



# **Organizational Intelligence: Knowledge and Policy in Government and Industry (Classics of the Social Sciences)**

*Harold L. Wilensky*

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## **Organizational Intelligence: Knowledge and Policy in Government and Industry (Classics of the Social Sciences) Harold L. Wilensky**

This prize-winning, foundational book — now in a new edition featuring a 2015 Foreword by Neil Smelser — focuses on the structural and ideological roots of intelligence failures (both informational and analytical) found in government, industry, and other institutions. It provides groundbreaking theory and structure to the analysis of decision-making processes and their breakdowns, as well as the interactions among experts and the organizations they inform. Smelser writes that the book remains “one of the classics in organizational studies,” and “it is still directly relevant to current and future problems of organizational life. ... What makes this book a classic? It is a disciplined, intelligent, and elegant model of applied social science. ... The text itself, richly documented empirically, yields an informed and balanced account of the decision-making process as this is shaped by the quality of information available (and unavailable) to and used (and not used) by organizational leaders.” Reviews of the book at the time it was written similarly attest to the originality and breadth of its interdisciplinary analysis. Amitai Etzioni wrote in the *American Sociological Review*: “This book opens a whole new field — the macrosociology of knowledge. It is as different from the traditional sociology of knowledge as the study of interaction is from that of the structure of total societies.” He added, “The power of Wilensky’s contribution is further magnified by his historical perspective. He studies structures and processes, but not in a vacuum.” Gordon Craig wrote in *The Reporter* that the book’s examples from organizations “show a similar tendency to believe what they want to believe, to become the victims of their own slogans and propaganda, and to resist or to silence warning voices that challenge their assumptions.... In his fascinating analysis of intelligence failures and their causes ... in the public and private sectors, Wilensky finds that the most disastrous miscalculations are those which have occurred in the field of governmental operations, especially foreign policy and national security.” The book explains how such highly institutionalized actors are vulnerable to informational pathologies. A compelling new addition to the 'Classics of the Social Sciences' Series from Quid Pro Books.

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