The Governance of Problems. Puzzling, Powering, Participation

Robert Hoppe, University of Twente
the GOVERNANCE of PROBLEMS

puzzling, powering, and participation

ROBERT HOPPE
"Hoppe subtly explores the problems inherent in traditional rational policy analysis which claims to be able to speak 'truth to power', exploring the relationship between problem solving ('puzzling') and securing a real impact ('powering'). It is an important contribution to policy analysis."

Michael J. Hill, Emeritus Professor of Newcastle University and Visiting Professor at the University of Brighton and Queen Mary College, University of London

"Hoppe has long been an important contributor to the field of public policy. Most important, his work has always challenged the conventional wisdom in ways that have led to useful insights for both theorists and practitioners. In this book, he analyses basic issues related to problem definition and participation. Both problem identification and problem solving, he shows, can be reflexive and yet pragmatic at the same time."

Frank Fischer, Professor of Political Science and Global Affairs, Rutgers University, USA

Policy analysis usually gives more attention to problem solving than problem finding and there is a real threat of mismatch between problem perceptions by citizens and problem definition by their elected and appointed policy makers. Contemporary democracies need to develop a better governance of problems, as all too often, policy is a sophisticated answer to the wrong problem.

This book offers a compelling new approach to public policy making as problem processing – problem finding, problem framing, problem structuring, problem definition and problem solving. It brings together aspects of puzzling, powering and participation, relating them in interesting and different ways to cultural theory, to issues about networks, to models of democracy and to modes of citizen participation. The author pays serious attention to creating the institutional conditions for more reflexive, deliberative practices of problem structuring in governance structures.

The book, which is part of a growing body of work in policy analysis literature, is clearly written and accessibly presented. Key points are lucidly set out and well illustrated with examples, making this an ideal text for academics and postgraduate students.

ROBERT HOPPE is Professor of Policy and Knowledge in the Faculty of Management and Governance at Twente University, the Netherlands. His publications concern the methodological and institutional implications of deliberative policy analysis, the governance of expertise and long-term policy dynamics and innovation, especially the role of technology.