

HANDBOOK ON
Complexity and Public Policy

'Over recent years complexity science has revealed to us new limits to our possible knowledge and control in social, cultural and economic systems. Instead of supposing that past statistics and patterns will give us predictable outcomes for possible actions, we now know the world is, and will always be, creative and surprising. Continuous structural evolution within such systems may change the mechanisms, descriptors, problems and opportunities, often negating policy aims. We therefore need to redevelop our thinking about interventions, policies and policy making, moving perhaps to a humbler, more 'learning' approach. In this Handbook, leading thinkers in multiple domains set out these new ideas and allow us to understand how these new ideas are changing policymaking and policies in this new era.'

Peter M. Allen, Cranfield University, UK

'Complexity theory has come to the fore because the world we live in is complex and many of the issues which confront us cannot be handled by the conventional tools of science, including social science. In public policy and professional practice, we are well aware of wicked issues where simple interventions often make things worse instead of better. The chapters in this excellent Handbook put complexity to work where it matters – in informing our thinking and action across governance and public policy.'

David Byrne, Durham University, UK

Though its roots in the natural sciences go back to the early 20th century, complexity theory as a scientific framework has developed rapidly from the 1970s onwards. Since the 1990s, it has been increasingly integrated into the social sciences and public policy. The ground-breaking and wide-ranging *Handbook on Complexity and Public Policy* brings together the latest work from top academics, researchers and policy actors working with complexity and policy from Europe, North America, Brazil and China and organizes it into three clear and cohesive parts:

- Theory and Tools
- Methods and Modelling for Policy Research and Action
- Applying Complexity to Local, National and International Policy.

With its distinctive combination of theory, methods and policy applications, comprehensive coverage of the field and state of the art overview, this *Handbook* is an essential read for students, academics and policy practitioners.

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Elgar

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Edward Elgar
PUBLISHING

The Lyptatts, 15 Lansdown Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 2JA, UK
Tel: + 44 (0) 1242 226934 Fax: + 44 (0) 1242 262111 Email: info@e-elgar.co.uk

William Pratt House, 9 Dewey Court, Northampton, MA 01060, USA
Tel: +1 413 584 5551 Fax: +1 413 584 9933 Email: elgarinfo@e-elgar.com

www.e-elgar.com www.elgaronline.com

ISBN 978-1-78254-951-2



9 781782 549512

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Chapter 8 © Eve Mitleton-Kelly 2015

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Published by
Edward Elgar Publishing Limited
The Lypiatts
15 Lansdown Road
Cheltenham
Glos GL50 2JA
UK

Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.
William Pratt House
9 Dewey Court
Northampton
Massachusetts 01060
USA

A catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014957096

This book is available electronically in the [Elgaronline](#)
Social and Political Science subject collection
DOI 10.4337/9781782549529



ISBN 978 1 78254 951 2 (cased)
ISBN 978 1 78254 952 9 (eBook)

Typeset by Servis Filmsetting Ltd, Stockport, Cheshire
Printed and bound in Great Britain by T.J. International Ltd, Padstow

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