



**Michigan
Technological
University**

Michigan Technological University
Digital Commons @ Michigan Tech

Michigan Tech Publications, Part 2

4-5-2024

Public value and procedural policy instrument specifications in “design for service”

Adam Wellstead

Michigan Technological University, awellste@mtu.edu

Michael Howlett

Simon Fraser University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.mtu.edu/michigantech-p2>



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wellstead, A., & Howlett, M. (2024). Public value and procedural policy instrument specifications in “design for service”. *Policy Design and Practice*. <http://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2024.2337095>
Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.mtu.edu/michigantech-p2/712>

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.mtu.edu/michigantech-p2>



Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Open
AccessISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rpdp20

Public value and procedural policy instrument specifications in “design for service”

Adam Wellstead & Michael Howlett

To cite this article: Adam Wellstead & Michael Howlett (05 Apr 2024): Public value and procedural policy instrument specifications in “design for service”, Policy Design and Practice, DOI: [10.1080/25741292.2024.2337095](https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2024.2337095)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2024.2337095>



© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 05 Apr 2024.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 621



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Public value and procedural policy instrument specifications in “design for service”

Adam Wellstead^a  and Michael Howlett^b 

^aMichigan Technological University, Houghton, MI, USA; ^bDepartment of Political Science, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

ABSTRACT

Strokosch and Osborne and others have recently argued the essence of effective service delivery in and by government increasingly involves the re-orientation of top-down service delivery toward enhanced co-design and co-creation. This new emphasis on what Strokosch and Osborne term designing and managing “for” services is seen to be increasingly replacing or augmenting an older emphasis on these tasks in the design “of” services. Analyzing and managing service design and delivery in this way, however, requires a steady eye to be maintained on the different ways in which “public value” is generated through each service process and upon the different kinds of policy tools useful in each activity. This paper expands and develops this thinking and the research and practice agenda around this emergent “designing for service” paradigm. It does so by focusing on the nature and types of substantive and procedural policy tools used in these efforts and especially upon a shift in emphasis toward the better understanding of the micro-level specifications of the procedural instruments used in management and design “for” services.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 14 November 2023



Accepted 25 February 2024

KEYWORDS

Policy design; service design; public value management; policy tools; policy specifications; policy calibrations

1. Introduction: what is “designing for service”?

Strokosch and Osborne (2023) recently argued that the essence of contemporary program or “service” design in government is changing and increasingly can be found in efforts made to re-orient top-down service delivery and encourage greater bottom-up citizen-led activities, such as co-design and co-creation. They note that these latter activities are increasingly involved in policy formulation and are championed by many newly created policy agencies and actors, such as innovation labs (Wellstead, Gofen, and Carter 2021). They further claim that this change can be characterized as one replacing or augmenting an older orientation which has deep historical roots in the effort to design and deliver efficient and effective services—what they term the design

CONTACT Michael Howlett  howlett@sfu.ca  Department of Political Science, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC, Canada

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

“of” services—by a new alternative paradigm focused on creating and retaining government legitimacy through enhanced public participation. They term this new emphasis on participation and legitimation as the design of processes “for” service provision.

Any such shift has many potential implications for policy design and practice, including a change in the kinds of instruments or policy tools used in these efforts, how those tools are calibrated and the activities governments undertake in formulating and implementing them. In the design “of” services approach, the delivery of goods and services deemed necessary for the general public and specialized interests, for example, largely features the creation and administration of portfolios of what Howlett (2000, 2019) has termed “substantive” policy tools—such as regulations, public expenditures, and other tools involved in the delivery of goods and services delivery directly by government agencies. These are all well-known implementation instruments that can typically be found arrayed in a mix designed by government agencies and ministries and approved by a governing executive (with funding from legislative bodies) in order to deliver specific kinds of services to the public in what is expected to be an efficient and effective way (Hood 1991; Salamon, 1989 2002).

While in practice these initiatives may or may not actually be as efficient or effective as intended, their state-led, “top-down” nature makes them susceptible to perceptions of de-legitimation and charges that the goals, policies, and programmes designed to implement them fail to represent either the priorities or interests of the public. Hence even a simple and routine snow-clearing contract negotiated on behalf of a city by public works department managers, for example, can be accused of illegitimately prioritizing snow removal in certain neighborhoods over others or for prioritizing administrative cost-saving over public safety, such as allowing minimum clearance levels to be raised, saving wear and tear on plows but at the risk of increased accident rates due to the poorer traction that results (Elhouar et al. 2015).

In some cases, such charges of favoritism and detachment from the public good may have merit, while in others they may simply be an artifact of a more general citizen disengagement from decision-making processes and growing cynicism regarding governments and the roles, activities, and interests of civil servants and decision-makers in the policy process more generally. Strokosch and Osborne (2023) suggest the latter situations are growing more commonplace and that many governments have responded through a reorientation of service design efforts to more actively involve greater numbers of citizens, or at least public opinion leaders, in government decision-making. Such efforts, they argue, take a designing “for” service approach, in which citizen involvement is also a policy goal, rather than just efficient service delivery. Others in the policy design and public management fields, such as Bel and Casula (2024) and van Buuren, Lewis, and Peters (2023), also see evidence of this same movement and dynamics. van Buuren et al, for example, label “design for policy” as a better way to “understand and structure a policy problem, rather than finding solutions for predefined goals” (14). Similarly, Villa Alvarez and Wellstead (2023) found that practitioners indeed have increasingly adopted this specific term in thinking about policy-making and policy design.

While provocative, however, Strokosch and Osborne provide few details about precisely how these two approaches to service delivery differ in practice or about

precisely what a designing “for” service approach entails in terms of instrument choices and how these choices differ from those made in more traditional efforts at service design.

In what follows it is argued that the creation of “public value” in each effort does differ as does the kind of policy tools involved in policy designs aimed at each purpose. And, more germanely in terms of the aims of this special issue, that they also differ in terms of the level of analysis and activity undertaken in their support. Thus, designing “for service,” for example, typically involves the use of what Bali et al. (2021) refer to “procedural” tools, or policy tools intended to alter aspects of policy processes designed to enhance public value through enhanced legitimation, rather than those geared to the creation of public value through the efficient delivery of goods and services using more traditional substantive tools, such as those listed above—regulation, government agencies, subsidies and others (Bali et al. 2021; Howlett 2000). And, third, it is argued that the level of analysis that most preoccupies those involved in the design “for” services is also different from that found in more traditional efforts at service design, focusing upon micro-level tool specifications and calibrations, a focus which is different from that found in traditional substantive instrument choices (Howlett 2009; Sewerin, Cashore, and Howlett 2022).

2. Why is this distinction important? Service design and the pursuit of public value

Strokosch and Osborne set out the main differences between design “of” and “for” service in terms of their conceptual roots, design perspective, focus, the aim of design, the approach taken, and the locus of design (see Table 1).

However, importantly, it can also be seen that how public value is expected to be attained through public action differs in the two approaches. As Moore (2000) has argued, attaining value through public action is contingent on both the effective use of policy tools and the level of legitimacy and support enjoyed by an authorizing environment and both of these differ in the two design approaches.

This conception of the two service regimes involving two different types of public value creation is important and tied into a significant thread of thinking in the public management literature where how public managers actually realize collective aspirations and public value through the design of public policies and programs is a growing subject of research (Barzelay 2019). This research, for example, has expanded beyond the examination of the actions of the public manager in a single organization to include the study of multi-actor situations (Bryson et al. 2017; Jarman, Luna-Reyes, and Zhang 2016; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007; Kelly 2002; Meynhardt 2009) and how public value is co-created in such efforts (Bryson et al. 2017; Sancino 2022; Wellstead, Howlett, and Chakrabarty 2022).

In general, public managers are seen to need to engage in three activities if they are to ensure their strategies actually create public value (Moore 1995). These correspond to Moore’s well-known public value “strategic triangle” whereby a public manager’s strategy must be “substantively valuable,” “legitimate and politically sustainable,” and “operationally and administratively feasible.” But fundamentally different

Table 1. Design of service and designing for service.

	Design of services	Designing for service
Conceptual roots	Early service research, where services are defined as market offerings with specific characteristics, intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability.	Service (dominant) logic, where service is understood as the integration of resources to support value co-creation (that is, subjectively perceived and determined).
Design perspective	Services (as an output) are designed and delivered by understanding user needs and experience, with value co-creation facilitated through the (re)design service output.	Service is designed by understanding the need and experience, but value co-creation is dependent on user experience and the surrounding context.
Focus	Solutions-focused by understanding user needs and experience.	Outcome-focused by emphasizing service experience and context throughout the value co-creation process.
Aim of design	Transforms tangible and experimental elements of services as outputs, including the physical service landscape to support effective delivery and immediate needs.	Transform tangible and experiential elements of the service and the physical and social context of the servicescape to support future value co-creation.
Approach	Reductionist approach—services are comprised of multiple component parts, and service design requires that decisions be made about each dimension.	In a constructivist approach, service is socially constructed by interactions between multiple actors and various contextual factors.
Locus of design	Service development phase	Throughout service production, including development, use, and contextualization. The frontline service provider and service user have a demonstrative impact on service.

Source: Strokosch and Osborne (2023).

strategies can be deployed in the service of these public value creation and maintenance efforts (O’Flynn 2021; Stoker 2006). Whether it aims at the design “of” service or design “for” service, any management strategy must be operationally and administratively feasible. The design “for” service strategy, however, differs from a design “of” services one in terms of the kinds of value expected to be created and, especially upon the relative emphasis the strategy places upon legitimacy in considerations of feasibility.¹

In this view, managers can develop and create public value in several different ways if they have the resources or capacity needed to do so. These differences can be seen in Talbot’s (2011) elaboration of Moore’s framework, whereby public value creation is said to differ according to its focus (trust and legitimacy, processes, resources, services, and social) and the types of interests (self, public, and procedural) involved in it. These different interests and foci are set out in Table 2.

Here it can be seen that the design “of” services is focused primarily on resources and services in the attainment of cost-effective results while the design “for” services highlights trust, process, and service delivery in equitable and participative ways. Design “for” services focuses on a broader set of societal values that provides “a normative consensus about the rights, benefits, and prerogatives to which citizens should (and should not) be entitled; the obligations of citizens to society, the state, and one another; and the principles upon which governments and policies must be based” (Bozeman, 2007 13) which design ‘of’ often takes for granted.

Table 2. Map of public value-related interests and foci.

	Self-interest	Public interest	Procedural interest
Trust and legitimacy focus	Respect for individual rights, complaints and restitution, and confidentiality	Respect for democratic and consultative decisions	Respect for democratic and consultative processes
Resources focus	Are purchased in economic and competitive ways	Are purchased in socially useful ways (e.g. fair trade and wages, locally sourced)	Are purchased in fair, transparent, and honest ways
Process focus	Are flexible and responsive to individual wants and efficient	Are equitable, responsive to democratic control, and are effective	Are formalized, fair, transparent, and honest
Services focus	Are delivered in flexible, cost-effective, and efficient ways with choice for individuals	Are delivered in socially equitable and effective ways	Are decided in democratic and participative ways
Social results focus	Are delivered in cost-effective ways which enhance individual's lifestyles	Are delivered in equitable ways that enhance social justice	Are decided in democratic and participative ways

Source: Adapted from Talbot (2011).

However, exactly how each process—that is, designing “for” and “of” service—is expected to unfold in practice and how they can best be designed and managed, is unclear in existing work on the subject. Both need the necessary tools, investments, and innovations to ensure their particular strategy can be successfully pursued but the kinds of tools deployed in each are quite different as is their configuration (Moore 1995; Moore and Khagram 2004).

3. Policy instrument used in the design “of” and “for” services: procedural vs. substantive instrument use

The policy studies literature is helpful in informing design content and practice in both of these efforts, having previously identified two different kinds of policy tools that serve the different purposes beyond these design types (Howlett 2009; Howlett and Cashore 2009).

In this literature, “substantive” instruments are those that are expected to alter some aspect of the production, distribution, and delivery ‘of’ goods and services in society (Howlett 2000). This is a large field of action since it extends not only to goods and services provided or affected by tools, such as regulation but also well beyond managed market-based delivery to direct or indirect state or public provision, as well as to the support or commissioning of many goods and services typically provided by the family, community, nonprofit and voluntary means (Salamon, 1989 2002).

These substantive tools can be seen to be the key components of the design “of” services as they can affect many aspects of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, from welfare provision to environmental quality. These tools are typically arranged in a mix or bundle, and the complexity of mix design often leads to top-down policy designing. Thus, for example, a mix of tools from public enterprises to regulation and tax treatment can affect the prices and actual distribution of produced goods and services, such as housing, as well as more macro-economic activities, such as the level of consumer demand for specific goods through interest rate manipulation and fiscal policies more generally.

On the other hand, other more procedurally oriented tools are typically involved in the design “for” service. These “procedural” tools - such as processes for judicial review, public participation or public hearings - typically affect production, consumption, and distribution processes only indirectly, if at all (Goldsmith and Eggers 2005; Klijn, Koppenjan, and Termeer 1995; Klijn and Koppenjan 2006). Rather, they are intended to affect the behavior of actors involved in policy implementation and include a wide array of such tools including not only public participation processes or judicial reviews but also, freedom of information legislation, censorship, and many others (Howlett 2000; Lang 2019; Lewis, McGann, and Blomkamp 2020).

Table 2 highlights that the design “of” services involves a focus on program results, resources, and services on the ground, while the design “for” services focuses instead on the attainment or retention of trust and legitimacy in policy processes. Designing “for” service can also be seen to involve a greater emphasis on the design and management of participation and consultation processes that affect the subjective interactions between actors less in output terms than in what Scharpf has called “input” or “throughput” legitimacy (Scharpf 2015).

A feature of value creation in the design “for” services often involves (enhanced) processes of stakeholder co-design and experience. Outcomes remain important but are coupled with the need to enhance the processual experience of stakeholders and citizens with greater attention needing to be paid to the context of that experience in managing such processes. Osborne, Nasi, and Powell’s (2021) earlier use of the value creation frame to analyze public services suggests four different kinds of service design activity can promote such enhanced “output” legitimacy (Scharpf 2015). These range from co-design, co-production, co-experiences, to co-construction, where *co-design* refers to the inclusion of service users and citizens in the development of policy solutions, *co-production* encompasses the involvement of service users and citizens in the management and delivery of services and *co-experience* is the process through which an individual’s use of the public service creates or takes away value for that individual. Lastly, *co-construction* concerns how an individual’s unique values, beliefs, and experiences will shape their engagement with a given public service (Osborne, Nasi, and Powell, 2021 649).

These design “for” service efforts often seek greater involvement of key actors, stakeholders, and the public in policy decisions through these processes in order to enhance compliance by defusing opposition to a project or programme *ex ante*. For example, an important part of the permitting approval process for new mines in many states involves extensive consultation procedures which do little to enhance the efficiency of service delivery, per se, but reduce the possibility of court or other challenges to regulatory decisions. The development of a new copper-nickel sulfide mine, the NorthMet Project in northeastern Minnesota, under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) provides a good example of this kind of effort where legal requirements for promoting and responding to public comments generated several rounds of comment and thousands of submissions (Nguyen et al. 2020). Here, value co-creation was dependent less on the outcome of the decision than on the design of the user experience as part of a long-term iterative process expected to bolster support, or at least diffuse opposition to a mine development among an initially skeptical public. This was expected to be accomplished by enhancing feelings of efficacy and representation in mine-related decision-making.

Attaining public value through design “of” efficient service activity, on the other hand, does not necessarily involve any of these processes and can be undertaken in a purely top-down fashion. This activity focuses on outputs with an emphasis on the design of the benefits and costs of a programme to promote enhanced programme outcomes and efficiency. Thus, the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS), for example, recently began rolling out a pilot “Direct File program,” a freely available software where taxpayers can calculate and submit their income tax returns. This is an effort to enhance public value by reducing the administrative burden tax compliance places on citizens while also enhancing efficient revenue collection (Herd and Moynihan 2019). In this case, the cost saving in lieu of using a commercially available tax software package significantly contributes to public value and does so while also enhancing policy efficiency by reducing compliance and monitoring costs. Such efforts involve the use of traditional “substantive” policy tools, such as regulations, public organizations, information campaigns, and financial tools in the effort to directly or indirectly affect the conditions of production or the distribution of goods and services in society (Howlett 2024).

4. The locus of activity in design “of” and “for services”: different goal specifications and tool calibrations

As these examples show, public management and policy design in the contemporary era are concerned not only with how public value can be achieved through efficient service delivery but also with legitimation and these efforts differ precisely in terms of what kinds of governing instruments are put into place for these purposes.

Both substantive and procedural instruments are thus a key part of policy designs and policy design activity and the configuration of procedural tools is as important to design “for” services as the calibration of substantive tools is for the design “of” services (Capano and Howlett 2020). Making the right tool choices and calibrating it to meet specific needs is thus the essence of both the “design ‘of’ and ‘for’ services” (Howlett 2024), and whether or not public value will actually be attained in either case center on the effectiveness of the choices made at this level in pursuit of each strategy. Significantly, however, the content of such choices differs between the two strategies.

In the case of the substantive tool choices made in the design “of” services strategy, tools such as regulation, subsidies, public enterprises, and fines all can alter many features of goods and service delivery but it must be specified who produces a specific good or service; what kinds and quantities are to be provided and with what quality, as well as other aspects of the methods and conditions of production and its organization. This is done through the calibration or fine gradation of tools, such as changes to interest rates in monetary and fiscal policy designed to combat inflation or affect key sectors, such as the investment. While debates and popular discussion of substantive tool choices often center on the “meso” level choice of instrument—for example, whether or not to regulate or subsidize some activity—the precise calibration of these tools is in fact the key activity in such design efforts.

Thus, at the substantive level this level of choices is very important in areas such as education policy and health policy, to name only two sectors, where improved

quality and efficiency have been systemic goals pursued by policy-makers. However, as noted above, debate and discussion often centers on the choice of different kinds of substantive policy tools, such as public *vs.* fee-for-service models of service delivery rather than on the details of their application. This is not true of all sectors, however, and in the study of the attainment of service goals in healthcare, for example, policy-makers and implementers seeking to enhance public value often focus on more input-oriented aspects of health policy-making involving more micro-level decisions around issues, such as accountability, competition, and decentralization ‘of what and to whom’ (Fitz, Gorard, and Taylor 2003; Hannaway and Woodroffe 2003; Howlett, Ramesh, and Capano 2022; Toth 2021).

Just as there are distinct techniques typically deployed in the designing “of” services, in design “for” service efforts some tools, such as re-organizing government departments or including supporters and co-opting opponents in service delivery are quite old and well-used and have been the objects of study in fields, such as public administration, public management, and organizational behavior for decades (Saward 1990; Schneider and Sidney 2009). While much discussion has concerned this ‘meso-level’ of analysis, just as with the deployment of substantive tools, important procedural design criteria are also often fundamentally about the more “micro” level policy specifications. Thus “public participation,” for example, is more or less an empty vessel until it is filled with instructions on who can participate, when, and how and who can not.

How these different kinds of procedural tools are configured and deployed—that is how their “micro-level” specifications fit with participatory targets and objectives—is often the key to effective design “for” services (Howlett, Ramesh, and Capano 2022), just as it is for more traditional substantive tools.

As the Introduction to this special issue has highlighted, recent studies in the policy sciences have only recently begun to grapple with the importance of design decisions at this micro level. However, it is possible to develop a framework for this level of tool choices which is helpful in understanding the the kinds of choices that need to be made at this level of policy-making .

These frameworks are based on earlier work, such as that by the Nobel Prize winner Elinor Ostrom, who outlined several design rules (2005, 2010) needed for the creation of regulatory institutions that emphasized the importance of decisions made at the micro-level of policy-making. As the model set out in the Introduction suggests, three aspects of Ostrom’s rules can be seen to be highly relevant to micro-level procedural and substantive tool design and, thus, to efforts to guide better design both “for” and “of” services. These are:

1. Designation of the target population: that is “who” specifically is targeted by an intervention (what Ostrom termed “scope,” “boundary,” and “position” rules);
2. The expected outcome of the intervention: “what” precisely is expected to be done by the target population with respect to the problematic condition (what Ostrom termed “aggregation” rules); and, in addition; and
3. The time frame desired for achieving the desired aim or the time by which the intervention is expected to be undertaken.

These elements can be thought of as micro-level policy goals or target specifications. Policy calibrations on the other hand denote the specific ways in which an instrument can be configured to realize these goals. Calibrations are more complex and in addition to Ostrom, scholars, such as Linder and Peters (1989), Salamon (2002), Schaffrin, Sewerin, and Seubert (2015), and Capano and Toth all have identified a relatively large range of possible micro-level policy tool components. These concern the extent to which a policy tool features:

1. Stringency (i.e. how coercive the adopted instrument is for shaping the behavioral autonomy of the target);
2. Public visibility (i.e. whether and how much the instrument is visible to the public);
3. Automaticity (i.e. whether and how the instruments can be immediately applied by an existing or new agency without manual oversight);
4. Resource intensiveness (i.e. the level of organizational and financial resources a tool requires in order to operate effectively);
5. The specification of the agencies responsible for implementation (if there is only one public agency, or if there are more agencies, even private, programmatically charged with implementation) (what Ostrom termed “position” rules);
6. Monitoring and auditing provisions (the provision of planned procedures of monitoring and auditing) (what Ostrom termed “choice” rules); and
7. Accountability rules (the rules that are expected to activate mechanisms leading to effective implementations; for example, provision of sanctions and fines can activate compliance) (what Ostrom termed “information” rules).

Table 3 presents a re-articulation of Strokosch and Osborne’s original 2-fold service framework to emphasize the kinds of tool specifications that are operationalized in the processes of either “designing for service” or the “design of service.”

Practitioners engaged in designing for policy-related work of either type need to be sensitive to these calibration considerations as well as to the key differences in the types of tools required for each task outlined above.

5. Conclusion: designing services and obtaining value through procedural tool deployment

Strokosch and Osborne’s distinction between design “of” service and design “for” service serves as a useful link between public management, public value, and public policy thinking, encapsulating two different types of on-the-ground policy-making and service delivery efforts using different sets of instruments designed to attain different kinds of public value.

As this discussion outlines, the conscious move toward more “designing-for-services” activity that Strokosch and Osborne, and others have identified raises to the fore considerations of policy design tools and choices about their goals and calibrations and especially the need to better understand and model the micro-level choices made in both the design of services and design for them. As is argued above, distinguishing between procedural and substantive tools and the different

Table 3. Micro-level and public value management considerations of design “of” and designing “for” service.

	Substantive tools	Procedural tools
Target specifications		
Designation of the target population	Self and public interests Public sector contribution to society	Policy community/network procedural interests Relationship between public administrators and politicians and their environment Ethical behavior of public sector employees Intra organizational aspects Relationship between public sector employees and public
Expected outcome of the intervention	Improvement of service, Service output including services, resources	Increased legitimation, trust, value creation, improved user experience and context, Individual rights, respect for democratic decisions and processes
Time frame for achieving the desired aim	Service development phase	Co-design phase
Calibrations		
Stringency	Focus on delivery and cost-effectiveness	Value creation through experience
Public visibility	Value creation through the delivery of services	Value creation through education
Automaticity	A desired goal	Engagement id preferred
Governing resource intensiveness	Often very high	Usually quite low
Designation of the agencies responsible for implementation	Few, usually one	Often multi-level and multi-sectoral
Monitoring and auditing provisions	Often formalized in audits and other processes and agencies	Project specific, but typically negligible, throughout the value production process
Accountability rules	Often, failure is undesirable	Failure is acceptable if not encouraged as part of the learning process

roles they play in attaining different kinds of publi value and especially, the components of a micro-level analysis of tools specifications and calibrations helps to illuminate the key decisions that have to be made in these types of design and how designing ‘for’ services differs from more traditional design “of” services.

The article thus expands and develops upon these two kinds of design efforts and especially upon the lesser studied “design for service” approach and research agenda. It does so by focusing on the role played by differeince in the kinds of policy tools deployed in each method of attaining public value and emphasizes how changes at the micro-level of policy-making are critical in this activity (Gofen, Wellstead, and Tal 2023; Howlett, Ramesh, and Capano 2022; Howlett and Cashore 2009). This refinement and modification of Strokosch and Osborne’s framework opens the door to a better understanding of what is at stake in each kind of policy design activity and allows research to focus on whether and how specific design arrangements “for” services “work,” why, and in which context, how they can enhance public value.

Many of the key practical questions facing decision-makers and administrators, such as how much to spend on a particular program and how best to do so or the technical design aspects of a particular policy, exist at the micro-level of policy

design and remain little studied outside the ambit of administrative policy advice. By overlooking this level of analysis, however, it is often difficult if not impossible to gauge and evaluate policy performance, which is measured in terms of a policy decision's real impact on society and this is a key concern for policy-makers and practitioners (Dunlop et al. 2022). Furthermore, the lack of focus on the micro-dimensions of policy design often leaves the real picture of what is at stake for policy-makers as they craft a policy to one side. Political battles, partisan dynamics, and conflict among interest groups center do in fact often centre on choices made about the specification of goals or the calibrations of instruments rather than at “higher” levels of tool choices or policy ideas although the meso- and macro- aspects of policy often attract more attention in the press and elsewhere (Hall 1993; Howlett and Cashore 2009).

Choices such as using open-ended or closed appointment procedures for advisory councils, for example, or community-level vs. expert-oriented co-design to legitimate or re-legitimate policy-making all rest at this micro-level, as do choices to provide subsidies or tax breaks of a certain size and not others. Introducing the dimensions and content of policy specifications and calibrations in part derived from Ostrom's and other policy scholars work, and emphasizing the role played by procedural policy tools as well as substantive ones in many policy designs, sheds a useful light not only on policy design in general but especially on efforts to design-for-service that Stokols and Osborne and others have argued are becoming more prevalent in many policy spheres.

It is these micro features of policy design that often matter the most in everyday policy-making, which typically centers less on major changes in policy goals or governance arrangements than on adjusting operational details. This is the case both with the procedural tool choices and designs that form the core of efforts to design “for” service and with the substantive tools which comprise the center of attention of the design “of” service (Capano and Toth 2023) and better understanding of these components and elements of policies promises to enhance policy-making and successful policy design.

Note

1. This can be seen in Jørgensen and Bozeman's work (2007), for example, where they develop a “public values universe” segmenting seven unique constellations where values manifested themselves such as in the public sector's contribution to society, the relationship between public administrators and politicians and others.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Adam Wellstead  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0601-2793>

Michael Howlett  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4689-740X>

References

- Bali, A. S., M. Howlett, J. M. Lewis, and M. Ramesh. 2021. "Procedural Policy Tools in Theory and Practice." *Policy and Society* 40 (3): 295–311. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14494035.2021.1965379>.
- Barzelay, M. 2019. *Public Management as a Design-Oriented Professional Discipline*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Bel, Germà, and Mattia Casula. 2024. "Re-Organizing the Service-Delivery Machine in a 'Post-NPM' Era: A Shopping-Basket Approach?" *Public Management Review* 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2024.2315569>.
- Bozeman, B. 2007. *Public Values and Public Interest: Counterbalancing Economic Individualism*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Bryson, J., A. Sancino, J. Benington, and E. Sørensen. 2017. "Towards a Multi-Actor Theory of Public Value Co-creation." *Public Management Review* 19 (5): 640–654. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2016.1192164>.
- Capano, G., and F. Toth. 2023. "Thinking outside the Box, Improvisation, and Fast Learning: designing Policy Robustness to Deal with What Cannot Be Foreseen." *Public Administration* 101 (1): 90–105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12861>.
- Capano, G., and M. Howlett. 2020. "The Knowns and Unknowns of Policy Instrument Analysis: Policy Tools and the Current Research Agenda on Policy Mixes." *SAGE Open* 10 (1): 215824401990056. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019900568>.
- Dunlop, C. A., J. C. Kamkhaji, C. M. Radaelli, and G. Taffoni. 2022. "Measuring Design Diversity: A New Application of Ostrom's Rule Types." *Policy Studies Journal* 50 (2): 432–452.
- Elhouar, S., D. Dragoo, Y. Khodair, and Y. S. Lee. 2015. "Performance Evaluation of Snow and Ice Plows."
- Fitz, J., S. Gorard, and C. Taylor. 2003. *Schools, Markets and Choice Policies*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gofen, A., A. M. Wellstead, and N. Tal. 2023. "Devil in the Details? Policy Settings and Calibrations of National Excellence-Centers." *Policy Sciences* 56 (2): 301–323. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-023-09496-4>.
- Goldsmith, S., and W. D. Eggers. 2005. *Governing by Network: The New Shape of the Public Sector*. Washington, DC: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Hall, P. A. 1993. "Policy Paradigms, Social Learning and the State: The Case of Economic Policy Making in Britain." *Comparative Politics* 25 (3): 275–296. <https://doi.org/10.2307/422246>.
- Hannaway, J., and N. Woodroffe. 2003. "Chapter 1: Policy Instruments in Education." *Review of Research in Education* 27 (1): 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X027001001>.
- Herd, P., and D. P. Moynihan. 2019. *Administrative Burden: Policymaking by Other Means*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Hood, C. 1991. "A Public Management for All Seasons?" *Public Administration* 69 (1): 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.1991.tb00779.x>.
- Howlett, M. 2000. "Managing the 'Hollow State': Procedural Policy Instruments and Modern Governance." *Canadian Public Administration* 43 (4): 412–431. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-7121.2000.tb01152.x>.
- Howlett, M., M. Ramesh, and G. Capano. 2022. "The Role of Tool Calibrations and Policy Specifications in Policy Change: Evidence from Healthcare Reform Efforts in Korea 1990–2020." *Journal of Asian Public Policy* 17 (1): 1–20.
- Howlett, Michael. 2009. "Governance Modes, Policy Regimes and Operational Plans: A Multi-Level Nested Model of Policy Instrument Choice and Policy Design." *Policy Sciences* 42 (1): 73–89. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-009-9079-1>.
- Howlett, Michael. 2019. *The Policy Design Primer: Choosing the Right Tool for the Job*. New York: Routledge.
- Howlett, Michael. 2024. *Designing Public Policies: Principles and Instruments*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Howlett, Michael, and Benjamin Cashore. 2009. "The Dependent Variable Problem in the Study of Policy Change: Understanding Policy Change as a Methodological Problem." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 11 (1): 33–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13876980802648144>.
- Jarman, H., L. F. Luna-Reyes, and J. Zhang. 2016. "Public Value and Private Organizations." In *Private Data and Public Value: Governance, Green Consumption, and Sustainable Supply Chains*, 1–23. New York, NY.
- Jørgensen, T. B., and B. Bozeman. 2007. "Public Values: An Inventory." *Administration & Society* 39 (3): 354–381. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399707300703>.
- Kelly, J. M. 2002. "Why we Should Take Performance Measurement on Faith (Facts Being Hard to Come by and Not Terribly Important)." *Public Performance & Management Review* 25 (4): 375–380. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3381132>.
- Klijn, E. H., and J. F. Koppenjan. 2006. "Institutional Design: Changing Institutional Features of Networks." *Public Management Review* 8 (1): 141–160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719030500518915>.
- Klijn, E. H., J. Koppenjan, and K. Termeer. 1995. "Managing Networks in the Public Sector: A Theoretical Study of Management Strategies in Policy Networks." *Public Administration* 73 (3): 437–454. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.1995.tb00837.x>.
- Lang, A. 2019. "Collaborative Governance in Health and Technology Policy: The Use and Effects of Procedural Policy Instruments." *Administration & Society* 51 (2): 272–298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399716664163>.
- Laumann, E. O., and D. Knoke. 1987. *The Organizational State: Social Choice in National Policy Domains*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Lewis, Jenny M., Michael McGann, and Emma Blomkamp. 2020. "When Design Meets Power: Design Thinking, Public Sector Innovation and the Politics of Policymaking." *Policy & Politics* 48 (1): 111–130. <https://doi.org/10.1332/030557319X15579230420081>.
- Linder, S. H., and B. G. Peters. 1989. "Instruments of Government: Perceptions and Contexts." *Journal of Public Policy* 9 (1): 35–58. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X00007960>.
- Meynhardt, T. 2009. "Public Value Inside: What Is Public Value Creation?" *International Journal of Public Administration* 32 (3–4): 192–219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900690902732632>.
- Moore, M. H. 1995. *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Moore, M. H. 2000. "Managing for Value: Organizational Strategy in For-Profit, Nonprofit, and Governmental Organizations." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 29 (1_suppl): 183–204. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764000291S009>.
- Moore, M. H. 2013. *Recognizing Public Value*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Moore, M., and S. Khagram. 2004. "On Creating Public Value: What Business Might Learn from Government about Strategic Management." Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative Working Paper 3.
- Nguyen, S. V., N. Langston, A. Wellstead, and M. Howlett. 2020. "Mining the Evidence: Public Comments and Evidence-Based Policymaking in the Controversial Minnesota PolyMet Mining Project." *Resources Policy* 69: 101842. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resour-pol.2020.101842>.
- O'Flynn, J. 2021. "Where to for Public Value? Taking Stock and Moving On." *International Journal of Public Administration* 44 (10): 867–877. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2021.1884696>.
- Osborne, S. P., G. Nasi, and M. Powell. 2021. "Beyond Co-production: Value Creation and Public Services." *Public Administration* 99 (4): 641–657. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12718>.
- Ostrom, E. 2005. "Doing Institutional Analysis Digging Deeper than Markets and Hierarchies." In *Handbook of New Institutional Economics*, 819–848. Boston, MA: Springer US.
- Ostrom, E. 2010. "Beyond Markets and States: Polycentric Governance of Complex Economic Systems." *American Economic Review* 100 (3): 641–672. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.100.3.641>.

- Salamon, L. 2002. *The New Governance and the Tools of Public Action: An Introduction. The Tools of Government*, edited by L. Salomon, 1–47. Oxford, UK: Oxford Press.
- Salamon, L. M. 1989. “The Changing Tools of Government Action: An Overview.” In *Beyond Privatization: The Tools of Government Action*, 3–22. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.
- Sancino, A. 2022. *Public Value Co-creation: A Multi-Actor & Multi-Sector Perspective*. Wagon Lane, Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Saward, M. 1990. “Cooptation and Power: Who Gets What from Formal Incorporation.” *Political Studies* 38 (4): 588–602. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1990.tb01504.x>.
- Schaffrin, A., S. Sewerin, and S. Seubert. 2015. “Toward a Comparative Measure of Climate Policy Output.” *Policy Studies Journal* 43 (2): 257–282. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12095>.
- Scharpf, F. W. 2015. “Political Legitimacy in a Non-optimal Currency Area.” In *Democratic Politics in a European Union under Stress*, 19–47. Cologne, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies.
- Schneider, A., and M. Sidney. 2009. “What Is Next for Policy Design and Social Construction Theory? 1.” *Policy Studies Journal* 37 (1): 103–119. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2008.00298.x>.
- Sewerin, Sebastian, Benjamin Cashore, and Michael Howlett. 2022. “New Pathways to Paradigm Change in Public Policy: Combining Insights from Policy Design, Mix and Feedback.” *Policy & Politics* 50 (3): 442–459. <https://doi.org/10.1332/030557321X16528864819376>.
- Stoker, G. 2006. “Public Value Management: A New Narrative for Networked Governance?” *The American Review of Public Administration* 36 (1): 41–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074005282583>.
- Strokosch, Kirsty, and Stephen P. Osborne. 2023. “Design of Services or Designing for Service? The Application of Design Methodology in Public Service Settings.” *Policy & Politics* 51 (2): 231–249. <https://doi.org/10.1332/030557321X16750746455167>.
- Talbot, C. 2011. “Paradoxes and Prospects of ‘Public Value.’” *Public Money & Management* 31 (1): 27–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2011.545544>.
- Toth, F. 2021. “How Policy Tools Evolve in the Healthcare Sector. Five Countries Compared.” *Policy Studies* 42 (3): 232–251. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2019.1656182>.
- van Buuren, A., J. M. Lewis, and B. G. Peters. 2023. “Policy-Making as Designing: Taking Stock and Looking Forward.” In *Policy-Making as Designing*, 218–229. Bristol, UK: Policy Press.
- Vedung, E., R. C. Rist, and M. L. Bemelmans-Videc, eds. 1998. *Carrots, Sticks & Sermons: Policy Instruments and Their Evaluation*. New Brunswick, USA: Transaction Publishers.
- Villa Alvarez, D. P., and A. Wellstead. 2023. “Navigating the ‘Policy Design’ Landscape.” November 27. Available at SSRN. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4644935> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4644935>.
- Wellstead, A. M., A. Gofen, and A. Carter. 2021. “Policy Innovation Lab Scholarship: Past, Present, and the Future—Introduction to the Special Issue on Policy Innovation Labs.” *Policy Design and Practice* 4 (2): 193–211. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2021.1940700>.
- Wellstead, A., M. Howlett, and A. Chakrabarty. 2022. “What Is Co-creation and How Does It Create Public Value?” *International Review of Public Administration* 27 (4): 367–380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/12294659.2022.2147751>.