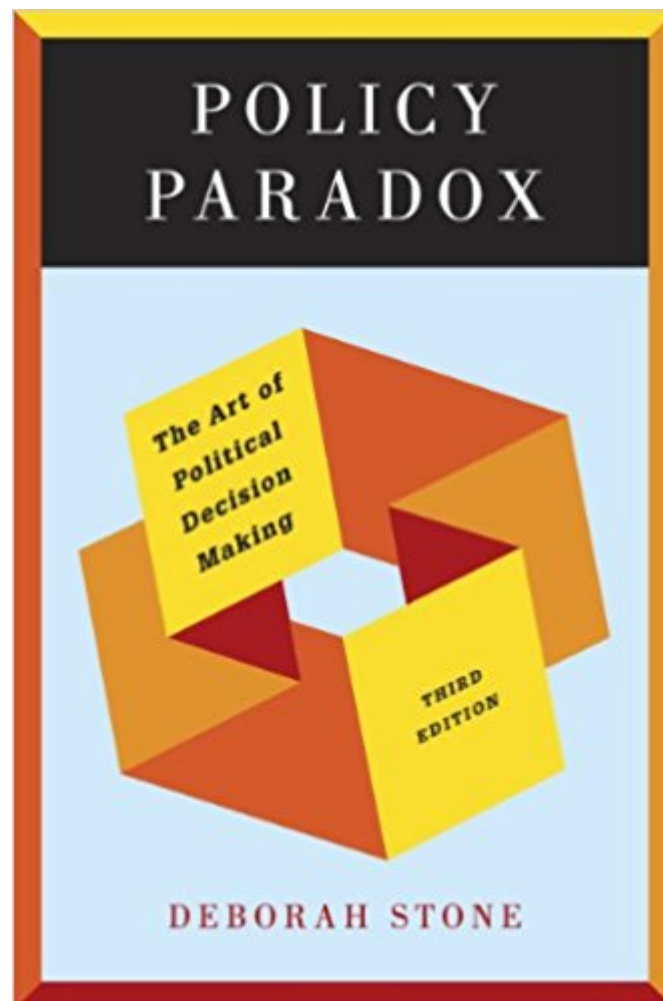




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# Policy Paradox: The Art Of Political Decision Making (Third Edition)



## Synopsis

The most accessible policy text available. Policy making is a political struggle over values and ideas. By exposing the paradoxes that underlie even seemingly straightforward policy decisions, Policy Paradox shows students that politics cannot be cleansed from the process in favor of “rationality.” Author Deborah Stone has fully revised and updated this popular text, which now includes many paradoxes that have arisen since September 11. Examples throughout the book have been updated, and the prose has been streamlined to make a great read even better.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Deborah Stone holds appointments as Research Professor of Government at Dartmouth College and Honorary Professor of Political Science at Aarhus University in Denmark. She has taught in undergraduate and graduate programs at Brandeis, MIT, Yale, Tulane, and Duke, as well as in universities worldwide where Policy Paradox is used.

This is a fascinating and thought provoking book on political decision making. I have used it as a text in my doctoral course on policy analysis for nearly two decades. She juxtaposes two models in this book. (1) The rationality project. This is where we use rational approaches to policy making, including economic analysis. The idea is to use neutral and objective data to make the best policy decision possible. The model for society and its functioning is the market, with its emphasis on self-interest and rational calculation. (2) On the other hand, she points out that this does not

describe the political world. Here (see the chart on page 35), we see that community is important (not just self-interest), altruism has a role to play, cooperation and competition coexist, and so on. Politics is an arena where there is contestation over facts, values, even numbers. There is no objective, neutral evaluation of facts. The very nature of the economic, rational approach is contested. The volume explores the debates between the political and rational models in such arenas as the goals for society, the nature of deciding on which problems should be addressed, and how solutions are addressed. This is a thought-provoking work that will leave readers thinking about the nature of policy making and what is at stake.

This book is a classic for good reason. It lays out concepts clearly, intelligently, and convincingly, all while sounding conversational and not overly technical, as is a pitfall of many academic publications. Stone's frameworks are just that--frameworks--and are useful for structuring one's analysis of policy, while also recognizing that no real world situation fits the frameworks perfectly. My one large critique of Stone is her extremely apparent liberal bias. While the ideas she presents are not inherently liberal or conservative (though one could certainly make the argument that the 'market model' she argues against is a conservative one and the 'polis model' she champions is a liberal one), the examples she draws to illustrate them are biased towards a liberal perspective. Whenever she presents something 'bad' done in a policy situation, it is almost always a Republican or conservative doing it, while liberal ideas and actions are almost always presented as the 'right thing' to do or a compassionate application of policy. Even as a liberal myself, it got a bit grating towards the end of the book. At times in certain chapters it seemed like Stone was soapboxing about an issue, even if that issue was only tangentially relevant to the topic at hand. If you can get past the bias, and perhaps only skim the examples she uses, there is still a lot to get out of this book.

Such a good book! I got it for school, but it is something anyone would enjoy because Stone's writing is pleasant and free of jargon. I learned a lot from this book and it made me reconsider how I think about politics in America.

The author is pretty funny. you will definitely notice it as you are reading. I had to buy this book for a public policy course for grad school. I reference this book when looking for ideas when writing essays.

We only used parts of this book which may have made it seem more confusing than it is. Very smart book but dense.

Deborah Stone makes complicated policy issues easy to understand. Used this book for a public policy course as part of my undergrad, and actually found myself looking forward to weekly readings of the text. I would read this again in my free time.

Best book I've had to read for a class. Highly recommend for those interested in policy analysis, as this is a genuinely enjoyable read.

Must read for anyone working in or even interested in public affairs.

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