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## **BOOK REVIEW**

### **Implementing Public Policy: An Introduction to the Study of Operational Governance (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)**

Michael Hill and Peter Hupe. London: Sage, 2014. Pp. xv + 231. ISBN 978 1-4462-6683-0.

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Implementing public policy was jointly written by two leading scholars in the field of public and social policy – Michael Hill, the Emeritus Professor of Social Policy of the University of Newcastle, and Peter Hupe, Public Administration Professor of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. Building on the success of the previous two editions of the same title, this book aims to be a state-of-the-art identification of critical issues relating to public administration and governance, including a comprehensive literature review. In its third publication, the book is believed to be the best text book serving as an excellent introduction to public policy theory and practices in the context of new governance. It is not only valuable to students of related majors but also to those who want to better understand the policy-making process and also implications involved in implementation.

The book is composed of nine chapters, starting with introductory remarks that set out the structure, and also highlight how the book differs from previous editions. It progresses through the definition of public policy and what it means for implementation, the top-down and bottom-up approaches that lay out the policy implementation process, and layers in policy processes. The book also aims to synthesize a broad range of sectors including the role of state, linkage between policy framework and governance, and the implementation of research. It concludes with the future of implementation studies before highlighting promising developments to enhance the study of the implementation of public policies.

The first chapter gives attention to some conceptual issues involving the definition of key terms related to public policy and its implementation. It begins with a thorough discussion on how public policy is defined. The authors claim that policy is subjectively defined, thus its definition can vary from one author to another or can depend on a specific aspect of phenomena in the real world. An easy to understand definition is provided by Anderson

who identifies policy as a purposive course of action followed by an actor or group of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern in society. When it comes to public policies, the author refers to those policies developed by government institutions or officials. This review is followed by an illustration of the policy cycle said to consist of three major stages, including meta-policy-making, policy-making and post-policy making. According to this interpretation, there is a total of 18 sub-stages in the policy process. Each stage is concerned with transforming policy intentions into action. This chapter then goes on to discuss policy implementation and its results. It analyzes the causes and consequences of implementation failure and ways to promote implementation success.

Chapter 2 positions implementation in a historical context, and implementation theory is the subject of analysis. The authors believe that policy implementation has emerged since the 1970s, well before textbooks on this topic sought to provide answers. Although the word ‘implementation’ was not often used by writers, the word was normally used to explore the ways in which public administration specialists regarded it as relevant. In this chapter, implementation is defined as to carry out, accomplish, fulfill, produce and complete a policy. Concerns about success of implementation are raised, and the authors suggest that implementation needs to consider the rule of law where citizens should be able to predict the impact resulting from the actions of the state when policies are implemented. This chapter then relates the role of law to democracy which could have an impact on the implementation process. It discusses institutional theory and the distinction between politics and administration by comparing the system in Western countries and the United States. It highlights Woodrow Wilson’s famous essay stating that political interference in the administration is a source of inefficiency and corruption. Woodrow Wilson saw the need to reform the American administration.

The third chapter revisits the definition of implementation and policy process and formation. The majority of this chapter represents brief views of key authors of different nationalities such as American and British, on the top-down and bottom-up approaches and then points out ways in which these authors differ from each other. Donald Van Meter and Carl Van Horn, said to be the proponents of the top-down approach, see implementation as a process that starts from an initial policy decision and then encompasses those actions by public and private individuals. In contrast, Michael Lipsky, who is believed to be the father of the bottom-up perspective, argues that

implementation of policy is really about street-level workers, including the expectations of people at local levels. He believes that the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively become the public policies they carry out. Authors in this chapter argue that the right approach to policy formation and implementation might depend on issues intended to be addressed.

Chapter 4 delves into implementation theory and the search for a linkage between the top-down and bottom-up approaches to ensure successful implementation of public policies. Scholars claim that both approaches play important roles in the implementation process, but a synthesis between the two is critical. Richard Elmore suggests adopting an open-minded or a mixed method to achieve a satisfactory outcome. It is stressed that without citizens' trust in the institutions responsible for implementing public policies, implementation is likely to fail. This chapter goes on to discuss layers in the policy process by focusing on federalism in the US government, widening networks, promoting decentralization and non-hierarchical models.

In chapter 5, the authors position implementation theory in its societal context by focusing on developments in both the practice and study of public administration. It starts by giving a historical account of a period of more than 60 years following the Second World War on the relations between the study of implementation and the practice of public administration. It places an emphasis on developments in the United States, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands where three phases of implementation are identified. The first is the era of great expectations from society that leads to a broad intervention from the government, originated in the 1930s. The second is the period of government retrenchment, looking at itself as being a business corporation, that took place between the 1980s and 1990s. The last section is the current phase, where governments in various countries have become more aware of their own role (neo-interventionism). This chapter concludes that the governments in the Western world have become more selective in the way they are proceeding with policy implementation. This chapter ends by exploring the linkage between the study of implementation and the practice of public administration and presenting the shifts in the practice of public administration in paradigm.

Chapter 6 reassesses the stages model of the policy process by linking them to a governance framework. This chapter emphasizes that policy process is

about problem identification, leading to agenda formation and proposals for a solution, and the way in which policy implementation will put the chosen solution into effect. These processes will be accompanied by policy evaluation for monitoring the results. However, when conceived as part of governance, the authors argue that the stage model was not so much a model; instead it is a general analytical framework, with shortcomings. The chapter then discusses alternative frameworks developed by authors from contrasting scholarly backgrounds for analyzing public policies and addressing consequences of policy actions carried out by government bodies. Among those, the authors favor two frameworks – *institutional analysis* and *development framework* as formulated by Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues. This chapter also identifies *aggregated framework* as proposed by Lynn, Heinrich and Hill. The earlier definitions focus on collective decisions and mechanisms made by officials and citizens to determine, enforce or alter actions authorized within institutional arrangements, while the later differentiate stake relationships, such as between citizens' preferences and legislative choice. The authors consider these frameworks to be the most developed.

Chapter 7 gives attention to undertaking implementation research that is particularly pertinent for those who want to know about how implementation can be studied. It starts with some reflections on the difficulties in defining exactly what is meant by studies of implementation discussed in the second chapter, before discussing the relationship between studying implementation and studying evaluation and distinguishing policy formation and implementation. The authors then explore challenges that researchers of implementation face, including dealing with multiplicity of layers in the policy processes, specifying inter-organizational relationships, differentiating ways to manage implementation within single organizations, and identifying the impact of the response by those affected by a policy. The chapter ends with a discussion on issues about quantitative and qualitative methods in implementation research.

Chapter 8 moves from prescriptive approaches to focus on implementation in practice and relate this to governance. The authors claim that policy implementation is part of governance that involves activities in relation to public tasks implied by directional decisions on those tasks. It explores how governance is being practiced, and also circumstances that practitioners in public administration need to deal with as contexts of action. From there, the authors go on to discuss three modes of governance such as governance by

*authority, transaction* and *persuasion* for implementation. The first refers to making directive decisions, and the delivery of products and services is seen as having exclusive character or in monopoly decisions. The second emphasizes frameworks that other actors can perform, while the last mode focuses on joint efforts between government and other actors in society. The appropriateness of applying any of the modes depends largely on the contexts in which practitioners of public administration are acting. The chapter suggests that an understanding of institutional contexts and policy objectives are vital in policy implementation.

In the final chapter, titled *The Future of Implementation Studies*, the authors go back to discuss the objective of studying implementation, research implementation and operational government. The authors examine some promising developments that can be judged as enhancing the study of implementation of public policies, for example studies of governance performance and measuring the results of government action. In their conclusion, Hill & Hupe encourage researchers to think about descriptive perspective on policy-making – how it proceeds and how it can be improved.

Overall, this book offers a concise delineation of some 60 years of implementation research, summarizing the authors' own previous research and also combining with major insights of other authors from diverse background who discuss the implementation concept, alternative definitions and framework of implementation policies, theories of implementation and formulation of public policies.

Compared to the previous editions of Michael Hill and Peter Hupe on this particular subject, this latest edition seems to be more interesting because it links implementation theory to the study of governance. I particularly found Chapter 1 to 6 very useful because the authors offer useful explanations about what governance means for implementing public policies, the state of the art in implementation studies and the top-down/bottom-up approach, policy implementation theories and models of interactions in governance frameworks, and a comprehensive discussion on the role of the state. Chapters 7 and 8, however, are overwhelmed with too many details of how we research implementation and how we implement research. While I was expecting to read the authors' views on how governance theories can successfully be applied to implementation of public policy in their final chapter, Hill and Hupe unfortunately go back to discuss the distinction between governance and implementation.

However, even so, I am not disappointed with the work of Hill and Hupe. Instead, I still find the book very informative, which I will refer to in my future studies and research on implementation of public policies. The book is a valuable resource that provides a good idea of what implementation has been and will be about. I am looking forward to learning more from Hill and Hupe on how operational governance can be distinguished from other models of governance and how the bottom-up approach can successfully be implemented when the top-level players or politicians do not offer support.