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Elements in Public Policy

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DISRUPTED GOVERNANCE

Towards a New Policy Science

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-009-12568-0 — Disrupted Governance
Kris Hartley, Glen David Kuecker
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009125680
DOI: 10.1017/9781009127868

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First published 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-009-12568-0 Paperback
ISSN 2398-4058 (online)
ISSN 2514-3565 (print)

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DOI: 10.1017/9781009127868
First published online: February 2022

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Abstract: This Element explores the uncertain future of public policy practice and scholarship in an age of radical disruption. Building on foundational ideas in policy sciences, we argue that an anachronistic instrumental rationalism underlies contemporary policy logic and limits efforts to understand new policy challenges. We consider whether the policy sciences framework can be reframed to facilitate deeper understandings of this anachronistic epistemic, in anticipation of a research agenda about epistemic destabilization and contestation. The Element applies this theoretical provocation to environmental policy and sustainability, issues about which policymaking proceeds amid unpredictable contexts and rising sociopolitical turbulence that portend a liminal state in the transition from one way of thinking to another. The Element concludes by contemplating the fate of policy's epistemic instability, anticipating what policy understandings will emerge in a new system, and questioning the degree to which either presages a seismic shift in the relationship between policy and society.

Keywords: critical studies, environmental studies, public administration, public policy, sustainability

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ISBNs: 9781009125680 (PB), 9781009127868 (OC)
ISSNs: 2398-4058 (online), 2514-3565 (print)

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	The Convergence of Crises Leading to Soft Collapse	11
3	Theoretical Evolution from Instrumental Rationalism to Policy Sciences	22
	References	77