UC Berkeley

UC Berkeley Previously Published Works

Title

Decentring Policy Networks: Lessons and Prospects

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8xr8477g>

Journal

Public Administration, 87(1)

Author

Bevir, Mark

Publication Date

2009

Peer reviewed

DECENTRING POLICY NETWORKS: LESSONS AND PROSPECTS

MARK BEVIR AND DAVID RICHARDS

This Conclusion reflects on the contributions the various articles in this special issue have made to decentred studies of policy networks. It concentrates on three areas: the role of meaning in action in shaping networks; new research agendas that have been potentially opened; and key theoretical debates. In considering the theoretical debates, this Conclusion considers various criticisms of the decentred approach to exploring policy networks, before offering some suggestions for those who want to undertake decentred studies of policy networks.

INTRODUCTION

As we saw in the Introduction, a decentred approach provides an alternative to the present literature on policy networks and network governance. Much of the existing literature offers macro-accounts of how networks operate, and it attempts to reach comprehensive theories or typologies of networks. The decentred approach challenges these state-centric or 'top-down' accounts. It treats networks as the product of individuals acting on their beliefs and the stories they tell one another. It thus emphasizes the diversity of the actions and practices that emerge from the various beliefs and traditions that inspire agents. This emphasis on diversity may cast more light on the ways in which policy networks change over time. In particular, the decentred approach challenges the existing literature on policy networks close up (1) rejecting the notion that it is possible to have a comprehensive theory of networks; (2) arguing that structures do not determine the nature of networks; and (3) refuting the view that networks can be defined by any essential properties.

How does the decentred approach help redefine our understanding of policy networks and network governance? First, it provides a bottom-up rather than a top-down perspective. Network behaviour is understood as rooted in the beliefs and preferences of individual actors, and it is explained using the aggregate concepts of tradition and dilemma. Second, the decentred approach offers the possibility of opening up new or alternative research agendas: it poses different questions from those addressed in the existing literature, and it introduces alternative techniques from much of the existing literature to address these questions. Third, the decentred approach identifies key theoretical issues that confront the understanding of networks. It claims to offer policy-makers distinctive stories about the governance environment in which they operate and, in so doing, it challenges both the language associated with New Public Management and the predictive claims made by a number of existing accounts of networks.

To explore such claims, the contributors to this special issue were asked to employ a framework that: used textual and/or ethnographic analysis to explore the meanings that inform a policy arena; where appropriate, to highlight competing or otherwise diverse sets of meaning within that policy arena; and finally explain the relevant sets of meanings by appealing to historical traditions. In this Conclusion, we reflect on the extent to which

Mark Bevir is Professor of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley. David Richards is a Reader in the Department of Politics, University of Sheffield.

the articles above collectively use the decentred approach to add to the existing literature on policy networks and network governance. We focus on three themes: the value-added of a bottom-up approach; the potential for new or alternative research agendas; and the key theoretical debates raised.

MEANING IN ACTION: A BOTTOM-UP PERSPECTIVE

Much of the existing literature on policy networks relies on a modernist empiricist epistemology, as follows: (1) an inclination to construct explanations of change in networks by appealing to exogenous not endogenous causes; (2) a tendency to offer typologies based on 'immutable' facts; and (3) an assumption that essentialist accounts of networks can give rise to normative prescriptions for improving network management. The decentred approach suggests that each of these elements in the literature is problematic. It encourages an approach to policy networks that:

- views networks as an enactment by individuals based on the stories they tell one another;
- offers an account of networks that explores their origins and how they have changed;
- explains network behaviour as a product of the micro-level of the beliefs and preferences of individuals.

In short, a decentred approach encourages a bottom-up perspective on meanings in action, encouraging researchers to explore the beliefs of the actors within particular networks.

The articles in this special issue often use case studies that focus on a particular network at the grass-roots level. Gordon *et al.* use a detailed study of a Local Area Command within the New South Wales Police Service as a means to explore corruption in policing and also more general issues about the nature of power and rationality. Durose's analysis of neighbourhood management systems draws on a detailed case study of a UK local government council – Salford – and the views of this network that are held by a variety of front-line workers, including health improvement officers, community development, and sport and youth workers. Gains provides an analysis of the nature of local governance by exploring the views of a variety of actors drawn from ten local authorities across the UK. Deneulin and Hodgett tackle general issues around the 'human development capability approach' by looking more specifically at how the views of local actors shaped the application of the European Union's structural funding in Northern Ireland. Similarly, Davies provides an account of the nature of the local politics of social inclusion and the impact of joined-up approaches to governing in two UK cities – Dundee and Hull – through the narratives offered by stakeholders involved in each respective strategic partnership.

A decentred approach can also inspire studies of policy networks beyond the grass-roots level. Needham provides a revealing exploration of criminal justice in England and Wales. She argues that the language of consumerism and the consumerist approach that have spread so widely through public services remains strikingly absent from criminal justice. Her study relies on a content analysis of pertinent framework documents and of speeches by three key sets of actors – the Prime Minister, the Home Office and local government. Finally, Poulsen examines the impact of governance on the Danish state, and, in particular, the emergence of new forms of performance accountability in the

Danish civil service. Her study rests on accounts of the roles and identities of individuals drawn in three different ministries – the Interior, Employment, and Business.

The articles in this special issue, and indeed the broader literature on the decentred approach, overlap with other approaches to policy networks and network governance. In particular, there is a considerable literature on how traditional hierarchical forms of bureaucracy often fail to deliver the outcomes intended by policy-makers. The existing literature on implementation explores the nature of policy fields across a variety of terrains, often looking at the views and actions of front-line workers (see, for example, Pressman and Wildavsky 1973, Lipsky 1980; Hill and Hupe 2008). It suggests that problems of policy delivery may arise because of the role played by: ‘professional norms, work customs and occupational culture’ among front-line workers (Riccucci 2005, p. 115). Policy is rarely based on shared meanings between different actors. Meanings are often vague and unclear in ways that lead to unintended or unforeseen consequences (Hill 2003). While this literature on implementation is not explicitly framed by a decentred approach, there are obvious parallels and links between it and the articles in this special issue that explore the nature of networks at the grass-roots level.

The existing literature on policy networks and network governance also includes a wealth of material on how governments seek to govern in an era when the certainties and solidities of modernity are perceived as melting into air. This literature considers the following: (1) strategies for co-ordination in terms of political economy; (2) the changing role of government in an environment of complex social systems; (3) the realigning of formal and informal government relations between and within trans-national, national and sub-national levels; and (4) the emasculation of traditional mechanisms of ‘command’ as government shifts from hierarchy to heterarchy. The literature points to the emergence of new patterns of governance, and especially a complex mix of hierarchy, networks and markets. This new governance has substantial implications for the understanding of policy networks and how they operate.

A decentred approach inspires most of the articles in this special issue to engage constructively with many of the themes associated with the literature on this new governance. In particular, the articles explore the formal and informal processes of co-ordination among the different and multiple actors in networks. The existing literature on network governance refers to these processes variously as negotiated self governance, delegated governance or self-steering networks (see, for example, Pierre 2000; Rosenau 2000; Hooghe and Marks 2001; Bang 2003; Kooiman 2003; Newman 2005). It attempts to evoke the complexity, reflexivity and differentiation of the multiplicity of actors involved in the policy process, pointing, for example, to the emergence of: ‘...an order which cannot be externally imposed but is the result of the interaction of a multiplicity of governing and each other influencing actors’ (Kooiman and Van Vliet 1993, p. 64). The decentred approach provides a potentially fruitful means of exploring this complexity, and especially the dynamics of change within policy networks. It provides stories, case studies, and lessons, which may help policy actors to navigate their way through this changing environment.

So, the originality of the decentred approach lies not necessarily in the sets of questions it poses, nor in its advocacy of a bottom-up approach, but in its explicit focus on understanding the diverse and contingent beliefs of situated agents and then explaining these beliefs by appeals to traditions and dilemmas. One of the original motivations behind the study of policy networks was the perceived need to move beyond the often fixed, monolithic and inflexible characterizations offered by macro-state theories while also avoiding

the problems of specificity associated with individual case studies. The concept of a policy network was meant to provide a bridge between macro-state theory and particular policy studies. However, as noted in the Introduction, the literature on policy networks tends to rely on the imposition of typologies to make sense of the disparate nature of networks. It is thus open to similar charges to those levelled at macro-state theory: the existing literature on policy networks too can appear to present them as inflexible, static, and even torpid phenomena. The problem is that the classifications often present policy networks as defined by their structured settings. Studies of policy networks thus pay virtually no attention to the actual meanings and discourses that inform the networks (see Hay and Richards 2000).

The decentred approach can offer a potential corrective to the formalism of the existing literature. It prompts social scientists to recognize that models, typologies and correlations can do explanatory work only if they are unpacked as narratives. To do this, researchers have to recover the meanings, traditions and dilemmas that inspire situated agents. Recognition of situated agency, then, provides a means of exploring change. Crucially, as both Davies and Gordon *et al.* highlight in their articles, the decentred approach allows the researcher to examine how the various actors involved in policy networks mediate their environment, and thereby understand the everyday production and reproduction of political power.

Arguably, the articles in this special issue are less clear about the ways in which individual relations of power are constituted. Typically, the articles reflect the tendency of decentred and other postfoundational approaches to work with concepts of power that refer to the way traditions and other social contexts define meanings, beliefs and subjectivities. Not surprisingly, then, implicit throughout the articles is a view of power as being both fluid and omnipresent. They largely avoid more objectified concepts of power as something particular people or institutions hold. However, critics may worry that much else is lost along with objectified concepts of power. In particular, even if decentred theory states that there is no comprehensive theory of network governance and, in turn, understandably eschews prediction, it may still need to offer the capacity to generalize. With this in mind, critics may ask: can tradition be used as a bridging concept to link individual case-studies with broader accounts of the state and authority? This question is one to which we will return.

NEW RESEARCH AGENDAS

It is claimed that the decentred approach can offer new research agendas through its emphasis on meaning in action as a source of change in the everyday production and reproduction of power. Of particular relevance here is an emphasis on exploring the dilemmas confronted by actors within policy networks: dilemmas are crucial to explaining change in networks. The decentred approach thus highlights the role of endogenous factors in accounting for change. Whereas much of the existing literature focuses on exogenous variables, notably economic, ideological, or institutional ones, the decentred approach concentrates on the beliefs of the relevant actors about the world they live in and the dilemmas they face.

How does the researcher go about recovering, understanding and explaining the stories actors tell themselves about the world? The contributors to this special issue faced the methodological challenge of recovering the beliefs of the actors in the networks studied. Many chose to use an ethnographic method. The majority of the research informing the

empirical studies relied on semi-structured interviews. Durose interviewed 45 front-line workers drawn from one council. Gains conducted 100 interviews from ten local authorities over 5 years. Davies undertook 53 interviews over 13 months from the two cities in his case study. Poulsen conducted 27 interviews with officials drawn from three Danish ministries. Elsewhere, the Gordon *et al.* study reflected a broader ethnographic methodology, involving a researcher operating in the field for a 24-month period carrying out participant observation and informal and semi-formal interviews which culminated in 250 research hours of data and 34 interviews.

The decentred approach is not tied to any particular method. Some contributors to this special issue replaced or supplemented ethnographic techniques with others. Needham relied primarily on textual analysis, deploying quantitative and qualitative forms of content analysis to prime ministerial speeches, official Home Office papers and local government corporate plans. Deneulin and Hodgett analysed the evaluation procedure carried out by Community Evaluation Northern Ireland (CENI) as part of the EU Community Infrastructure measure through a 'narrative method of self-evaluation' in 22 project areas. They adopted this methodology as the most appropriate to identify areas on which social and political progress could be made in a province with a long history of conflict. In turn, policy-makers embraced 'narratives as policy assessment', seeing them as an effective strategy for planning future policy in the region. Deneulin and Hodgett thereby reveal some of the transformative potential of the decentred approach. As well as demonstrating how it can be operationalized in the field, they show how it may have a direct impact on shaping policy.

Ethnography and textual analysis confront many of the criticisms made of qualitative research methods more generally. Concerns about subjectivity, representative sampling, access, interpretation, rhetorical preferences, and correlation have all been well-rehearsed elsewhere (see, for example, Marsh and Stoker 2002; Burnham *et al.* 2004; Silverman 2004). We do not want to denigrate the importance of these concerns, but constraints of space do not allow us to discuss them in any detail. Instead, our attention returns to the potential of the decentred approach to use qualitative methods to develop innovative agendas. Aggregate quantitative data often abstracts from individual circumstances to find patterns. Thus it tends to neglect differences between people, lumping together individuals who act in broadly similar ways for different reasons. In contrast, the decentred approach encourages more detailed studies of the beliefs of the relevant people using ethnography and textual analysis. In this case, the decentred approach offers the concept of a 'dilemma' and the methods of ethnography and textual analysis as ways of addressing a key topic in political analysis: change.

Change is one of the hardest phenomenon in social science to analyse and interpret. Social scientists find it difficult to capture the complexity, unpredictability and multiplicity of forces involved (see Richardson 2000). Much of the literature on policy networks struggles to account for change over time. It concentrates on static, snapshots of particular networks at any one moment in time. One attempt to overcome this problem is Marsh and Smith's (2002) dialectical model. They conceive of change in terms of the interaction between the structure of the network and the agents located in it. Their critical realism treats networks as structures that constrain or facilitate, but do not determine, the actions of actors. Exogenous factors can alter the nature of a network, but actors continue to mediate change. Networks affect policy outcomes, but at the same time policy outcomes influence the nature of the network. Clearly, the decentred approach to policy networks shares little common ground with this dialectical model, in particular, finding itself at odds with the notion of a network as a structural entity.

An alternative attempt to address the issue of change – one that may overlap more closely with a decentred approach – is the ‘strategic relational theory of networks’ (Hay and Richards 2000). Its proponents recognize that a key limitation of the original policy network perspective was its failure to consider the dynamics and processes through which network formation, evolution, transformation and termination occurs. They emphasize the strategic context of networking as a social and political practice and view networks as dynamic institutional forms. Actors seeking to achieve their objectives make strategic assessments of the context they find themselves in, but context is not seen as neutral, since it privileges certain strategies and agents over others. Agents, as reflexive beings, learn from their actions and adjust their strategies, which in turn changes the context. The network is therefore imbued with dynamism; it is seen as recursively reconstituted, and constantly evolving by the interaction of strategic actors operating within a strategically selective context which is itself constantly changing through the consequences of strategic action. In this view: ‘...though actors are conceptualised as intentional and strategic, their preferences are not assumed to be fixed, nor to be determined by the material circumstances in which they find themselves’ (Hay 2002, p. 131).

The strategic relational approach suggests that the role of the researcher should be to seek out what the perceived concepts, interest, preferences and strategic learning of actors are. Proponents of the decentred approach may worry that there remains a temptation to reify strategic action as defined by the apparently fixed interests of the actors and the objective contexts in which they find themselves. However, if the strategic relational approach treats the concept ‘strategic’ as entirely empty, to be filled by whatever beliefs and preferences actors happen to reach, then it closely resembles decentred theory. The strategic relational approach here would come down to the claims that actors act in accord with contingent beliefs and that researchers should recover these beliefs. The decentred approach provides a similar focus on actors responding to contingent beliefs while also introducing historicist concepts such as tradition and dilemma with which researchers can explain why actors hold the beliefs they do. These historicist concepts are aggregate ones that explain continuities and change even in a contingent world.

It is not surprising that all the contributions in this special issue identify change as a key topic. A number stress the impact of actors’ interpretations and responses to dilemmas on the changing nature of network governance. Durose analyses the effects of change in an era of governance on a neighbourhood management network. Similarly, Poulsen explores changes in the Danish state associated with the variable impact of new types of administrative accountability within the bureaucracy. Gains analyses the responses of local bureaucratic elites to evolving governance networks. Davies explores the impact of joined-up governance on local strategic partnerships by analysing conflicts over political values. Hodgett and Deneulin offer lessons on policy evaluation in their analysis of the impact of change on the human development capability approach. Conversely, the other two contributions use a decentred approach to explore the way in which situated agents, when confronted by dilemmas, defy or emasculate the impact of change. Gordon *et al.*’s study of power, rationality and legitimacy offers a case study of corruption, reform and resistance to change in a police organization. Needham uses a decentred approach to explain the extent to which the language of choice and personalism embraced by the Blair government in its reform of public services has not become embedded in the discourse of the criminal justice policy network.

All these articles portray change as a complex and unpredictable phenomenon. The evolution of policy networks remains contested and contingent. Much of the existing

literature on policy networks reflects the fact that it is easier for researchers to focus on a fixed moment in time, or navigate from a map depicting a static political terrain, than it is for them to explain change over time as occurs in a network. The decentred approach's emphasis on identifying and understanding dilemmas, by exploring traditions as contingent entities reproduced through the actions of agents, may offer one potential way to account for network change.

More generally still, the decentred approach may counter the tendency of the existing literature to overlook the variety of attributes different people ascribe to networks. People within a network may have an (understandable) inclination to ascribe to it positive connotations, emphasizing attributes such as efficiency, flexibility and responsiveness. Equally, interested parties who, for whatever reason, are outside of a particular network may use the term 'network' in a pejorative sense, depicting narrow, secretive, 'cliques', operating in ways that are contrary to the public interest (see Hay and Richards 2000). The larger points here are that networks are not uncontested, and that the decentred approach encourages us to explore the conflicting meanings actors ascribe to them.

Finally, the decentred approach may open up a normative agenda for network management in a constantly changing and complex policy-making arena. Current observers often state that a shift in governance – characterized by greater pluralization, loss of central-controlling capacity, segmentation, hollowing-out, fragmentation, differentiation, interdependence and the growth in multiple governing institutions – requires a redefining of the issues and problems confronting policy-makers. As social scientists have become more aware of the mix of bureaucracy, markets and networks, so they have tried to identify effective means to manage these different types of entities and the relationships between them.

When proponents of the decentred approach tackle network management, they often argue not only that it is the mix that matters, but also the potential variety and inherent fallibility of the sets of instruments that can be used to steer networks. The logic of this argument leads some to conclude that practitioners should turn away from a 'tool kit' approach to network management predicated on the need to establish the correct balance between financial incentives, indirect management, regulation, targets and bureaucracy. Practitioners should turn instead to storytelling as a way of managing the public sector, where stories point toward analogical lessons and so possible ways of acting. As many of the articles above illustrate, this storytelling often involves a shift of topos from institutions to individuals, leading to a focus on the social construction of policy networks through the ability of individuals to create meaning.

KEY THEORETICAL DEBATES

Just as the decentred approach has the potential to establish new research foci, so it also opens up new theoretical debates. Indeed, it is important to take seriously what is now a sizeable literature challenging decentred theory and its associated methodologies (see, for example, Dowding 2004; Finlayson 2004; Hay 2004; McAnulla 2006; Smith 2008; Glynnos and Howarth 2008; Marsh 2008; Richards 2008). We do not want here simply to rehash what are well rehearsed arguments, which often reflect epistemological and ontological conflicts, concerning, for example, the nature of agency and structure, the relationship of the ideational to the material, or institutions and individuals. Instead, we hope to illuminate a couple of important themes that emerge from these criticisms by exploring the issue of political authority and how it is mediated and understood within the network literature.

A current debate in the policy network literature is the extent to which networks have replaced hierarchy as a new governing mode. A number of critics of a decentred approach to policy networks stress the importance of structure. In so doing, some have argued that while it is important to recognize that forces such as globalization, marketization, devolution and managerialism can have a clear impact on the nature of networks, nevertheless caution should be shown concerning the extent to which networks and markets have supplanted traditional hierarchical control (see Saward 1997; Davies 2000; Holliday 2000; Taylor 2000, Marsh *et al.* 2001, 2003; Marinetto 2003; Richards 2008). They would caution those embracing a decentred approach in the study of network governance not to exaggerate the extent to which policy networks should be characterized now by diversity, pluralization and self-steering.

This criticism of a decentred approach to policy networks can be widened to include broader concerns over how issues of power, authority and the state are addressed. The view offered here is that: '...if network is useful as a concept then there should be some collective explanatory feature, not just a derivative of the individual components' (Peters 1998, p. 25). The challenge to the decentred approach is: what it can provide in terms of explanation or informed conjecture? Its approach to networks must offer more beyond explanation on a case-by-case basis. Much of the original network literature was developed to explore national level policy-making, and it was reasonably criticized for its analytical narrowness (see Richardson 2000). Conversely, a decentred approach may engender a surfeit of empirically rich case studies cast predominantly at the sub-sectoral or grass-roots level. This emphasis may be to the detriment of the potentially more challenging, but equally important, need to offer accounts of networks, at both the national and transnational level, as well as in other fields beyond public policy, including criminology, international relations and strategic studies (see Haas 1992; Loader 2000; Rhodes 2008).

Arguably, the main challenge facing decentred theory is, therefore, that of providing a broad recentred account that shifts from networks to power and the state without appealing to reified institutions. Can the decentred approach facilitate recentred studies that sustain broad generalizations? Can the decentred approach to policy networks, with its emphasis on the importance of understanding the traditions, beliefs and dilemmas of individuals, be developed to offer a bridge or – to use the parlance of traditional network literature – to act as a meso-level concept linking individual case studies to broader narratives concerned with state authority?

This conclusion is not the place to fully tackle the challenges facing decentred theory. Nonetheless, for those who wish to make further contributions to the network literature using a decentred approach, there are two suggestions worth considering, which, when combined, potentially offer a way forward in providing recentred accounts of power and the state.

First, recentred accounts should deploy aggregate concepts, such as tradition and dilemma, that refer to meanings – but avoid essentialism. It has already been pointed out that these historicist concepts potentially offer a way of avoiding the reification of action or context. This involves explaining social phenomena not by reference to a reified strategy, context, process, mechanism, or norm, but rather by describing contingent patterns of actions in their specific contexts. Historicist explanations are not only temporal in that they move through time; they are also historical in that they locate the phenomena at a specific moment in time by using explanatory concepts such as tradition and dilemma.

The second suggestion is that power should be seen as something that flows up and down policy cascades in varying and changeable forms. All kinds of actors are capable

of resisting, transforming and thwarting the hopes and intentions of others. Thus, power and resistance alike are understood as ubiquitous features of people interpreting and re-interpreting one another against inherited backgrounds that contain differences as well as similarities. Power appears wherever people interpret and respond to one another. Every actor is constrained by the ways in which others act. Prime ministers, elected representatives, senior civil servants, street-level bureaucrats, and everyday citizens all find their possibilities for action restricted by what others do. Decentred studies can attempt to show how various actors restrict what others can do in ways that undermine the intentions of those others: for example, by seeking to show how the core executive exerts pressure on local actors to pursue certain policies, or how local actors are able to draw on their traditions to resist the policies being promoted by the core executive. From this perspective, policy networks are not presented as reified entities to be classified or correlated. On the contrary, they are often the sites of contingent struggles of power and resistance, with different actors seeking to remake policies and even the network itself in different ways.

CONCLUSION

The concept of a policy network has made a discernible contribution to a variety of sub-fields in political science, including implementation, intergovernmental relations, interest groups, governance and public policy. The concept originally arose between the world wars as one of a number of new empirical topics concerned more with political behaviour than formal institutions. Policy networks helped to open up the black box of the state. Yet, the rise of rational choice theory led to criticisms that the analysis of policy networks lacked a suitable micro-theory.

As we have seen in the articles in this special issue, a decentred approach has the potential to provide:

- insightful studies of networks and network mediation at the local governance, national and intergovernmental levels;
- different ways of addressing the tricky issue of network change over time;
- multi-methodological studies, including not only ethnography and textual analysis but also quantitative techniques, of meanings and beliefs;
- normative lessons to policy actors concerning the nature and functioning of networks.

Thus the decentred approach offers a micro-theory based on individuals acting in accord with beliefs and desires forged against the background of specific traditions and dilemmas. This understandably provokes criticism over its ability to inspire broader accounts of power, authority and the state. Nevertheless, for its proponents, it offers a way of building further upon the already extensive and diverse literature on policy networks.

REFERENCES

- Bang, H. (ed.). 2003. *Governance and Social and Political Communication*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Burnham, P.K. Gilland, W. Grant and Z. Layton-Henry. 2004. *Research Methods in Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davies, J. 2000. 'The Hollowing-Out of Local Democracy and the "Fatal Conceit" of Governing without Government', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 2, 3, 414–28.
- Dowding, K. 2004. 'Interpretation, Truth and Investigation: Comments on Bevir and Rhodes', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 6, 2, 129–64.

- Finlayson, A. 2004. 'Introduction The Interpretive Approach in Political Science – A Symposium', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 6, 2, 129–64.
- Glynnos, J. and D. Howarth. 2008. 'Structure, Agency and Power in Political Analysis: Beyond Contextualised Self-Interpretations', *Political Studies Review*, 6, 2, 155–69.
- Haas, P.M. 1992. 'Epistemic Communities, and International Policy Coordination', *International Organization*, 46, 1, 1–35.
- Hay, C. 2002. *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hay, C. 2004. "'Taking Ideas Seriously" in Explanatory Political Analysis', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 6, 2, 129–64.
- Hay, C. and D. Richards. 2000. 'The Tangled Webs of Westminster and Whitehall: The Discourse, Strategy and Practice of Networking within the British Core Executive', *Public Administration*, 78, 1, 1–28.
- Hill, H. 2003. 'Understanding Implementation: Understanding Street Level Bureaucrat's Resources for Reform', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 13, 3, 265–82.
- Hill, M. and P. Hupe. 2008. *Implementing Public Policy: An Introduction to the Study of Operational Governance*, 2nd edn. London: Sage.
- Holliday, I. 2000. 'Is the British State Hollowing Out?', *Political Quarterly*, 71, 2, 167–76.
- Hooge, L. and G. Marks. 2001. *Multi-Level Governance and European Integration*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Kooiman, J. 2003. *Governing as Governance*. London: Sage.
- Kooiman, J. and M. Van Vliet. 1993. 'Governance and Public Management', in K. Eliassen and J. Kooiman (eds), *Managing Public Organizations*, 2nd edn. London: Sage.
- Lipsky, M. 1980. *Street-level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Loader, I. 2000. 'Plural Policing and Democratic Governance', *Social and Legal Studies*, 9, 3, 323–45.
- MacAnulla, S. 2006. 'Challenging the New Interpretist Approach: Towards A Critical Realist Alternative', *British Politics*, 1, 1, 113–38.
- Marinnetto, M. 2003. 'Governing Beyond the Centre: a Critique of the Anglo-Governance School', *Political Studies*, 51, 3, 592–608.
- Marsh, D. 2008. 'Understanding British Government: Analysing Competing Models', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 18, 2, 251–68.
- Marsh, D., D. Richards and M.J. Smith. 2001. *Changing Patterns of Governance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Marsh, D., D. Richards and M.J. Smith. 2003. 'Unequal Power: Towards An Asymmetric Power Model of the British Polity', *Government and Opposition*, 38, 3, Summer, 306–22.
- Marsh, D. and G. Stoker. 2002. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 2nd edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Newman, J. 2005. *Remaking Governance: Peoples, Politics and the Public Sphere*. London: Policy Press.
- Peters, B.G. 1998. 'Policy Networks: Myth, Metaphor and Reality', in D. Marsh (ed.), *Comparing Policy Networks*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Pierre, J. 2000. *Debating Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pressman, J.L. and A. Wildavsky. 1973. *Implementation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Riccucci, N. 2005. *How Management Matters: Street-level Bureaucrats and Welfare Reform*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Richards, D. (2008) *New Labour and the Civil Service: Reconstituting the Westminster Model*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Richardson, J. 2000. 'Government, Interest Groups and Policy Change', *Political Studies*, 48, 5, 1006–25.
- Rhodes, R.A.W. 2008. 'Policy Network Analysis', in M. Moran, M. Rein and R.E. Goodin (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rosenau, J. 2000. 'Change, Complexity and Governance in a Globalizing Space', in J. Pierre (ed.), *Debating Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Saward, M. 1997. 'In Search of the Hollow Crown', in P. Weller, H. Bakvis and R.A.W. Rhodes (eds), *The Hollow Crown: Countervailing Trends in Core Executives*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Silverman, D. 2004. *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*, 2nd edn. London: Sage.
- Smith, M.J. 2008. 'Re-Centring British Government: Beliefs, Traditions and Dilemmas in Political Science', *Political Studies Review*, 6, 2, 143–54.
- Taylor, A. 2000. 'Hollowing Out or Filling In? Task Forces and the Management on Cross-Cutting Issues in British Government', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 2, 1, 46–71.

Date received 11 August 2008. Date accepted 12 October 2008.