

## Cases and Controversies: How Novitiates Are Trained to Be Masters of the Public Policy Universe

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### **Abstract**

*Public policy schools were established 30 years ago to provide analytic and management skills to aspiring policy professionals. A centerpiece of policy management training has been the action-centered teaching case, modeled after the cases long used in business schools. Though other aspects of public management teaching and research have been vigorously debated, little attention has been paid to the content of teaching cases. Taking these texts as a central element in policy student socialization, the authors ask what implicit lessons they convey. A close reading of 10 best-selling cases from the Kennedy School of Government finds the policy world to be the domain of high-level, lone protagonists beset by hostile political forces; collaborative problem-solving is rare, street-level actors insignificant, and historical, social, and institutional contexts of minimal importance. The article discusses the implications of this construction and raises questions about its appropriateness for the training of future public servants. © 2001 by the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

A third of a century ago came the birth announcement of a new field of professional study: public policy.<sup>1</sup> The preceding decade had been a period of high hopes for public life, a time when it was widely believed that government might be capable of designing a "New Society." The founders of this new field were motivated simultaneously by a concern for social problems and by a measure of caution regarding government's ability to address them. In keeping with this perspective, public policy entrepreneurs promised to produce graduates fit to tame and guide the ambitious, socially oriented vision of the sixties.

The curriculum would include extensive training in both quantitative methods and qualitative topics related to policy implementation. Unlike the early field of public administration, which had insisted on maintaining neutrality about both the ends and the political means of government action, public policy would pay explicit attention to the substance of policies as well as the political and leadership dimensions of the policy universe. And rather than equipping students with the tools of a single discipline, producing lawyers, political scientists or economists, the new programs would provide graduates with a kit-bag of tools drawn from all the social sciences, most especially economics and political science. Out of this multiplicity of perspectives,

<sup>1</sup> Our abbreviated history of the field draws on Fleishman (1990), Lynn (1996), and Stokes (1996).

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the founding generation contended, would emerge both a new kind of scholarship to map the complex policy landscape, and a new breed of professionals qualified to work within that landscape. Even as the traditional programs had trained administrators, public policy schools would produce policy analysts and managers.

The early academic leaders of this movement—among them Aaron Wildavsky, Graham Allison, Richard Nelson, Thomas Schelling, and Eugene Bardach—were refugees from traditional disciplines—intellectual border-crossers—and their writing confirmed the promise inherent in transgressing familiar intellectual boundaries. But as the new field took institutional form, a cultural divergence, echoing in some ways the quantitative-qualitative divide within the social sciences, developed.

Economists and statisticians working in public policy generally saw no need to invent a new discipline; they simply wanted to make the tools of their trade more explicitly useful. Situated in policy schools, they engaged in research and teaching that coupled the traditional theoretical models of their disciplines to real-world, data-rich problems.

By contrast, many of the political scientists and lawyers who migrated to public policy were committed to intellectual reinvention. They re-christened their territory “public management,” to distinguish it from public administration, and went about constructing a new kind of teaching and research. Banished was instruction in the classics of politics, the sustenance of government departments. Rarely would public policy students read David Truman’s account of interest group politics, Robert Dahl’s polyarchy, Philip Selznick’s cooptation, or Charles Lindblom’s incrementalism. Gone as well were the curricular staples of traditional public administration programs, such as personnel administration, applied political science, and accounting. The public policy professoriate sought not to train mid-level mandarins but to mold public leaders. Their pedagogy (and for the generation that came after the founders, the new management scholarship as well) became mainly problem-centered rather than idea-centered; inductive rather than deductive; focused more on the “figure” of the public leader than the “ground” of organizations and politics (Lynn, 1996).

A centerpiece of this orientation is the “teaching case.” Following the business school model, situations drawn from life confront students with the necessity of making tough decisions.<sup>2</sup> In business-school cases, the plant manager, division head, or CEO must select a product line, choose among various marketing strategies, or draft the most effective design for operations. In the public sector counterparts of these cases, students are placed in the role of public officials facing challenges. The newly appointed head of a troubled juvenile justice agency must redefine its mission; a Secretary of State tries to thwart a potentially disastrous policy favored by the President; a police chief seeks to reform an excessively aggressive department. Cases are either “action-forcing,” that is, they lead up to the point at which the official, like the judge in a lawsuit (the prototypical “case or controversy”), makes a critical decision; or “retrospective,” that is, completed decisions are set out for analysis and critique. As with business students who learn the tricks of their trade by reading about the “new Coke” or Southwest Airlines’ business plan, policy students are supposed to develop analytical and managerial insights through reading and discussing public-sector narratives.

The pedagogical argument for the case method as a teaching strategy is straightforward and persuasive: It grounds teaching in real situations characterized by complexity and ambiguity, it links analysis and action, and it engages the students, requiring their active participation in the learning process (Barnes,

<sup>2</sup>To varying degrees, professional schools in general include cases as part of their training. What distinguishes public policy and business (and also law, which involves a different kind of case) is the primacy of the case in basic training.

Christensen, and Hansen, 1994). In class discussions, students must declare the course of action they favor for the protagonist of the case, explaining and defending their recommendations with reference to the relevant circumstances.

Not all case-based teaching is the same, however; different approaches to cases in public management training reflect differing assumptions about how best to advance the field. Beyond serving as illustrations of lessons (a use that does not qualify as “case-based” teaching), cases can be employed pedagogically in three ways: as a form of exercise or practice in which a kind of managerial intuition is developed; for inductive theory-building, in which cases are seen as providing data about what works and what does not work in the world; and as a way to apply and test existing theory. In the debate the public management professoriate is now waging, this last approach is favored by those who believe that the field should develop more as a science than as art, who argue that the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of “best-practice” research, and that formal, empirically testable theories should be inserted into the discourse (Lynn 1994, 1996; for comments on Lynn see Bardach, 1994; Fountain, 1994; Weiss, 1994). Conversely, there are those who insist that management can never be scientific and that practical skill-building and inductive reasoning are more suitable and realistic approaches to developing the field. “Case-analysis research,” writes a leading advocate of this approach, “is designed to show what can work—to help us discover what combinations and permutations of managerial tactics, approaches, strategies, concepts, and ideas can help managers in different situations produce useful results” (Behn, 1993, p. 40).

Surprisingly, though, none of the partisans in this vigorous debate has paid much attention to the substance of the cases themselves, the messages they carry about the policy world, and the way these implicit lessons shape the development of policy professionals.<sup>3</sup> Countless studies of other educational settings have demonstrated that schooling develops not only technical expertise but also cultural proficiency as novices are socialized into the relevant community. School children are trained to enter the larger society; vocational trainees learn the folkways of their chosen occupation (Becker, 1961; Granfield, 1992; Van Maanen, 1983; Willis, 1977). Often the socialization process involves a kind of hidden curriculum—lessons that, while never formally specified, are nonetheless learned by students during their days in school (Jackson, 1968).

Because cases play such a pivotal role in policy training, if one is to understand the values of the new generation of public servants it makes sense to examine the content of those cases.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, those of us who teach policy cases (as do the authors) should be alert to the possible implicit messages of our material. Class discussion develops from the case; the text provides a framework, a common context, and a set of boundaries for the lessons of the classroom. When students are exposed to a regular diet of these cases, what are they learning? How is the world of the policy analyst or manager constructed: What are its social relationships, institutional influences, and history? What kinds of data are central to the decisionmaking task, and how are these obtained? And what theories of public action do the cases tacitly embrace?

This article reads a sample of public policy cases as texts, in much the same way as one would unpack a legal opinion, study a poem, or interpret a passage from the Bible (Miles,

<sup>3</sup> There have been attempts to define the formal qualities of a good case—for example, that it be brief, generalizable in its lessons, decision-forcing and conflict-provoking (Robyn, 1986).

<sup>4</sup> A more extensive study of the training and socialization of policy students is being conducted by one of the authors. Chetkovich is analyzing longitudinal data on two classes of policy students (one at KSG and one at the Goldman School of Public Policy) gathered through periodic surveys and in-depth interviews.

1995; Vendler, 1997). Selection of the primary sample was determined by the preferences of the market: The article focuses on the 10 best-selling public management and policy cases for the 1997-1998 academic year from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government (KSG).<sup>5</sup> A reading of this particular sample will reveal messages carried by the most popular texts—the primary purpose of this article. But this reading will not indicate whether such messages are characteristic only of the market's preferences (the best-sellers) or of teaching cases more generally, a concern relevant to those using cases in the classroom. The question of how much the form itself dictates content in cases is not one this article can answer definitively, but it is possible to assess whether the lessons of the most popular cases are highly unusual. To explore this question, an additional sample of 10 randomly selected cases was drawn from the same program and read in the same manner; the results of this review are presented after discussion of the primary sample.

Each of the cases has been read with a common set of questions in mind.<sup>6</sup> Some focus on the specifics of the narrative: Who are the principal actors? What is the conflict or controversy? What is the story line? What is the central decision? What are the objectives of the decisionmaker and other actors? What constraints or opportunities are present in the decisionmaker's environment? What are the relevant social structures, institutional arrangements, and historical factors?

Other aspects of the analysis look beneath the surface of the story. What perspective is the reader encouraged to adopt? Is the aspiration of "neutrality" (Kennedy and Scott, 1985) realized in practice? What messages are conveyed, implicitly as well as explicitly, in the stories themselves and in their presentation? What types of data are included or omitted? What is the "theory" of the case?<sup>7</sup> What general class of situations or problems does the case reflect? And what understandings of the effective public policy actor can be gleaned from it?

The reading uncovers a disquieting set of lessons. The policy world is depicted as a domain where high-ranking officials, usually organizational outsiders, deal with narrowly constructed policy problems. Historical and social context are of limited relevance. Action is individualized rather than socially embedded, and conflict is more common than collaboration. Lone heroes get by with little help or input from politicians, the public, or organizational subordinates. Aimed at an audience of aspiring public servants, these are instructions worth scrutinizing.

<sup>5</sup>Although other programs and individuals do produce cases, the Kennedy School's Case Program enjoys a near-monopoly in the field. The Program has produced more than 1800 cases, which it markets both internally and to those at other institutions. "Whether you're interested in public health or public housing," the web-site asserts, "privatization, re-engineering, or innovation in government, these and dozens of other sector-related topics are treated in a readable but rigorous way by Kennedy School case studies." Because internal Kennedy School usage is heavily dominated by large core courses and can shift dramatically from year to year as a case is chosen or dropped by the core instructors, this article looks at the "best-sellers" as defined by external sales figures. Among these cases, one, the *Ellen Schall* case, was also among the top ten in internal distribution as well, and *Policewoman* was heavily used within the School. Although cases are available from other sources, including the Internet-accessible "Electronic Hallway," the Kennedy School's older and larger program dominates the current market. A recent advertising mailer describes the School's Case Program as "the world's largest producer and repository of case studies designed for teaching about how government works, how public policy is made, and how nonprofit organizations operate."

<sup>6</sup>These questions are drawn in part from a Kennedy School Case Program teaching note that advises students on how to read cases (Gómez-Ibañez and Kalt, 1986).

<sup>7</sup>It is interesting to note the use of the word "theory" in the context of cases themselves. Robyn's teaching note "What Makes a Good Case?" cites a fellow faculty member who "in considering the pedagogic value of a potential case, applies the following rule: 'Every case needs a theory.'" As an example, she writes, a case on the rebuilding of Central Park might offer the following "theory": "Public managers need to think differently about public goods that are largely passive or static—parks and monuments being two examples—than about the more common examples, such as police and fire protection, where production is active." (Robyn, 1986, p. 1)

## THE CASES

A typical case begins with an introduction that launches the reader into the heart of the problem; a bit of background follows; then a narrative of events. Almost all cases are presented in the form of a story detailing the actions of the protagonist to the point of denouement. The best-selling cases range in length from five to 24 double-spaced typed pages, with occasional appendices.<sup>8</sup>

Those cases include:

*Ethical Problems in Public Careers: Lying* (1980) is a collection of 10 mini-cases—some based on actual events, some hypothetical—each of which poses a problem in which the protagonist must choose between clear truth-telling with undesirable consequences and untruthful behavior that will result in some personal or public policy gain.

*A Policewoman's (Non)Use of Deadly Force* (1991) tells a story within a story. The larger context is the gender integration of the Houston Police Department, and the contrast between the department's aggressive, even brutal, traditional style of policing with the less confrontational style of the female newcomers. The smaller story is that of a policewoman who gets drawn into a life-and-death struggle with a suspect and ultimately becomes the first woman HPD officer to shoot (and kill) a suspect.

*Two Oaths of Richard Helms* (1983) portrays the former CIA director who confronts the choice between upholding his oath of secrecy to the CIA by not revealing aspects of covert U.S. operations in Chile, and giving full, truthful testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in hearings related to his confirmation as ambassador to Iran.

*Walking a Fine Line: Qualifications and Equal Opportunity in the Charlotte Fire Department* (1991) describes the issues confronting Charlotte, North Carolina's public managers and personnel analysts when they must address the challenge of gender integration in the city's fire department.

*Telling the Boss He's Wrong: George Shultz and Iran/Contra* (1994) portrays Secretary of State George Shultz's strong but ultimately ineffective opposition to the Reagan Administration's plan to exchange arms for hostages with Iran.

*Improper Advances: Nixon, Ehrlichman, and the Secretary of the Army* (1983) features an Army promotion board resisting White House pressure to place a particular candidate's name on an upcoming promotion list.

*George Shultz and the Polygraph Test* (1986) relates Secretary of State George Shultz's threatened resignation over a policy proposal to expand the use of polygraph testing on federal employees with access to classified information.

*Lebanon and the Intelligence Community* (1988) shows the unfolding of an ill-fated U.S. policy toward Lebanon at a time when U.S. intelligence analysts were highly

<sup>8</sup> This length is in keeping with the Case Program's belief in brevity. "For students fully to see the general relevance of a case, the class discussion must evolve to a high enough level of abstraction to address principles of management or analysis. Idiosyncratic facts can impede that process . . . Similarly, too many facts can have that effect by keeping the discussion grounded in the particulars. For this reason above all, brevity is desirable." (Robyn, 1986, p. 4).

critical of the merits of the policy, raising questions about the relationship between analysis and policy-making.

*Ellen Schall and the Department of Juvenile Justice* (1987) outlines the operational and strategic challenges facing the new manager of a troubled public agency in New York City.

*Park Plaza (A)*<sup>9</sup> (1975) depicts Massachusetts housing official Miles Mahoney resisting a proposed redevelopment in the city of Boston on the advice of his analytic staff. When the project gains strong political support, Mahoney's boss Governor Sargent ultimately feels compelled to support it.

## THE WORLD ACCORDING TO KSG PUBLIC POLICY CASES

### Who Are the Main Players on the Policy Stage?

The protagonists—almost invariably, they are heroes—are the characters with whom the reader most readily identifies and whose roles are adopted by students during class discussions. In general, they are high-ranking officials.<sup>10</sup> Among the nine regular-length cases, five have a federal-level focus that includes U.S. Presidents (four cases), cabinet secretaries or directors of federal agencies (five cases), other White House advisors (three cases), high-level diplomats (one case), U.S. Senators (one case), brigadier generals (one case), and professional analysts (one case). The one case involving state-level actors features a governor, gubernatorial advisors, and a state agency head; other actors include a mayor, local agency officials, and highly visible private actors. The remaining three full-length cases are situated at the city level, but these also emphasize powerful actors: all involve agency heads, and in two cases it is the agency head with whom the reader primarily identifies. In only three cases (two local, one federal) do mid-level managers or analysts figure prominently, and they mostly go unnamed. Just one case features a street-level bureaucrat. The ethical mini-cases are similar in their tilt toward powerful roles, with only three cases featuring grass-roots advocates, staff aides, or analysts.<sup>11</sup> (See Appendix, Table 1 for a tabulation of various characteristics by case.)

The cases depict a world run almost entirely by white men. Only two of the nine full cases feature female actors; all other principal characters in these cases are male. All the protagonists are either known to be white or are of unspecified racial background.

<sup>9</sup> The *Park Plaza* case in its entirety includes (A), (B) and (C) parts. These are sold separately, however, and only the (A) case appears among the top-ten sellers, with almost five times as many sales as either (B) or (C). *Park Plaza* is also the only case not copyrighted by Harvard; it was written by Professor Colin Diver, then at Boston University, now at the University of Pennsylvania. Diver has also taught at the Kennedy School.

<sup>10</sup> This focus typifies the perspective of public policy's management orientation. "In contrast to public administration's focus on the functions and values of the permanent government, teachers and scholars in the public policy community have chosen to concentrate on the contributions to public policy achievement of a transitory cast of executives and their assistants who hold high-level appointments for limited periods and are usually drawn from other professions..." (Lynn, 1996, p. 55).

<sup>11</sup> It should also be noted that all of the cases have an American focus. In recognition of the need to train policy analysts and managers to work in a global environment, the KSG Case Program is now producing more cases set outside the United States, but it may be some time before such cases are widely used.

In the ten mini-cases (*Lying*), only one features a woman (a grass-roots advocate) and all actors are either known to be white or of unspecified race.<sup>12</sup>

In this policy universe, decisions are made only by individuals acting as individuals. None of the cases depicts a team of people working together to accomplish a task or solve a problem. If multiple actors are featured, they are usually in conflict or tension rather than in active collaboration; the exceptions are quasi-conspiracies or interest groups promoting ill-advised policies. Positions are often represented by individuals rather than groups. *Shultz and Iran/Contra*, told as a story of disagreement among individual policymakers, illustrates the common focus on personalities:

President Reagan's national security advisor came to him with a bold proposal. Robert McFarlane advocated . . . selling arms to . . . Iran, on the understanding the Iranians would use their influence to secure the release of U.S. hostages. . . . Reagan was enthusiastic. . . . Other administration leaders also responded warmly to the idea, from CIA director William Casey to chief of staff Donald Regan. But within the inner circle there was a naysayer. Secretary of State George Shultz . . . thought the proposal outrageous.

In keeping with the individualistic view of policy activity, none of the cases depicts actors working with institutions. Protagonists either operate independently of their agencies or take on the role of change-agent. As an example of the independent outsider, consider George Shultz, the hero in two cases. Shultz entered government in 1969 as President Nixon's Secretary of Labor at age 65; he had been Dean of the University of Chicago Business School. One year later he became Director of the Bureau of the Budget, a position he held for two years; then Secretary of the Treasury for two years. He returned to private industry and academia for eight years, then reentered government in 1982 as Secretary of State. Over the course of his career, Shultz spent far more time outside than inside government, and when a public official, he served only at the highest ranks.

Other case protagonists are more involved in their organizations but usually in the role of newcomer brought in to bail out a failing institution. Ellen Schall arrives as "the mayor's choice" to take over and improve the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice, "an agency in upheaval," where she has "braced herself for a rocky start." Among her early moves is the hiring of an outside consultant needed "to help her think through the challenges of taking on a leadership position." Interestingly, Schall worries that if she becomes too "involved" in the agency's major field operation, Spofford Juvenile Center, she "could get dragged in" and "never be able to pull out and look at the larger issues." The dangers of institutional involvement are summarized by Schall's hand-picked deputy commissioner, who cites the "theory in New York City government that you should pick two or three things, do them, and get out. And that's how you make your reputation and your name."

Similarly, gubernatorial appointee Miles Mahoney signs on with the intent of reinvigorating the Massachusetts Department of Community Affairs. "If the agency's charter impressed Mahoney, its past performance did not," and "his first month was spent 'trying to make some early-up organizational changes to make the agency more administrable.'" Elizabeth Watson is promoted from within to head the Houston Police Department, but as a woman she is a markedly nontraditional member—"the first woman police chief in the history of the department"—and the protégé of predecessor Lee Brown, "a black man and an outsider" who has departed Houston to become New York City's police commissioner. In the Charlotte,

<sup>12</sup> Whereas the KSG Case Program has made a stronger effort in recent years to increase the proportion of cases featuring women, people of color, and issues relating to diversity, such cases are not well represented among the current best sellers.

North Carolina Fire Department's efforts to address the problem of integration, the primary actor is not even a fire official but a city personnel analyst.

Whereas *Lebanon* is a departure from the other cases insofar as it has no central protagonist, its institutional arrangements are also treated as constraints, not assets. According to standard operating procedures, the CIA's intelligence analysts offer their work to policymakers in the form of "carefully defined intelligence products," from the most basic, factually oriented "talking points" to the "prestige art forms," the "estimates" that emphasized analysis and interpretation rather than simple reporting. In the case, policymakers adopt a course of action that most analysts consider woefully ill-conceived, but the analysts are institutionally constrained from giving voice to their concerns. In a section entitled, "Waiting for the Phone to Ring: A Question of Art Forms," the case explains that the "intelligence community very much wanted to spell out its case, and waited eagerly for (policymakers) . . . to request a SNIE (Special National Intelligence Estimate). It waited, as time went by, in increasing frustration." In this story, both policymakers and analysts are undone by their own institutional norms.

What does the policy student take away from the ways in which actors are presented and action is framed? Readers are placed in the position of high-level actors—positions that few of them will ever attain—who face problems that differ from what most policy school graduates are likely to confront. By contrast, the positions the students will most likely occupy—mid-level analysts or managers—are cast in shadow, implicitly denigrated. To the extent that these characters are present at all, they are usually nameless and are rarely depicted as having anything important to contribute. To a student beginning to form career expectations, the message would seem to be that in the public sector, only high-level positions—usually filled by political appointees or elected office-holders—are worth pursuing.

A top-down, or outside-in, model of action predominates in these cases. Lower-level organizational members rarely have any significant influence, unless it is to undermine agency performance; indeed, they are seldom mentioned even as useful sources of knowledge. *Ellen Schall* is typical. In the Department of Juvenile Justice, 540 employees work in the field and 70 in central administration, but the field personnel's presence in the case is indirect (for that matter, only a handful of administrators are heard from). The line workers' resistance to change is alluded to in managers' comments, but no line staff members themselves are named or quoted. In *Fine Line*, the reader learns nothing from line firefighters and sees only a handful of quotations from uniformed officers in the department. All information in the case comes from the department's physical fitness coordinator, a city personnel analyst, and other outside commentators, including media sources.

An important exception to this eclipsing of lower-level staff members is *Policewoman*. In that case, a significant portion of the narrative is set at the street level, translating abstract concerns into meaningful if difficult reality.<sup>13</sup> At one level, the case concerns such issues as when police should be authorized to use deadly force and how the Houston Police Department's hyper-aggressive style can be moderated. But at the heart of the story is a policewoman's violent encounter with a suspect she eventually kills, and this episode is told largely in her own words. In addition, her story is accompanied by a preamble that relates the experience of other women officers in the Houston Police Department—again, with much of the reporting in the women's own voices. These details remind readers of the dangerous, unpredictable, and emotional nature of police work, and also provide students with the perspective of

<sup>13</sup> The case is also unusual in that it was developed out of the personal experience of a Kennedy School mid-career student.



unwanted newcomers (women, in this case) entering an insular occupational community. Such factors are relevant not only to those on the street level, but to those interested in managing organizational change. Yet in all these respects the case stands in stark contrast in many ways to the other best-selling cases.

### WHAT'S THE CONTROVERSY?

Somewhat surprisingly, none of these cases is clearly framed as either a conflict about the substance of policy (should we restructure public schools or issue vouchers?) or a definition of the public interest (is public education essential for a democratic community?).<sup>14</sup> Most cases pivot on an individual facing an ethical dilemma or a tension between personal ethics and politics. Three cases involve organizational performance problems in which tension exists between the new manager and the old guard staff, between external political demands and organizational effectiveness or within the organizational mission itself. The remaining case concerns the divergence between politically motivated policymakers and knowledgeable analysts. Most striking overall is the negative role usually assigned to politics, and the pitting of politics against analysis. The *polis* (Stone, 1997, p. 32) is often absent altogether.

A prominent example of the divide between analysis and politics is *Park Plaza (A)*, in which protagonist Miles Mahoney, an outspoken and progressive housing activist, takes over the directionless Massachusetts Department of Community Affairs (DCA). When a redevelopment plan for the Park Plaza area in Boston is submitted for DCA review, Mahoney's staff finds it seriously inadequate and after consulting Governor Francis Sargent's staff, Mahoney rejects the proposal. Those interested in having it go forward protest loudly and Mahoney is urged to work with these local interests to develop a satisfactory plan. As Mahoney sees things, months of meetings produce no significant change in the proposal; however, the Governor eventually announces that the revised submission meets his concerns. Mahoney is left with the choice of continuing to reject the plan "on the merits"<sup>15</sup>—which likely means being overruled by the Governor and forced out of his position—or going along with the prevailing political sentiment. Though subsequent segments of this case, the separately distributed and much less widely used parts B and C, provide the reader with more of the Governor's perspective and a greater appreciation for political considerations, the A case focuses on Mahoney, and where an actor is quoted at any length, it is almost always Mahoney or his executive assistant Harry Spence. The dominance of his perspective tends to frame the conflict as one of politics versus merit, as illustrated by the following comment from Spence about Al Kramer, the Governor's chief policy advisor:

He didn't take positions on the merits of the thing. That was one of the things that always disturbed Miles. . . . There was never an argument that the project had great merit or that Miles' actual findings weren't the right ones if one really came down to making a proper judgment on it. It was: "Miles, do you really have to be such a Puritan about it? Can't you really be more flexible about this thing?"

Even with the more sympathetic perspective on political concerns in the parts B and C, the central tension sets politics against analytics.

<sup>14</sup> A case like *Policewoman* lends itself to the latter discussion and other cases might be used to explore such questions. The fact that a case is not *framed* as a choice between substantive policy options, competing public values, or alternative definitions of the public interest does not mean it cannot be used in such a discussion, but it does mean there is little reason to choose the case for this application, and it may be less useful than some alternative text.

<sup>15</sup> This phrase appears in the Cae Catalog's case description.

The same tension drives *Lebanon*, where an important underlying premise is that policymaking and analysis are radically different activities. In this case, the United States adopts an ambitious and, in hindsight, unrealistic policy in strife-torn Lebanon, one that entails exposing U.S. troops to needless risk. Intelligence analysts have strong and nearly unanimous reservations about the assumptions underlying the policy, but because of the procedures and norms that separate analysis from policymaking, they lack a clear opportunity to express their views. When the analysts finally provide their critique, the policymakers angrily dismiss it as irrelevant to their concerns. Toward the end of the case, a frustrated policymaker complains about the intelligence estimate:

It was not their job to say Assad couldn't be swayed. . . . It was their job to analyze what might sway him, that he has vulnerabilities and here's what they are, and what it will cost. . . .

By contrast, an analyst expresses the following view of his role:

If somebody asks me something, and I have the information to come to a position, then that's what they're going to hear. . . . I don't give a shit if it's "helpful." If they don't want to know the answer they shouldn't have asked the question.

In retrospect, both sides point fingers over their communication problems, but in light of the story's tragic conclusion (the fatal bombing of a Marine barracks), the policymakers' choices appear misguided and the analysts' views correct.

*Fine Line* revolves around the tension between meeting political demands for gender integration, and maintaining organizational effectiveness. Congressional passage of anti-discrimination measures, the case asserts, has "created pressure for all public sector employers to hire women and minorities." City officials in Charlotte, North Carolina, reacted by moving to increase hiring of men of color in the Fire Department (the city is already under court order to do so in the Police Department) and recruiting the city's first female firefighters. Providing opportunities for women is a task the department approaches "with trepidation," as "not only did city administrators have to devise an approach that would keep the fire department running smoothly, they had to navigate through a legal minefield. . . ." Personnel analyst Art Brown feels an "obligation to go out and aggressively recruit" women, while those in the Fire Department are wondering, "How far is this going to go?" Chief Luther Fincher explains that "they see that you can absorb a certain number of folks that, in their eyes, maybe aren't the best qualified to do this, but how far—and how actively—are you going to go with this?" The case begins and ends with questions about the long-term effects of gender integration, which has resulted from politics, on fire-fighting effectiveness.

Four cases pit a lone, principled protagonist against a misguided political superior or a charged political environment. In the two *Shultz* cases, the right-minded Secretary of State opposes President Reagan's ill-advised actions. In the *Polygraph* case, Shultz denounces a proposal to increase random polygraph testing of government employees, but supporters of the policy prevail. When Shultz then threatens to resign, saying, "the minute . . . I am told that I'm not trusted is the day that I leave," Reagan backs down. In *Iran/Contra*, Shultz represents the unheeded voice of reason opposing the Reagan Administration's arms-for-hostage plan. In Shultz's view, "President Reagan and Vice President Bush, along with Casey, Meese, Regan, and Poindexter; 'all had one opinion and I had a different one and Cap [Weinberger] shared it.'" After the activity is publicly revealed, Shultz is criticized for failing to stop it, but the wisdom of his opposition is clearly validated.

In a similar vein, *Improper Advances* tells of an Army general's refusal to alter a promotions list in accord with political pressure. Says Brigadier General Smith, "I was working . . . the ethical line. I was working the line of the necessity to keep promotion boards unsullied by political interference and I was working the line of the necessity to hold the clear distinction between the political and the military in our society, and I thought that that's better guarded if you don't have a politicized leadership."

One might not expect a case about a public official lying to Congress to be written in a manner that conveys this sense of the principled protagonist besieged by political authorities. In fact, however, the dilemma in *Helms* is framed in just this way. In congressional hearings on his proposed ambassadorial appointment, former CIA director Richard Helms is asked whether the agency tried to overthrow the government of Chile and if it had passed money to the opponents of the Chilean regime. Helms' negative responses are inconsistent with the facts of CIA activities, and therefore perjury. "Nevertheless," the case states, "Helms' decision to withhold information . . . is defended not only by Helms himself but also by the vast majority of CIA members, Senator Eugene McCarthy, and many members of the national press." The case points out that Helms was bound in part by his CIA oath of secrecy, and though "it may be argued that on a strictly legal basis Helms' oath to the Committee should have taken precedence . . . , [f]rom Helms' perspective . . . the question of conflicting oaths is more complex than strictly legal interpretation would suggest." The case outlines the pros and cons of his various options and concludes that, "given his doubts about (Senator) Church's willingness to maintain confidentiality, full and accurate testimony . . . would have constituted an act of disclosure that the Senate itself had yet formally to sanction." Helms' conviction on a misdemeanor charge is described by his attorney as "a badge of honor"; a *Washington Post* editorial is cited for the proposition that Helms' choice to "remain faithful to his commitment to the CIA at the expense of his obligation to a committee of the Congress does not diminish our estimate of him as an honorable man."

As with *Helms*, a central proposition of the mini-cases in *Lying* is that there will be times when deceiving a public audience or elected decisionmaker is appropriate. Several of the mini-cases depict a policy protagonist confronting a situation in which full truth-telling is likely to lead to a poor policy outcome because the elected decisionmaker or the public will misinterpret or misuse what is said. For example, in "Miller and furloughs," a public manager committed to the deinstitutionalization of juvenile offenders lies to the press about the late return of some furloughed youths, believing that if informed, the public will withdraw its support for the program. In another mini-case, "JFK, the 'deal,' and the denial," the President, seeking to maintain an image of the United States as unyielding in its military posture, misleads the press about the variety of issues negotiated with the Soviets during the Cuban missile crisis. In "Breaking the deadlock," state legislative leaders deceive their colleagues about the effects of a budget bill to ensure its passage and so avoid fiscal chaos.

Following case-writing convention, *Helms* and the mini-cases in *Lying* focus on the "decisionmaker," which in these situations is the deceiver. Those deceived are either absent or relegated to the sidelines, and the liar's perspective dominates the narrative. This construction is particularly unfortunate, given that the costs and benefits of a lie will be estimated very differently by those telling it versus those deceived by it. Adopting the deceiver's perspective—or simply ignoring the perspective of those deceived—makes it easier to defend the practice of lying.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Philosopher Sissela Bok emphasizes this point. "The perspective of the liar is paramount in all . . . decisions to tell 'noble' lies," she writes (Bok, 1989, p. 168). Public officials can come up with many seemingly reasonable arguments for deception. However, "if we assume the perspective of the deceived—those who experience the consequences of government deception—such arguments are not persuasive." (Bok, 1989, p. 169). She argues strongly that the test to justify deception should be difficult to pass.

It is a troubling characteristic of these and other cases that although the protagonists face choices that carry important public interest implications, the cases rarely include the public as an active participant. A list of the primary actors and their objectives in *Helms*, for example, suggests a confined, even parochial, drama: Helms is engaged in a sparring match with Senators Symington and Church. He wishes to uphold his oath and safeguard his former agency's secrets, as well as to protect himself from embarrassment, prosecution, and loss of the ambassadorial appointment; Symington and Church are presumably interested in exposing CIA covert operations and embarrassing their political opposition. But in reality this drama is taking place on a world stage. What is the interest of the American public in the outcome? What implications do Helms' choices have for the people? The community has an interest but, in the text of the case, no voice.

Two cases that do include a limited public voice are *Ellen Schall* and *Policewoman*. In *Ellen Schall*, the political environment that surrounds the agency is not so much misguided as divided.<sup>17</sup> The public manager must somehow satisfy constituencies with conflicting expectations for her agency. Child advocates are concerned about the poor treatment of juveniles in detention, while others (not named in the case) want more security. But there are no community-based actors in the case; the public is present only in the form of undifferentiated interest groups such as the "child advocacy community," to which actors in the case make occasional reference. Schall is concerned about her credibility with this group, but she doesn't collaborate with them; rather, she presents herself and her plans in order to "win them over sufficiently so that they would give me some space to work." The story does not pit politics against analytics, but politics remains a problem to be managed.

The only case in which an identified public interest is aligned with the analytic or managerial concerns of the protagonist is *Policewoman*. In response to police violence, Houston citizens bring "their rage . . . to the streets"; local legislators also react in anger, calling for better screening of police applicants and civilian review of violent incidents. The Police Department's former chief, Lee Brown, had attempted unsuccessfully to moderate the department's confrontational style of policing; his protégé, Elizabeth Watson, is continuing the effort. In this story the reformers are not struggling against the citizenry but rather responding to its concerns, trying to improve agency performance. (Brown had instituted a move toward community-oriented policing—though we have almost no details on this; his tenure is a background feature of the case.) Still, no community members are named actors in the case, and we have little sense of the public beyond its reported outrage over police brutality.

Eight of the 10 cases situate analytical and ethical interests on one side of the policy divide and political interests on the other. Public managers or analysts determine what is right without reference to the standards of the broader community or political authorities. If they are skillful, they will manage the political community (including in some cases, their bosses) so that it embraces their conclusions. With the possible exception of *Policewoman*, in no case does the protagonist collaborate with community groups in reaching a decision.

Whereas public policy cases are supposedly decision-forcing, the best-selling cases rarely center on a pivotal decision. Instead, their tension comes from fault lines within the case, conflicts between groups or individuals. Protagonists must either prevail over their opponents or else maneuver their way through a maze of conflicting

<sup>17</sup> This condition probably exists in *Fine Line* as well, but the case contains relatively little data on the attitudes found in the CFD's local community.

interests. Despite the fact that the policy world can be a collaborative environment (Stone, 1997), none of the cases relate stories of cooperation, coalition- or trust-building, or mutual problem-solving. Policy students are implicitly instructed to prepare not for joint effort but for battle or intrigue—against colleagues, public decisionmakers, or the community. They must be prepared to manage politics to achieve their vision of the public good.

### In What Environment Does Decisionmaking Take Place?

The setting for policy decisions is described from the perspective of the protagonist and his associates. It is an “inside baseball” view of the world, one that specifies whether the immediate environment is friendly or hostile to the analyst or manager and his or her agenda, but which pays little attention to broader or subtler social influences. *Helms*, the two *Shultz* cases, and *Improper Advances* can be read as morality plays, with all the action centering on the pivotal players in the drama; indeed, the substantive policy issues in these cases seem almost inconsequential. The mini-cases in *Lying* also minimize or dispense with environmental context. In the remaining cases, the environment is only selectively presented.

*Lebanon* provides an unusually strong sense of the internal institutional environment from the analysts’ perspective, and also offers background on the political situation in Lebanon. However, the case says little about the environment of the policymakers; the reader knows nothing about public sentiment or other sources of information and influence. In a sense, this limitation comports with the fact that the case views the issues from the perspective of intelligence analysts who are cut off, by choice or necessity, from the grubby details of policymaking. But to appreciate fully the interaction between analysts and policymakers would require a more complete understanding of the circumstances of both groups.

A more balanced case is *Park Plaza*, which—because it concerns the problem of analysis without effective political management—explains not only Miles Mahoney’s motives, but the political environment in which his superior, Governor Francis Sargent, is operating. Whereas other cases are written as if there were only a single item on the policymaker’s agenda, *Park Plaza* mentions a noteworthy related issue: Having previously halted some major highway construction, the Governor has angered business and labor groups whose interests will be harmed if the Park Plaza redevelopment proposal is scuttled. This wider view of the Governor’s situation allows a deeper analysis of Mahoney’s circumstances; it supports a discussion of the divergence between the two men that includes factors beyond personality differences.

Even so, attention to other influences on policymaking is spotty in *Park Plaza*. Though community-based opposition to the redevelopment plan is mentioned early in the case, at day’s end manager-hero Mahoney seems to be standing alone against the project, even though in all the other disputes he has been involved in, opposition has been “largely confined to private commercial and political interests, lacking broad public support. In fact, if anything, public support—particularly from tenants, community organizers, social service agencies and environmentalists—was with Mahoney.” Where are those who might have supported his efforts to reform or defeat the proposal?

Moreover, there is no mention of the pertinent economic conditions. The absence of economic factors in almost every case suggests that the case-writers have accepted the “two cultures” division that prevails in some policy schools, perceiving economics and politics as existing in two different worlds.

Similarly, though *Policewoman* incorporates certain aspects of the environment, important pieces are missing. The case depicts the department’s history of aggressive

policing, inciting protests and poor relations with minority communities; important internal differences between male and female officers in the use of force are also specified. But what of the men of color who are now part of the police force: Are they part of the problem or the solution?

Simplistic presentations of the much-abused concept of “community” are common in these cases. “Community” is portrayed either as a monolith or as warring camps, the organized citizenry as pawns to be mobilized or obstructionists to be overcome. In *Policewoman*, it is unclear whether Houston residents are united in their desire for less confrontational policing or whether some neighborhoods are entirely satisfied. Such critical factors in the chief’s environment are not elaborated. Their absence not only diminishes the racial dimension of the case, but limits the analysis of the strategies available to the reform-minded chief.

*Ellen Schall* also incompletely presents racial tensions. The case indicates that inside the organization, at least half of upper management is white; the line staff consists primarily of black and Hispanic workers; the juveniles held in detention are almost entirely black or Hispanic, and poor. Child advocacy groups protest the department’s inhumane detention facilities, while from other quarters there has been an unspecified public outcry over violent youthful offenders. What remains unclear is whether the internal tensions and external divisions are in any way related, whether the case captures the full range of the citizens’ concerns and whether some venue exists in which diverse interests can be brought together.

The environmental context provided in *Fine Line*, the story of gender integration in the Charlotte Fire Department, is similarly constricted, and the consequences of this blinkered view of the world are even more troubling. According to the case, the Police Department has been sued for racial discrimination and the city council has pressed for progress on affirmative action; there has been some internal resistance to gender integration; and firefighters’ wives have voiced concerns about firehouse privacy. These are merely snippets of information from the universe of potentially relevant details about the policy environment. In most cities, fire departments are responsible for a wide and evolving set of emergency responses, but this case says nothing about the volume and nature of fire department activity in Charlotte. Also missing are a sense of the community’s expectations, its level of satisfaction with the department’s performance, possible constituencies for race and gender integration, and arguments for other changes such as an increased emphasis on fire prevention or medical response capacity. Even concerning integration, the focus of the case, there is little detail about the nature and strength of internal resistance.

In short, those cases that do include environmental context provide only arbitrarily selected pieces of the broader picture. Potentially important perspectives and influences are absent. Possibilities for combining perspectives or constructing collaborative strategies are unexplored. The reader is left with the impression a narrow context will suffice for understanding, analyzing, and decisionmaking. Equally problematically, the environmental constraints and opportunities appear in pre-digested form, so that students are neither required nor expected to do the hard work of interpreting a complex world of influences that may be relevant to a decision. The presumptively relevant features of the context are identified and summarized for the case readers.

*Ellen Schall*’s litany of organizational problems provides a striking example of this pre-digestion. Though the catalog describes this case as one that “offers students the chance to diagnose the ills of the agency,” the ills are in fact quite clearly laid out. In a section entitled “Schall surveys the scene,” readers are given the highlights of the “several overlapping areas of tension in the agency” including the “uptown/downtown split,” “racial and class tension,” and “turf wars between facilities.” Similarly, *Fine Line* summarizes the “questions [that] remained” for fire department managers in the third paragraph of the case, clearly directing the reader to the conflict between

gender integration and firefighting effectiveness: What about the injury rate for female firefighters? Would firefighting be “compatible with motherhood”? Would women “be able to sustain the physical prowess necessary for the strenuous task of firefighting”? Should all firefighters “be expected to do the most demanding tasks”? *Lebanon’s* second paragraph effectively outlines the entire story:

US intelligence analysts . . . were uncommonly convinced that much of the administration’s policy was misguided. . . . They eagerly awaited the . . . call for a Special National Intelligence Estimate. . . . [T]hey pushed other established channels of communication . . . to the limit in an attempt to get their message through. But dissatisfaction with Lebanon intelligence was almost universal: policymakers felt increasing ill-served, and analysts . . . felt increasingly ill-used. . . . The intelligence process may not, in the end, have offered up many insights about Lebanon, but Lebanon. . . says a great deal about the intelligence process.

To the policy student reading these cases, it appears that—though solutions may be difficult—problems present themselves clearly and concisely to the practitioner. Reality is messy and complex, perhaps, but the policy analyst can relegate much of it to the periphery, or even, as the cases often do, to the realm of non-consideration. Among the many different perspectives from which an issue might be viewed, only one or two are of practical concern, and these are for the most part attainable within a small slice of the social world.

#### Do Policy Problems Have Histories?

Because no issue is ever entirely new, policy students are often advised to learn how to “think in time” (Neustadt and May, 1986): To situate an issue in historical perspective, to grasp the background of the key players, to understand the uses and limits of analogies to earlier problems. In public management teaching cases, need for relevant history is balanced against the limitations of space. As a note on case-writing advises: “the trick in the background section is to include the necessary information without swamping the reader in a welter of detail” (Kennedy and Scott, 1985, p. 5). Generally cases include three or four pages of background material, although cases on “big topics” may incorporate separate background notes (Kennedy and Scott, 1985). In these best-selling cases, the treatment of history is un-edifying. Four of the nine full-length cases provide no historical data beyond what must be given to produce a comprehensible story. The remaining cases (*Park Plaza*, *Ellen Schall*, *Lebanon*, *Fine Line*, and *Policewoman*) barely sketch a complex history, with major milestones alluded to in phrases that carry the flavor of newspaper headlines. As with the treatment of the policy environment, this slighting of history may be defended as a price worth paying for brevity, yet it leaves the impression that history does not matter much. Once again, policy action appears to be centered on individual behavior almost devoid of context. The student is discouraged from asking pertinent broader social and historical questions because no case material bears on those questions.

*Fine Line* offers an unsettling example. The case states that during the early 1970s, “occupational safety became a growing national concern” leading to the adoption of safety precautions and physical agility tests by fire departments. “Meanwhile, in 1972, Congress passed the Equal Opportunities Act [sic], which created pressure for all public sector employers to hire women and minorities.”<sup>18</sup> Because women disproportionately failed the physical agility tests, fire departments faced the challenge of reconciling

<sup>18</sup>The legislation is actually titled the “Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972.”

the use of physical tests with pressure to hire women. The case goes on to provide considerable material about the problem of setting physical standards, discussing some of the political and legal concerns that surround this issue.

This rendering of history offers at best a narrow, and at worst a distorting, frame. No explanation is offered for why equal employment opportunity became a federal mandate: not a word about wage gaps, occupational segregation, or civil rights. The history of racial integration in the Charlotte Fire Department, potentially relevant to understanding gender integration, is treated in a footnote mentioning the city's eight-year suspension of its written test and subsequent "steady progress in hiring minority men to the fire department."

This selective presentation of contextual material ensures that the central problem is narrowly posed: How should city officials respond to political pressure for gender diversity while maintaining appropriate and legally defensible hiring standards?<sup>19</sup> Presenting a broader historical context would invite more critical ways of thinking about the problem. If, for example, the case began with historical data on wage differences and occupational segregation, the fact that firefighting has "as a matter of tradition, belonged unequivocally to the world of [predominantly white] men" might seem more problematic. Current work arrangements and strength requirements might seem less inevitable, and a wider range of effective policy alternatives could be imagined.

Neither of the popular cases that looks at gender integration, *Fine Line* and *Policewoman*, describes the agency's experience with racial integration, even though that history might well offer useful analogies. *Policewoman* also provides no context for gender integration; it notes that hostility and discrimination met the arrival of women into the Houston Police Department, but says nothing about the surrounding circumstances. Why did the department begin to hire women when it did? How were they recruited and selected? What did the department do to support the gender integration process? Policy students cannot explore the relationship between workforce diversity and organizational change—a central issue in this case—without knowing something about how and why the diversity in a given organization has come about.

In some cases, the historical material that is included is less relevant than what has been omitted. *Lebanon*, the story of failed communications between foreign policymakers and analysts, briefly outlines that country's recent political history. Yet the case focuses not on the substance of American foreign policy in Lebanon but rather on the problematic relationship between foreign policymakers and analysts—and on that topic, only minimal historical background is included. "Over the years," the case states, "analysts and policymakers had come to an elaborate understanding of their respective rights and privileges." How has this demarcation come into being? Do specific historical events help to account for the formal and cultural constraints on communication across this divide? The Case Catalog (1997) description of *Lebanon* points out that the analysts' (appropriate) warnings went unheeded and asks, "How does intelligence analysis fit in the structure of American foreign policy formation?" It is a fine question, but one that cannot be explored without more historical data, particularly if the aim of the exercise is to develop an approach that would lead to better communication. Among other things, the reader should know what arrangements have been tried in the past, and to what effect.

In the limited world of the cases, history—even an agency's own experience—has

<sup>19</sup> An instructor might take a broader approach, using the organizational challenge as an opportunity to examine the fire department's mission and work (Fountain, 1996). However, the case includes almost no data with which to explore such concerns, and its narrow framing does not invite such a discussion.



little relevance to present-day problem-solving. Students are encouraged to pay minimal attention to past events, relationships, or conditions. For those with the leisure to study it, history may have something to teach us, but in the time-constrained world of the policy professional, these cases imply that the benefit of historical knowledge is rarely worth the effort necessary to obtain it.

### Are Policy Actors Social Animals or Lone Rangers?

In most of the best-selling cases, the protagonists are outsiders—political appointees and elected officials—rather than long-time members of their organizations. Although research tells us that such outsiders often do take on the perspective of their new organizational home, the cases depict their behavior as more individually motivated than institutionally influenced. Oddly enough for cases that are meant to train public managers and analysts, there is little discussion of the role of institutions, or of how institutional settings shape individual behaviors—despite the fact that a canonical public policy text, written by a former dean of the Kennedy School, focuses on organization-based explanations for policy decisionmaking (Allison, 1971).

In *Shultz/Iran-Contra*, the high-level internal debate over the arms-for-hostages plan is depicted as a story of individual viewpoints, not institutional interests. “Over the decades,” the text points out, “a spirited competition developed between the national security advisor and the secretary of state over who should control foreign policy. The ascendancy of either was heavily driven by personality, particularly that of the president and his relationship with his Cabinet officers.”

Institutions are not entirely missing from the story. The case identifies the organizational affiliations of key players and sometimes casts the institutions themselves as actors, as when it states that Shultz “perceived a growing mistrust of him and the State Department on the part of the CIA and NSC.” But no information is presented on the agencies themselves: their histories, tasks, structures, or cultures. The picture that emerges is one of powerful individuals—the Secretary of State, the Director of the CIA—acting in certain institutionally identified roles, but with no evidence of institutional influence on their choices, values, motives, or perspectives. If anything, the organization appears to be shaped by the individual rather than the other way around; by way of illustration, one case subheading reads “George Shultz and *His* State Department.”

The absence of detail about life in organizations is particularly troubling in cases that concern organizational change, such as *Ellen Schall* or *Fine Line*. Neither case provides much information about working conditions or organizational culture, important influences on the line staff members who do the actual work of the agency. *Policewoman*, with its focus on street-level actors and the details of their work, and some attention to organizational culture, provides an instructive contrast. The case offers enough material on police work and attitudes for the reader to have some idea why the protagonist would go to such deadly lengths to pursue her suspect, and how complex are the barriers to change within the Houston Police Department.

*Park Plaza* and *Lebanon* also do a better job of treating important institutional factors. *Park Plaza* presents a structurally situated story. The central conflict involves not only individuals with different personal goals, but offices with different structural incentives and constraints. The difference in constituencies and responsibilities associated with the two offices, Governor, and appointed agency director, clearly contribute to the divergence of the protagonists’ positions on the redevelopment proposal. Furthermore, with the history of the Department of Community Affairs and its mandate, readers are given a context for Mahoney’s actions that is broader than his own personal values (though again, Mahoney comes in as a outsider/change-agent, not an organization man). The institutional analysis would be even stronger

with some details on the Boston Redevelopment Agency (BRA) and its mission, culture, membership, and structure. The BRA's staff plays a pivotal role in the story, and their actions would be better understood if placed in the context of their own organizational incentives and values.

Among the most popular cases, only *Lebanon* can be read as a case about institutional relationships and the influence of institutions on actors. Even though historical perspective is lacking, sufficient material is included about the organizational settings in which intelligence analysts work to enable the reader to understand how formal regulations as well as cultural norms constrain communication between analysts and policymakers. In providing this level of detail about institutions and in shifting the spotlight somewhat away from individual actors, the case invites discussion of issues of institutional design as well as an analysis of cultural assumptions concerning the relationship between analysis and policymaking.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the case also focuses on the activities of unnamed protagonists, primarily the Middle Eastern intelligence analysts. With the exception of two National Intelligence Officers (the official analyst-liaisons to policymakers), the named actors—cabinet secretaries, special envoys, and the like—still seem motivated more by individual goals than organizational imperatives. They are constrained in that they deal with others whose behavior is institutionally shaped, but their own choices are not powerfully guided by their institutional settings. *Lebanon* is exceptional in its attention to institutional arrangements, but primarily when it focuses on unnamed analysts; primary actors still tend to be depicted as acting outside of institutional context.

If organizational or institutional context is limited in most of the cases, attention to larger structural influences is even weaker. In three cases—*Ellen Schall*, *Fine Line*, and *Policewoman*—social identity categories such as race, gender, and class are presented as relevant, but are not sufficiently developed to support a structural analysis or encourage attention to problems of structural inequality.

*Fine Line* cites “anecdotal evidence that women seemed to be getting injured at fires more frequently than the men.” Because the case ignores larger issues of gender construction and inequality, this reported problem is interpreted as reflecting women's physical weakness. Data on the unequal status of women firefighters might point toward alternative explanations, including inadequate training or harassment by co-workers.

Similarly, race is an unexplored dimension of the *Policewoman* case. The case points out that the Houston Police Department has a history of aggressive policing and that there have been some especially violent incidents involving citizens of color. What social and organizational factors have shaped the behavior of HPD officers toward these citizens? How has the entry of officers of color affected the department? Gender is clearly relevant—the case notes women's less violent style of policing and offers stereotypical arguments for the difference—but even though race also seems critical, nothing is said about the policing styles of minority male officers. The case discourages an analysis of racial factors, and while it promotes attention to gender, it does so in a way that treats gender from an essentialist perspective, rather than as socially constructed.

The *Ellen Schall* case leaves the reader wondering about the relationship between the problematic performance of the Department of Juvenile Justice and the racial composition of its clients, but the case itself provides limited information on this possibility. Race and class tensions are presented as operational problems for the new manager—a white woman in an agency of primarily black or Hispanic line staff and clients—not as factors affecting the agency's troubled history and ambiguous mission. The brief history of the Spofford detention facility notes that the facility has been overcrowded since opening, and has a quarter-century-long record of dismal performance with respect to the health, safety, and security of the juveniles in detention. What factors have contributed to this poor performance? Is it simply a matter of leadership, as the case seems to suggest (“Schall . . .

believed that part of the problem was that there had never been truly effective leadership at Spofford . . .”) or are there larger structural influences at work? Perhaps the facility has been chronically underfunded, a low public priority for reasons having in part to do with the race and class composition of its population?

In general, the policymakers, analysts and public managers of these cases act as Lone Rangers whose behavior is not meaningfully placed within institutions or larger societal structures. With few exceptions, the inattention to organizational setting or institutional arrangements discourages discussion of institutional design; it also intimates that important challenges or problems can be understood without reference to larger social or organizational structures. The narrow construction is consequential in another way. It limits attention to distributional concerns, even when—as in *Fine Line*, *Policewoman*, and *Ellen Schall*—such concerns are centrally relevant. Again, the would-be public manager is invited to act alone, without much appreciation for context.

#### COMPARISON WITH RANDOMLY SELECTED CASES

The best-selling cases appear to share certain distinctive features that convey a particular view of the policy world. Before considering the implications of this world view for professional training, it is useful to ask whether these features reflect primarily the preferences of the market or the construction of teaching cases more generally. Could a case teacher critical of this world view avoid it simply by choosing different cases, or would most cases be likely to carry these same lessons?

In an effort to address this question, a random sample of 10 additional cases was drawn from the Kennedy School of Government collection, and the cases analyzed in the same manner as the market-based sample.<sup>20</sup> Ten is an admittedly small number and more work could be done on this question, but the comparison does suggest that the best-sellers are not extraordinary and that the cautions that apply to use of these texts probably apply to most teaching cases.

The randomly selected cases with a brief description are listed in chronological order below. Note that because the random draw sometimes produced a case that was in the middle or end of a multi-part sequence, in some instances full series rather than single cases were read. The cases are:

*William D. Ruckelshaus and the Environmental Protection Agency* (1974) describes how Ruckelshaus tackles the job of making the newly created Environmental Protection Agency a reality with appropriate goals, a workable structure, and an approach that will satisfy supporters without offending potential critics.

*Budgeting in the State Government* (1975), through actors’ comments rather than a story, portrays the efforts of state-level actors (primarily the governor’s staff, department secretaries and assistant secretaries) to define and assert their own budgetary authority following a reorganization of state agencies into “secretariats.”

*Redevelopment of the Boston Waterfront* (1978) describes how Boston Mayor John Collins and his new Redevelopment Agency Director Edward Logue set in motion a large-scale plan for waterfront redevelopment and how the vision runs into obstacles and resistance as times, resources, and actors change.

<sup>20</sup> A list of numbers within the range of KSG case numbers was generated using a spreadsheet random-number generator. Then the first ten numbers on this list that corresponded to cases identified the cases to be read for this comparison.

*Bill White and the Veterans Administration* (1981) shows the director and assistant director of a Veterans Administration hospital fending off pressure from Washington to hire a well-connected local official who has been active in veterans' affairs (similar in some ways to *Improper Advances*).

*Community Development in Gainesville A, B, and C* (1983) tells the story of how, in the wake of a failed urban renewal program, Gainesville Mayor John Cromartie recruits two former Office of Equal Opportunity project directors to staff the city's efforts to establish a Model Cities Program in Gainesville. The series describes the efforts of the project directors to collaborate with different segments of the community and external stakeholders to make the program a reality.

*Starting from Scratch: Alice Rivlin and the Congressional Budget Office A and B* (1988) features Alice Rivlin as the first director of the Congressional Budget Office, establishing the CBO's scope, structure, and credibility and navigating through the agency's early political challenges.

*General Electric and the National Broadcasting Company: A Clash of Cultures* (1990) relates the conflicts over news division management after cost-conscious General Electric acquires RCA and its television network NBC; in particular, focuses on the tensions between NBC News President Lawrence Grossman and GE-appointed NBC President Robert Wright.

*The Paraguay-Parana Waterway* (1996) describes the economic benefits and costs of a proposed waterway project in the upper Paraguay-Parana river system, which has been scaled down in response to environmental outcry but still raises concern.

*The 1976 Footwear Import Decision* (1997) outlines the political and economic issues relating to an upcoming presidential decision on footwear industry trade remedies, focusing on the actions of Special Trade Representative Frederick Dent and Economic Policy Board director William Seidman.

*The Cleveland School Voucher Program: A Question of Choice A and B* (1999) relates the challenges facing program director Bert Holt, as she attempts to deal with logistical difficulties, resource limitations, and resistance after the state legislature adopts a pilot voucher program.

As described below (and summarized in the Appendix, Table 1), the randomly drawn cases are similar in construction to the best-sellers, also including variation and some exceptions. Only one case in the random sample is radically different in form from the rest, and not in a way that runs counter to the findings of this article: *Paraguay-Parana Waterway* is really more of a technical exercise than a standard case. It contains data on the economic returns and construction costs of a proposed waterway project and identifies some of the environmental and cultural concerns raised by critics. But it features no actors (neither individual nor institutional) and offers very little in the way of data on the decisionmaking environment; in consequence, it factors very little into the following discussion. One other case from the random sample that deserves mention here is *Gainesville*. It is in the standard format, but differs in significant degree in the opposite direction from *Waterway*: It contains significantly more context and historical data than the other cases and is also the only one to include the community in a meaningful way. These observations about *Gainesville* must be qualified, though, by

the comment that the case includes three parts, all of which were read for this analysis—making it less than perfectly comparable to a single-segment case.

The protagonists of the random-sample cases are similar to those of the bestsellers, though the distribution of the settings in which they act differs slightly. All of the best-selling cases are domestic, public-sector cases and the majority are located at the U.S. federal level, whereas the random sample contains one case outside the United States (a multinational case in Latin America), one private sector case, and fewer federal cases. Like the best-sellers, though, the randomly selected cases tend to feature high-level actors; lower-level actors are largely irrelevant and none of the random set (in contrast to one of the best-sellers) focuses on a street-level character.

Protagonists and other central characters are predominantly white and male. Only two cases include characters known or specified to be people of color; six cases contain only male actors, and only two feature a woman protagonist. In the one case highlighting an African American woman (*Cleveland Vouchers*), the character is an implementer, not a decisionmaker (she is hired to direct a pilot project after the political authorities have decided to offer it).<sup>21</sup> Public sector protagonists are virtually all appointees rather than career civil servants. Only one case (*Gainesville*) includes grass-roots-level community members actually contributing to the achievement of public policy objectives. *Gainesville* is also the only case that tells a story of group work, problematic though it is.

As in the best-sellers, policy activities in the randomly drawn cases tend to be the product of individuals acting outside or against institutions rather than in concert with them, and data on institutional influences is limited. In *Budgeting*, the one case in which particular institutional units are central to the substantive question, the institutional influences on the actors featured are not adequately explored or explained. Comments and descriptive passages that allude to specific institutional factors (such as culture, capacity, structure, or political function) and the way these shape behavior are infrequent; the reader has the general sense that the actors' differing contexts must be important but lacks adequate data to understand them. In the remaining cases, actions and decisions seem much more motivated by individual character than shaped by institutional context (in two extreme cases, *Ruckelshaus/EPA* and *Rivlin/CBO*, the protagonist's home agency has not even been established yet, but will develop out of his or her own efforts, subject to political constraints).

In contrast to the best-selling cases, which did not center on substantive policy conflicts, three of the random-sample cases do feature such a conflict—though only one offers policy substance embedded in a social context. *Waterway* has already been described as an analytic (primarily economic) exercise with almost no data on social and institutional factors. *Footwear Imports* features a choice relating to trade policy—whether to restrict foreign imports—but the choice is subtly framed as the now-familiar conflict between analytics and politics: Economic arguments are made on the side of free trade (tariffs will cost consumers \$750 million, efficient manufacturers are doing fine), whereas the push for trade restrictions seems political (37 states have shoe factories, congressional contacts favor relief). The third substantive policy case, *Cleveland Vouchers*, is in some ways an exemplar. The case provides some details relevant to the voucher policy debate but does not revolve around this choice; rather, the action concerns the implementation obstacles facing the pilot program and an eventually successful court challenge. The implementation data allow for a more realistic consideration of the policy choice than would otherwise be possible, though the case still lacks adequate information about relevant social and institutional factors.

<sup>21</sup> Note that although the implementor's role is a critical one, it is not usually treated as such in the cases.

An opposition between politics and analytics or ethics characterized the central conflict more often in the best-selling cases than in the random sample, but even among the latter is a common theme (and it is central in *Bill White*). For example, *GE/NBC* presents a kind of private-sector analog to this opposition in its pitting of the (allegedly) high-quality journalism of the NBC News division against the profit requirement of the parent company. In *Ruckelshaus/EPA* and *Rivlin/CBO*, conflicts revolve around choices of new agency mission, scope, structure, and activities, but it is largely political interests that complicate the actors' choices and threaten successful performance. Though political forces are not all hostile—Ruckelshaus “was riding the crest of a wave of public concern over environmental degradation”—political forces are tools or obstacles, not a source of information or collaborative assistance. *Gainesville* provides an instructive contrast, as a case in which the community whose support is necessary for success is also a source of ideas (though here as well is considerable analyst-community tension). Only *Gainesville* includes an element of mutual problem-solving, coalition- or trust-building.

As with the best-selling cases, the public is rarely represented directly in the random sample. Partial exceptions are *Redevelopment*, *Footwear Imports*, and *Cleveland Vouchers*, in which particular interest groups or segments of the community participate in some of the action (albeit usually in resistance). A much stronger exception is *Gainesville*, in which all segments of the community play pivotal roles in the developing story, and as noted, are something more than tools or obstacles (though they are often cast in these roles as well).

Half of the best-selling cases had effectively no data on broader social and institutional factors relevant to the action, and whereas fewer of the sample cases are quite so limited, they do tend to provide only a narrow context, and rarely pay attention to structural concerns such as race and class. *Redevelopment* is one of the better cases but still misses some important factors: The case is rich in some kinds of detail, such as its information on the Boston Redevelopment Agency structure and the protagonist's redesign thereof, and its description of the agency's battle with small dealers of meat, produce, and fish (who hinder the realization of the planners' vision). But the case contains almost no information about the potential or actual redistributive effects of this very large project. The “community” consists of supportive local business interests, displaced food dealers, and an undifferentiated public that is apparently supportive of the redevelopment proposal. Who stood to benefit and who stood to lose from this project? How well were the interests of the city as a whole served? How did the many changes made in implementation affect the community? The case does not address these questions.

In a similar vein, *Cleveland Vouchers* includes extremely useful data on the immediate social and institutional environment of the policy implementation, but provides little or no data on other elements of the picture that are clearly relevant. In particular, the reader needs more information on the influences of race and class, as well as some data on the structure of public schools. These things are relevant not only to implementation but to the underlying policy choice. The case suggests that vouchers are a remedy for the crisis state of the city schools, but if the schools fell into deterioration and eventually crisis only after the departure of jobs, financial resources, and white residents (as the historical background states), why assume that the problem is one—like school bureaucracy—that vouchers will address? Student readers will not be able to argue the merits of vouchers without better data on the system the program is intended to fix.

History is minimal in six of the sample cases, a largely irrelevant history is offered in one case, and a complex history is only sketched in another. The remaining two cases—*Gainesville* and *Redevelopment*—are unusual in that they not only offer historical detail (albeit in the case of *Redevelopment*, rather more

colorful than relevant) but they develop over time. Economic conditions change, institutional arrangements shift, politicians and planners enter and depart, and the reader has a sense of the passage of time and its relevance for policy design and implementation. The lesson is particularly powerful in *Gainesville*, in which the reader understands the story of a project from the time of its unsuccessful precursor, through planning, funding, implementation, and phasing in of a different project. Earlier events and relationships help make sense of later conditions and of the choices that can be made by policy actors. The main actors themselves demonstrate a commitment to the project and the community that—in part because it endures over time—surpasses that associated with the standard “make-a-name-for-yourself” strategy of so many case protagonists.

In summary, the random sample contains fewer extremely narrow cases, but in other respects is not markedly different from the best-sellers. Both samples include some variation along the dimensions of interest and one or two striking exceptions to the general rules (most notably *Policewoman* in the first set and *Gainesville* in the second), but both sets are also characterized by the same general depiction of the policy world, which is summarized and critiqued in the following section.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PUBLIC POLICY PROFESSIONALS

This article explores 10 best-selling policy cases along a number of dimensions, and in the process reveals ways in which these cases construct the policy world and its choices. The conclusions drawn about these particular cases may not hold for all policy teaching cases, and the degree of variation within the original sample itself suggests that not all of the problematic features are universal. Still, the reading of a random sample suggests that the best-sellers are not highly unrepresentative, and given that important pedagogical goals and constraints do shape the case-writing process, it is likely that teaching cases will share certain characteristics.<sup>22</sup> Brevity has already been mentioned as a significant constraint with numerous implications—including the very narrow framing of problems—but there are other important factors. Those of us who teach with cases wish them to be as engaging and motivating as possible for the reader; creating an incentive for dramatic presentation with heroic actors and limited attention to structural or institutional constraints. Lively case discussions rely on disagreement among students, a requirement that encourages production of conflict-centered cases. And the practical orientation of public policy programs is most easily supported with cases that involve narrow problems and a single powerful decisionmaker.

How inevitable it is that policy cases will take the shape of those described above is a question that can and should be debated. What we observe here is that the best-selling cases from the country’s dominant case-writing program share important characteristics that may be common among policy cases, and these features should be scrutinized, especially by those of us in the business of training the next generation of policy analysts and managers. Some will find the framing of the cases generally consistent with their aims, but others will not, and all of us should be aware of the multiple messages carried in our texts.

A summary description of the public policy world as conveyed in these cases would look something like this:

- Social and organizational policy problems are usually resolved by high-ranking officials. These officials act autonomously, on the basis of individual

<sup>22</sup> We thank Professor Jane Mansbridge for suggesting that we address these considerations.

motivations rather than group- or institutionally-driven concerns. Collaboration is a rarity. Innovation comes from the top down, generated by charismatic outsiders, not career officials. Mid-level analysts may possess useful information, but they are often powerless to use it. Street-level bureaucrats are an important source of resistance to change but are otherwise insignificant. Organizational innovation matters more than institutional maintenance.

- The scope of policy problems is typically narrow. Such issues can be understood and addressed without reference to a broader historical or social context. Organizational difficulties, in particular, are readily apparent and easily comprehended; there is little need to rely on interpretive or diagnostic skills.
- The public interest is effectively defined by the senior analyst or public manager. Although political influences are usually negative, they must be attended to—that is, skillfully managed—for the sake of good policy or improved organizational performance. The community may be a difficult audience or a self-interested pressure group, but is rarely if ever a source of legitimacy, strength or value.

How one evaluates this message depends on one's own beliefs about the policy world and expectations for the training of new practitioners. In a critique of an earlier version of this article, University of Chicago public policy professor Laurence Lynn, although the leading proponent of a more theory-based approach to policy research and teaching, nonetheless defends the focus on individual action in the cases:

Students are individuals, and professional schools aim to prepare individuals for various policy pursuits. The existential question we all face is: "What should I do?" The answer may be: "I should contribute to the well-being of the team/group/community." But another question always looms: "How can I best do that? And what can I, as an individual, do in the presence of group-think, misplaced loyalty, fear-induced conformity, community unwillingness to consider unpopular alternatives, power imbalances, ignorance and vaulting irrationality?"<sup>23</sup>

Lynn concludes that policy schools "are well advised to emphasize individual responsibility/accountability/conscience/capacity/skill." Perhaps so—perhaps the mission of policy programs is to produce self-motivated, entrepreneurial professionals, who, in a distinction that Kennedy School professor Mark Moore has drawn, are interested more in "heroic leadership" than "modest stewardship."<sup>24</sup>

A defender of the popular cases' construction might add that the narrow substantive focus is consistent with the incremental nature of policy work, the reality that available interventions are limited in scope—better, then, to leave more wide-ranging exploration to budding political scientists and sociologists. Moreover, the assumption that analysis can be conducted and decisions made with a modest amount of data-gathering and interpretation coincides with the expectation that—unlike, say, public health or environmental professionals—policy analysts and public managers will switch from one policy domain to another: Today's environmental agency manager will tomorrow be running a public health service. Good generalists must be quick learners, able to adapt readily to working in unfamiliar policy environments.

Still, the implicit take-home lessons of these cases are troubling for both practical and ethical reasons. The depiction of public managers as go-it-alone types misstates reality. Abundant testimony from policy practitioners indicates

<sup>23</sup> Personal correspondence with one of the authors.

<sup>24</sup> Moore has employed this contrast when leading class discussions on cultural differences in leadership styles.



that in order to succeed, they must work collaboratively with personnel up and down the organizational ladder; reforms are likely to fail if the perspectives of those at any level are ignored (Behn, 1991). In addition, leaders rarely have enough real control for a command-and-control approach to be effective.<sup>25</sup>

Though most policymaking is incremental, it nonetheless remains vital to comprehend problems in their social and historical contexts. To do otherwise is to guarantee inattention to certain critical issues, social and economic inequality among them. This narrow view also deprives policymakers of the depth of understanding needed to craft appropriate interventions; policies and programs designed without regard for their social context can be very misguided. There is no need for every practitioner to be a scholar, confronting hundreds of pages of text on every issue, but a steady diet of 10-to-20-page cases is thin gruel.

A deeper ethical question arises with respect to the construction of the public and political interests in the cases. Politics and analysis may often be at odds, but it seems mistaken to reject entirely the aspiration to a democratically based public interest. The problems of the polity that Lynn cites are serious, but they do not represent the whole story. If, during their training, public policy students encounter no examples of collaborative, community-based policy design or problem-solving—no examples of leadership as fully engaged in profound public conversation with the affected community (Reich, 1985) then the belief in an inevitable and unresolvable conflict between policy and politics becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy.

The hero-centered model of social and organizational change is not only unachievable but undesirable as well. It invites aspiring practitioners to conclude that analysts and managers, not politicians or the polity, embody the truest sources of policy wisdom. That conclusion is profoundly at odds with the core mission of public service and the idea of a democratic society. To the extent that such a model permeates policy cases, it ought to be consciously countered by those who teach these texts.

<sup>25</sup> Making these points in a different way, one of the anonymous reviewers commented, "Construing policy work as the lone, embattled individual making decisions diverts the attention of people in policy schools from the central question of governance, namely how can free people be induced to accomplish public purposes. Answering that question requires giving attention to the institutions that broadly influence behavior. Not to do the latter is to mislead our students terribly. If, twenty years ago, all of our students (and faculties) had moved to Warsaw or Moscow we would have disappeared without a trace—because the institutions of government there were deeply flawed. Governance in America needs constantly to be adjusted and formed in ways that will not be recognized by students who learn of public affairs through the cases described in this article."

Appendix, Table 1. Summary characteristics by case.

Characteristics of Principal Actors					
Case	Setting*	Position	Race**	Sex	Appointee/outsider or career civil servant?
Policewoman	local	high- and street-level	white/ns	f/m	outsider within appointee
Helms	federal	high-level	white	m	
Fine Line	local	high- and mid-level	ns	m	civil servant outside agency
Shultz/Iran-Contra	federal	high-level	white	m	appointee
Improper Advances	federal	high-level	white/ns	m	career military officer
Shultz/Polygraph	federal	high-level	white	m	appointee
Lebanon	federal	high-level, unnamed mid-level	white/ns	m	named appointees; unnamed civil servants
Ellen Schall	local	high-level	white/ns	f/m	appointee
Park Plaza	state/local	high- and mid-level; also private	white/ns	m	appointee
Lying (10 mini-cases)	varying	high-level only (7); street-level (1)	white/ns	m (9)	appointees/outside
Ruckelshaus/EPA	federal	high-level	white/ns	m	appointee
Budgeting	state	high- and mid-level	white/ns	m	primarily appointees
Redevelopment	local	high- and mid-level; also private	white/ns	m	appointees/outside
Bill White	state/federal	high-level	white/ns	m	unclear
Gainesville	local	high- and mid-level; also private	white/AfAm/ns	m/f	appointees committed to community
Rivlin/CBO	federal	high-level	white/ns	f/m	appointee
GE/NBC	private	high-level	white/ns	m	private sector
Waterway	Latin America		<b>no principal actors—case is narrow</b>		<b>analytical exercise</b>
Footwear Imports	federal	high-level	white/ns	m	appointees
Cleveland Vouchers	state/local	mid-level implementer	AfAm/white	f/m	appointees

Note: \*U.S. unless otherwise indicated. \*\*ns=not specified.

Appendix, Table 1. (cont'd)

Case	Story told of group action?	Feature lower-level actors?	Situated quality of policy actors/action: shaped primarily by motives of individuals or institutional concerns? embedded in or independent of/in opposition to institutional context?	Public interest portrayed directly?
Policewoman	no	yes	individually motivated; acting as change agent	limited
Helms	no	no	individually motivated; no longer within institution	no
Fine Line	no	no	motives unclear; acting as outside change agent	no
Shultz/Iran-Contra	no	no	individually motivated; acting independently	no
Improper Advances	no	no	upholding military values but acting independently of political superior	no
Shultz/Polygraph	no	no	individually motivated; acting independently	no
Lebanon	no	no	named characters act as individuals; unnamed players institutionally challenged	no
Ellen Schall	no	no	individually motivated; acting as change agent	limited
Park Plaza	no	no	individually motivated; acting as change agent	limited
Lying (10 mini-cases)	no	no (9)	individually motivated; acting independently	no
Ruckelshaus/EPA	no	no	individually motivated; acting independently (establishing agency)	no
Budgeting	no	no	no single protagonist; institutional units featured, influences on actors unclear	no
Redevelopment	no	no	multiple protagonists, acting independently against or on (not <i>with</i> ) institutions	limited
Bill White	no	no	multiple protagonists, influences mixed; resisting higher-level authorities	no
Gainesville	yes	yes	protagonists working with community and local institutions, for community goals	yes
Rivlin/CBO	no	no	individually motivated; acting independently (establishing agency)	no
GE/NBC	no	no	individually motivated; acting independently	no
Waterway				
Footwear Imports	no	no	institutional units featured, influences on actors unclear	limited
Cleveland Vouchers	no	no	individually motivated; acting independently as director	limited

Appendix, Table 1. (cont'd)

Case	Nature of conflict or controversy	Social/institutional context of policy action?
Policewoman	new manager v old guard	gender in department; need more on race, community effectively none
Helms	individual ethical dilemma	legal/political pressure; need more on agency, community
Fine Line	political demands v organizational effectiveness	effectively none
Shultz/Iran-Contra	individual ethical dilemma	effectively none
Improper Advances	ethics v politics	effectively none
Shultz/Polygraph	ethics v politics	effectively none
Lebanon	policy-makers v analysts	analyst's institution; need more on policymakers' environment
Ellen Schall	new manager v old guard; mission ambiguity	political constraints, internal tensions; need more on race, community
Park Plaza	politics v analytics	political constraints; need more on agencies, community, economic conditions
Lying (10 mini-cases)	individual ethical dilemma	effectively none
Ruckelshaus/EPA	conflicting political constituencies	EPA's mandate, inherited units; need more on culture, ties to other agencies
Budgeting	political actors' struggle over budget authority	institutional units represent interests, not contexts
Redevelopment	series of conflicting interests in implementation	BRA structure, protagonist's redesign; need more on community, class issues
Bill White	ethics v politics	effectively none
Gainesville	a set of ongoing challenges and balances	multiple institutions and levels; need more on race
Rivlin/CBO	broad mission/autonomy v political constraints	effectively none—political character of setting emphasized
GE/NBC	journalism v business	industrial sector; need more about TV news and public interest
Waterway	policy problem: cost-benefit of waterway	effectively none
Footwear Imports	policy problem framed as politics v analytics	shoe industry; need more on affected communities
Cleveland Vouchers	policy option meets implementation challenges	political pressures and resistance; need more on public school structure

Appendix, Table 1. (cont'd)

Case	Attention to larger structural concerns	Treatment of history
Policewoman	limited	sketches complex history
Helms	none	minimal
Fine Line	limited	sketches complex history
Shultz/Iran-Contra	none	minimal
Improper Advances	none	minimal
Shultz/Polygraph	none	minimal
Lebanon	none	not relevant to central problem
Ellen Schall	limited	sketches complex history
Park Plaza	none	sketches complex history
Lying (10 mini-cases)	none	minimal
Ruckelshaus/EPA	none	minimal
Budgeting	none	minimal
Redevelopment	none	case develops over time
Bill White	none	minimal
Gainesville	yes	relevant history; case develops over time
Rivlin/CBO	none	minimal
GE/NBC	none	not relevant to central problem
Waterway	limited	minimal
Footwear Imports	limited	minimal
Cleveland Vouchers	limited	sketches complex history

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