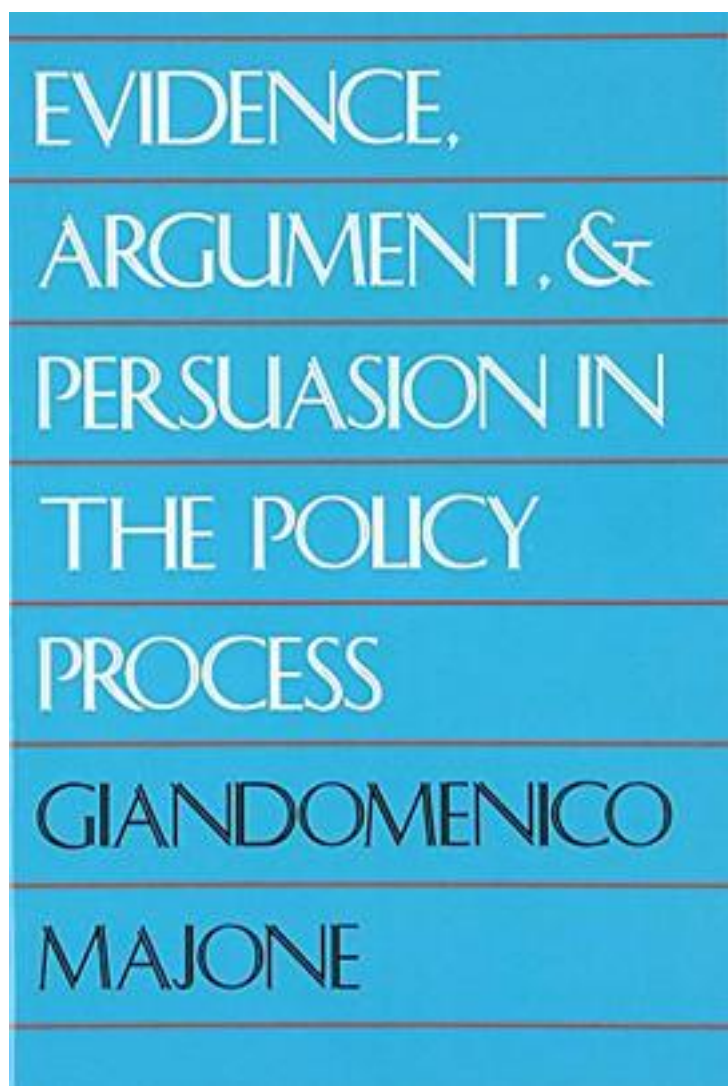


Evidence, Argument, and Persuasion in the Policy Process



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In modern industrial democracies, the making of public policy is dependent on policy analysis—the generation, discussion, and evaluation of policy alternatives. Policy analysis is often characterized, especially by economists, as a technical, nonpartisan, objective enterprise, separate from the constraints of the political environment. However, says the eminent political scientist Giandomenico Majone, this characterization of policy analysis is seriously flawed. According to Majone, policy analysts do not engage in a purely technical analysis of alternatives open to policymakers, but instead produce policy arguments that are based on value judgments and are used in the course of public debate.

In this book Majone offers his own definition of policy analysis and examines all aspects of it—from problem formulation and the choice of policy instruments to program development and policy evaluation. He argues that rhetorical skills are crucial for policy analysts when they set the norms that determine when certain conditions are to be regarded as policy problems, when they advise on technical issues, and when they evaluate policy. Policy analysts can improve the quality of public deliberation by refining the standards of appraisal of public programs and facilitating a wide-ranging dialogue among advocates of different criteria. In fact, says Majone, the essential need today is not to develop 'objective' measures of outcomes—the traditional aim of evaluation research—but to improve the methods and conditions of public discourse at all levels and stages of policy-making.

作者介绍:

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