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the fast part of our brain). In fact, merely learning about such susceptibility can mitigate the effect. We may not be rational, but we are capable of thinking critically and learning. Increasingly, public policy theory is recognizing the nonrational nature of public policymaking. A better understanding of how the brain actually works is leading scholars to better explanations of policy phenomena.

Concluding Thoughts

It is our conclusion that the essence of the policy process is much more political than it is rational. Note that the claim is absolutely *not* that rationality and positivist methods have no role to play. This chapter introduced you to the policy process model and its components. When it is seen as a continuation of Chapter 4, debating the role of rational methods in the policy process, you have been thoroughly exposed to an alternative way to envision and explain how policy analysis and policymaking occurs. Before moving to the case study, pause again and consider the three criteria for evaluating models presented in Chapter 2. Relate them to both the rational and nonrational policy models. What do you think now? How does the policy process work? Can analysts normally ignore politics and succeed?

Glossary Terms

- groupthink (p. 132)
- policy primeval soup (p. 127)
- political IOU (p. 142)

Case Study: The Expansion of Human Services in Allegheny County, 1968–95, Section I*

Preface and Introduction

This case study examines the policymaking process behind the change in the quantity and quality of services that took place in the human service arena in Allegheny County during the nearly three decades Thomas Foerster served as commissioner. It thus can serve effectively as a vehicle for evaluating the ideas presented earlier in the chapter (as well as ideas presented in the first four chapters).

Allegheny County, with a population of 1.3 million people, covers 731 square miles, including Pittsburgh—second largest city in Pennsylvania. Allegheny County does not have Home Rule and therefore has no inherent right to self-govern beyond what the state constitution and the General Assembly grant. Three county commissioners serve as the executive and legislative officers of the county, which has 130 municipalities, each with its own government structure. The Second Class County Code adopted by the state legislature in 1933 and modified in 1955 guides Allegheny County government. The functions delegated

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