of ways. As noted earlier, extensive interdisciplinary cross-fertilization has resulted in the adoption of theoretical approaches from other disciplines such as geography, sociology, communication, and cultural studies. This edited collection charts some of these changes in the context of policy making discussed earlier by Hajer (2003) and in the approaches undertaken to grasp what is unfolding in a public policy world set against the ambiguous and contradictory backdrop of globalization and neo-liberalism. Although the volume covers a lot of ground, it is based on the assumption that there are horizontal synergies across new policy areas which render some of the traditional divisions outdated. Our contributors include a number of respected analysts as well as some of the new, exciting voices in the discipline. Some, if hard pressed, might not self-identify as public policy scholars, but their scholarship has wider implications for how we understand public policy generally and policy analysis specifically. This edited collection is distinctive in providing a discussion of a range of policy fields, some of which have emerged only recently on the policy agenda and will no doubt occupy policy makers for years to come. In addition, we hope this collection will help to ignite a much-needed discussion of the appropriate boundaries of the discipline of policy studies within a Canadian and comparative context. Policy issues associated with risk, compensation, sexuality, and Aboriginal

people, for instance, have not generally been accorded their rightful place in the study of public policy. We hope, therefore, that this book will contribute to correcting this problem.

### Main Themes of the Volume

The themes of the volume reflect the concern with new voices in policy debates as well as recent theoretical developments in critical policy studies. The book is divided into four main sections, "Political Economy," "Citizens and Diversity," "Discourse and Knowledge," and "Risky Subjects."

#### POLITICAL ECONOMY

The first section draws on Canada's rich political economy tradition. In Chapter 2, Peter Graefe demonstrates quite convincingly that, though it is a long-standing approach, political economy is flexible enough to accommodate a range of intellectual and practical concerns. Graefe offers a particularly clear discussion of the distinction between political economy as a form of policy analysis and the pluralist and neo-pluralist assumptions of much mainstream policy analysis. For Graefe, political economy is centrally concerned with the exploration of public policy as an exercise of economic and political power. He dismisses the claim that political economy is reductionist and presents a rich distillation of recent literatures on political economy and intersectionality, focusing specifically on feminist political economy. Graefe's chapter presages Karen Murray's Chapter 8 discussion of governmentality by focusing on the advantages and disadvantages of a governmentality approach from the perspective of feminist political economy.

Chapter 3, by Rianne Mahon, Caroline Andrew, and Robert Johnson, presents an overview of recent thinking about the rescaling of political economy. They question concepts that have been central to traditional public policy analysis and political economy. Drawing on new developments in geography, Mahon, Andrew, and Johnson argue that policy studies must develop a more nuanced approach to the theorization of space. Traditional policy analysis has recognized the diminished importance of the nation-state in the global era, the downloading of responsibilities to subnational levels of government, the importance of cities, and the role of new policy actors (such as the voluntary sector) in governance. Nonetheless, the policy literature overwhelmingly assumes that the national scale is the privileged level for public policy action and analysis. Yet, the authors argue that the process of rescaling that is under way in the global era requires us to rethink the

dominant place of the nation-state in public policy. Understanding scale means paying attention to the many spaces in which policies are constructed and in which contestation over policy occurs. Globalization entails not simply the decline of the nation-state but the emergence of new forms of contestation over space and scale. In this light, it is essential to view scale as a set of dynamic relationships, rather than as fixed spaces. The authors provide a useful summary of the ways in which central concepts of policy analysis such as the “policy community” or “knowledge transfer” are rooted in specific assumptions about the importance of the national scale and how these limit the consideration of the multi-scalar nature of shifting policy responsibilities.

#### CITIZENS AND DIVERSITY

The second section is concerned with the public policy challenges associated with the politicization of diversity in Canadian society. Chapter 4, by Rachel Laforest and Susan Phillips, asks whether the policy process needs to be “re-wired” in order to bring citizens’ voices into policy making in a significant and meaningful way. Such forms of engagement would circumvent the traditional forms of representation of interests through the party system or through interest associations or social movement organizations. Instead, citizen engagement aims to empower ordinary citizens to participate in policy processes, especially in holding governments accountable for policies and performance. However, Laforest and Phillips caution that “the emerging performance-based model of engagement is not an expansion, but in fact a potential contraction of the influence of citizens in political representation and policy development” (p. 68). In this sense, claims to tap the knowledge of ordinary citizens in the policy process may legitimate less participatory forms of policy making.

Although citizen engagement is based on the assumption of the undifferentiated individual, one who is divorced from his or her civil society involvement and who always speaks as a citizen, Chapters 5 and 6, by Miriam Smith and Olena Hankivsky, respectively, discuss how the situated knowledge of groups can be brought into the policy-making process. In each case, new knowledges challenge the existing structure of policy making, the definition of policy issues, and the nature of the policy process itself – each of which is a perennial concern of policy scholars. All three chapters – Laforest and Phillips, Smith, and Hankivsky – refer to the ways in which the specific experiences of groups that have historically been excluded can be integrated into policy making.

Smith argues that public policy also needs to be “queered,” as a way of taking seriously the interests and identities of lesbian and gay citizens; Hankivsky focuses on gendering the analysis of public policy. Challenging “heteronormativity” in the policy process, as suggested by Smith, requires the kind of restructuring that is discussed and developed in Hankivsky’s chapter on gender mainstreaming. Hankivsky provides a survey of current Canadian efforts at gender mainstreaming, that is, evaluating policy from the perspective of its impact on gender equality and ensuring gender equity in the policy process itself. Like Laforest and Phillips, in their discussion of citizen engagement, Hankivsky finds that the discourse of gender mainstreaming and gender-based analysis has not matched reality. Both the Smith and Hankivsky chapters discuss the dangers of an essentialized definition of gender-based identities. A liberal approach to difference assumes that “women” or “lesbian and gay” citizens can fit into neat analytical boxes and be added into the policy-making process; however, feminist analysis, queer theory, and post-colonialism all point to the intersections among different identities, as well as to the role of broader social and political structures as patterned power relationships that set important limits on the policy-making process. Similarly, these chapters highlight the importance of the patterns of political mobilization in civil society and their relevance for the policy process. As Hankivsky notes, the declining political power of the women’s movement at the federal level has seriously undermined efforts to deepen gender analysis.

In Chapter 7, Yasmeen Abu-Laban argues that the central concept of the nation-state in Canadian policy analysis has been based on specific assumptions about colonialism and race, assumptions that must be re-examined in the global era. Abu-Laban asserts that the consideration of race and ethnicity in Canadian policy studies and political science must move beyond multiculturalism as a policy arena to consider the ways in which what the Canadian state does (or does not do) is linked to the legacy of European colonialism and to specific assumptions about the nature of Canadian society. Abu-Laban shows how areas of policy such as the census, immigration, borders, and the war on terror must be linked to and integrated with an approach that pays attention to the intersections of race and ethnicity.

These chapters present very diverse views on how citizens influence policy making, ranging from the individual citizen of Laforest and Phillips’ chapter through the group politics and structural reworking of public policy that is suggested by gender-based analysis, challenging heteronormativity, or engaging with the colonial legacy of Canadian public policy analysis.

## DISCOURSE AND KNOWLEDGE

The chapters in this section ask, in different but complementary ways, how one might incorporate new knowledges into the policy process or whether these new ways of knowing require us to redraw the contours of the public policy field. Just as feminists were correct to point out that gender is not simply an add-on to policy analysis (“add gender and stir”), the chapters in this section outline a similar challenge when trying to bring new, often “situated knowledges,” to borrow a phrase from Donna J. Haraway (1991), to the table. Policy makers are facing formidable challenges in opening up the policy process to non-state actors. For one, there is greater pressure to consult with and engage actors who may not be traditionally consulted on policy issues. It is fairly straightforward for governments wishing to hear the range of civil society opinion on, for instance, specific environmental policies. This normally involves canvassing the groups which are often vocal on the issue. It is quite another thing for governments, at all levels, to confront an issue with disparate interests, unorganized interests, or newly mobilized citizens who may not follow the institutional rules of engagement.

Karen Bridget Murray’s Chapter 8 discussion of governmentality and policy studies reflects the growing influence of Foucauldian thought in the social sciences in fields as diverse as medical sociology, criminology, and security studies. Murray’s chapter demonstrates the ways in which this analytic approach can be used to interrogate comparative welfare state scholarship. Governmentality poses a fundamental challenge to the mainstream social science methodologies on which comparative welfare state scholarship is based, methodologies that assume that competing explanatory claims can be adjudicated with reference to empirical evidence, both quantitative and qualitative. Murray’s chapter shows how comparative welfare state research is based on the assumption of the reality of a liberal zone of freedom in which power is absent; in contrast, the governmentality approach explores the ways in which the individual is constituted to participate as a “free” subject through the use and deployment of various fields of knowledge. As Murray argues, “expert knowledge was drawn upon in various ways and at various times to justify a whole range of endeavours: educators relied on knowledge about pedagogy; counsellors trusted theories of human nature; parents turned to parenting journals in determining how to raise their children; administrators drew upon organizational theory, and so on” (p. 164). This illustrates how governmentality is concerned with the micro level at which public policies play themselves out; however, it also illustrates the two other themes of

this volume: the emergence of new areas of public policy such as health promotion (described in Chapter 16) or assimilationist political strategies in queer politics (described in Chapter 5) as well as the importance of knowledge and ideas in the policy process. Governmentality points to the construction of fields of expert knowledge which provide contested parameters for policy. This is true not only in the sense of the well-worn literature in comparative welfare state studies on the impact of ideas, as Murray argues. The governmentality approach also suggests a much more profound critique of knowledge deployment as means of governing people and, perhaps even more importantly, as means by which people actively govern themselves.

In Chapter 9, Stuart N. Soroka uses the example of Canadian environmental policy making to present an introduction to the role of agenda-setting and issue framing in public policy. Soroka's chapter offers a counterpoint to the other chapters in this section by drawing on a long-standing public policy literature in political communication and public opinion studies. In a careful review of the wealth of literature on the subjects of agenda-setting and issue definition, Soroka notes that both perspectives have something to offer to policy studies, even though they may appear to be "unlikely bedfellows." As he explains, "Agenda-setting is premised in large part on empirical rational-choice-inspired theories of policy making. Issue definition, however, finds its roots in constructionist or interpretivist – even anti-empirical – research strategies in political communications, emphasizing the importance of language and the subjective, manipulable descriptions that structure everyday politics" (p. 188).

Francesca Scala's Chapter 10 examination of the boundaries between state and non-state actors in producing knowledge in the policy process applies the concept of "boundary work" to the rapidly expanding subfield of "social studies of science," posing important questions about the blurring of the boundaries between state and non-state actors, which have important implications for how we conceptualize knowledge. As Scala explains, boundary work theories are useful in explaining how "different disciplines, professions, and social organizations negotiate and maintain the boundaries that delineate their activities and spheres of influence and authority" (p. 213). More importantly, the concept of boundary work highlights the constructed nature of scientific knowledge and authority, in contrast to claims that scientific knowledge is pure, untainted, and can speak for itself. It is clear, then, that introducing the idea that scientific knowledge could also be viewed as "situated knowledge" has important implications for how we view the

knowledge presented by non-experts who are trying to mould policy discourses that are heavily influenced by science and/or medicine.

In Chapter 11, Frances Abele tackles a particularly challenging area, namely, the use of traditional Indigenous knowledge in policy making. Abele argues that, because of the strength of Aboriginal political organizations in Canada, debates over the use of Indigenous knowledge have centred on the ways in which it can be brought into the policy process, rather than on how it can be exploited for profit or “bio-prospecting.” Abele’s analysis shows the ways in which claims about who is expert and who is defined to have knowledge form a central element in social movement challenges to traditional policy analysis. In advancing claims about knowledge, Aboriginal peoples are also making claims about participation in policy creation and respect for traditional forms of Aboriginal governance that themselves privilege certain types of knowledge (such as that of elders).

In Chapter 12, the final study in this section, Luc Juillet draws on Fischer’s (2003) post-empiricist approach to explore the discursive framing of policy debates over migratory birds. Juillet shows how scientists and Aboriginal peoples put forth conflicting policy frames regarding conservation and environmental policies in this area and how this “inter-frame conflict” prevents policy change. Juillet demonstrates that the discursive frameworks of policy debates are linked to and embedded in other frames in Canadian politics, such as constitutional politics. Shifts in constitutional politics legitimated First Nations’ demands for national recognition, which, in turn, reinforced the Aboriginal framing of conservation policy regarding migratory birds.

Together, these chapters suggest diverse methodological and theoretical approaches to understanding the role of discourse and knowledge in policy making: they range from the Foucauldian approach of Murray to the media-focused framing and agenda-setting of Soroka; Scala’s chapter scrutinizes the role of experts in setting policy boundaries, and Abele’s chapter examines challenges to experts and the reassertion of grassroots policy knowledge epitomized by debates between elders and “experts”; finally, Juillet’s chapter takes a post-empiricist approach to discursive framing.

#### RISKY SUBJECTS

The final section groups chapters by Denis Saint-Martin, Mark B. Salter, Matt James, and Michael Orsini. Each chapter deals with conceptions of risk, vividly demonstrating that risk talk has permeated not only popular but policy discourses as well. We speak of “at risk” populations (Saint-Martin), “risky”

physical environments (Salter, James), and “risky” lifestyles (Orsini). What is new, one might argue, is how the social is being reshaped through the prism of risk. For instance, in 2004, Social Development Canada, a recently reconstituted federal government department, and the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada co-sponsored a large conference entitled “New Century, New Risks,” which dealt with the emergence of new “social” risks; in 2002, the Policy Research Initiative devoted its annual conference to the theme of risk in all its various guises, from security to unemployment to infectious diseases to risk management in the public service. What is often lost in many discussions of risk and public policy is how risk discourses are altering citizens’ subjectivities. Governments, and by extension, policies, have internalized the language of risk in their conception of vulnerable populations (Murray 2004). Policies directed at subpopulations such as Aboriginals, people with AIDS, and single mothers construct these citizens in ways that ultimately remove their agency, all the while using the language of community empowerment and capacity building. Such language assumes that individuals as consumers will behave rationally (in a risk averse manner) to evade risky situations, whether that means making healthy food choices so as to avoid obesity, or remaining in a dead-end job to avoid unemployment or, worse, social assistance. Meanwhile, governments are saddled with the arduous task of trying to protect individuals from their own bad habits or unwise choices, and from situations, often beyond their control, which may place them at risk, whether in the short, medium, or long term. For instance, the precautionary principle, which has defined the environmental movement, is concerned primarily with hardwiring the decision-making process in such a way as to act decisively in the face of scientific uncertainty regarding potential dangers or hazards. At the same time, there is a paradoxical movement toward evidence-based policy making, itself a by-product of the shift toward evidence-based medicine, which has its firm roots in the randomized clinical trial, the so-called Gold Standard.

It is not surprising that there are immense public policy challenges associated with making decisions in an environment increasingly marked by risk. As Martin J. Smith (2004) explains, there are three dimensions of risk which are often confused in policy discourse: risk as science, risk as perception, and the risk society approach. The first approach holds that risks are identifiable, knowable, and thus measurable; the second focuses on the cultural aspects of risk, and tries to take issue with the claim that measuring risk is possible. The risk society approach is best associated with the work of Ulrich Beck

(1992), who links the proliferation of risk to a crisis of modernity. Risk, Smith says, is being used in all three ways – in the objective sense, in terms of risk perception, and in terms of responding to greater anxieties in society (risk society thesis). The problem of risk in government policy, he says, is fairly complex. First, he notes, the general approach to risk is objective and positivist; it is also based on a number of questionable assumptions: risks are measurable, policy making is rational (governments can use risk assessment to make the right decisions), and the process of risk assessment is independent of human agency. In addition, although some lip service is paid to the subjective nature of risk, there is an assumption that the public's overreaction to risk can be limited if only the "facts" are communicated to it in a proper manner. When examining the British case of BSE (mad cow disease), Smith argues that most analysts underplay the contingent nature of risk and the way it has been used as a form of power/knowledge to legitimize certain behaviour. He also argues that the management of risk has failed because the notions of risk are contested, risk is intersubjective (interventions create new risks), and perceptions of risk vary according to political, economic, and social positions. Since the definition of risk is inherently political, it is critical for policy scholars to examine how risks are conceptualized, identified, and acted upon, and why some risks gain prominence in public discourse while others remain largely hidden from public view; they must also study the respective roles of science, government, the public, and the media in these processes.

In Chapter 13, Denis Saint-Martin discusses the recent evolution of social policy in Canada, as elsewhere, in terms of the shift from the Keynesian welfare state to the social investment state. Following Anthony Giddens (1998) and others, Saint-Martin argues that one of the key shifts in contemporary social policy breaks with the assumption of a separation of politics and economics, viewing social policy as a tool of "social investment" for economic development. Linking back to issues raised by Graefe and Murray in Chapters 2 and 8, Saint-Martin asserts that this paradigm involves investing to create responsible citizens who can manage risk: in the social investment state, the purpose of social policy is to prepare citizens to participate in the market economy, rather than to insulate them from its vagaries. For Saint-Martin, the social investment state might be appropriately renamed the "risk management state," following the work of thinkers such as Peter Baldwin (1990) and Pierre Rosanvallon (2000). As David Garland (2004, 63) explains, what is disconcerting about the shift to a risk-management state is

the “attention away from conflicts over the means of production and towards conflicts over the means of security.” Saint-Martin ultimately suggests that decommodification is no longer a sufficient criterion on which to judge the generosity of welfare states.

Mark B. Salter’s Chapter 14 examination of security typifies the reconceptualization of traditional arenas of public policy, which were based on a separation between foreign and domestic spheres of policy. Salter’s chapter represents part of a growing trend to reconceptualize “border policy” as an important new arena of Canadian public policy, one that brings together a broad range of concerns about immigration, security, crime, and health. Salter explores the ways in which the border is defined as a problem in public policy discourse, showing that how the problem is perceived or constructed often shapes the policy solutions that are proposed; the trend toward securitization of the border has important implications for other policy areas such as those concerning health, criminal law, and immigration/refugees, a phenomenon he characterizes as “spillover securitization.”

In Chapter 15, Matt James’ discussion of the new politics of redress shows how the growth and failures of redress movements have led to the creation of a new category – the “innocent victims” of natural disasters. The politics of compensation for such victims is a moral commitment for a neo-liberal era, drawing on the age-old distinction between the deserving and undeserving recipients of material commitments from the community. Drawing these themes together, James links the politics of compensation, redress, and reparations to the modern politics of social policy in the neo-liberal period.

Finally, in Chapter 16, Michael Orsini examines health politics and policy, and offers an alternative to the usual discussion of health care spending and intergovernmentalism by tracing the main paradigms that have influenced Canadian health policy from the sixties to the present. Orsini provides the lens through which we can read a broad range of health debates as moving from a focus on health promotion and population health to one on the responsabilization of health. Against the backdrop of the omnipresent “risk society,” Orsini’s discussion offers a critique of these shifting paradigms based on a narrative analysis of health policy.

## Conclusion

The chapters offered here depart, in different ways, from the traditional definition of Canadian public policy. They develop and explore the application of new theoretical approaches to public policy such as governmentality and

rescaling while building on older theoretical traditions such as political economy, agenda-setting, and issue framing. Many of the contributions discuss the ways in which knowledge is used in the policy process, where policy knowledge(s) come from, and in which interests they are developed and deployed. Although the chapters range in their assessment of the truths of policy-relevant knowledge, many reflect a post-positivist sensibility in which the social and political construction of policy problems and the expert or situated knowledges used to “solve” them are viewed as dynamic interactions that are shaped by power relations. Many of the chapters draw on insights from disciplines beyond political science. Unlike so much of American political science, which borrows from economics and public choice theory, these chapters build on scholarship from the English-speaking world beyond the US as well as from neglected American voices and European traditions of social theory. In both geographical and disciplinary terms, the chapters open up new terrain for Canadian policy analysis by showing how theories, methods, and research questions from other disciplines and traditions can inform research questions and approaches to Canadian material. Although much of Canadian public policy analysis has had a strong public administration bent and has been directly or indirectly tied to the state’s political projects, this book offers a critical perspective on public policy and on the policy process, suggesting that the knowledge(s) that are claimed by state actors in making policy must be subjected to questioning, contestation, and critique.

The chapters also suggest a new delineation of policy fields: rather than employing the traditional focus on economic policy, social policy, and so forth, the chapters suggest the emergence of new areas of public policy or, to put it another way, the redefinition and reconceptualization of substantive areas of public policy. The politics of risk and compensation are new areas of public policy; the redefinition of security in terms of borders or of social policy in terms of social investment all offer new ways of thinking about old policy areas.

Finally, much more than most volumes on public policy, the book takes seriously the perspectives of marginalized groups in Canadian society, whose interests and identities have often been absent from discussions and debates on public policy. By integrating the views and interests of Aboriginal people, ethnic and racial minorities, women, and lesbian and gay citizens, the volume offers a critical perspective on Canadian public policy. The authors may quibble about how best to integrate the interests of previously marginalized

groups into the policy-making process, but many of them agree on the importance of doing so. The analysis of Canadian public policy must be open to a critical rethinking of fundamental assumptions about political power and about the social and political structures that underpin the policy process.

## REFERENCES

- Baldwin, Peter. 1990. *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State, 1875-1975*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beck, Ulrich. 1992. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. New York: Sage Publications.
- Burt, Sandra. 1995. "The Several Worlds of Policy Analysis: Traditional Approaches and Feminist Critiques." In *Changing Methods: Feminists Transforming Practice*, ed. Sandra Burt and Lorraine Code, 357-78. Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Dobuzinskis, Laurent, Michael Howlett, and David Laycock, eds. 1996. *Policy Studies in Canada: The State of the Art*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Dryzek, John. 1990. *Discursive Democracy: Politics, Policy and Political Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fischer, Frank. 2003. *Reframing Public Policy: Discursive Politics and Deliberative Practices*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Garland, David. 2004. "The Rise of Risk." In *Risk and Morality*, ed. Richard Ericson and Aaron Doyle, 48-87. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1998. *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hajer, Maarten. 2003. "Policy without Polity: Policy Analysis and the Institutional Void." *Policy Sciences* 36: 175-95.
- . 2005. "Setting the Stage: A Dramaturgy of Policy Deliberation." *Administration and Society* 35(6): 624-47.
- Haraway, Donna J. 1991. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, ed. Donna J. Haraway, 183-201. New York: Routledge.
- Hawkesworth, Mary. 1994. "Policy Studies within a Feminist Frame." *Policy Sciences* 27: 97-118.
- Murray, Karen. 2004. "Do Not Disturb: 'Vulnerable Populations' in Federal Government Policy Discourses and Practices." *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 13(1): 50-69.
- Pal, Leslie A. 2005. *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*. 3rd ed. Scarborough: Nelson Thomson Learning.
- Phillips, Susan. 1996. "Discourse, Identity, and Voice: Feminist Contributions to Policy Studies." In *Policy Studies in Canada: The State of the Art*, ed. Laurent Dobuzinskis, Michael Howlett, and David Laycock, 242-65. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.



- Rosanvallon, Pierre. 2000. *The New Social Question: Rethinking the Welfare State*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Smith, Martin J. 2004. "Mad Cows and Mad Money: Problems of Risk in the Making and Understanding of Policy." *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 6(3): 312-32.
- Torgerson, Douglas. 1996. "Power and Insight in Policy Discourse: Post-positivism and Problem Definition." In *Policy Studies in Canada: The State of the Art*, ed. Laurent Dobuzinkis, Michael Howlett, and David Laycock, 266-98. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

ONE

# Political Economy

PART



