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# THE ANNUAL HARTNACK LECTURE

**NANCY CARTWRIGHT:** Deliberating Policy: Where Methods and Morals Mix — and Not Always for the Best

**Time and place:** Wednesday, November 20th, 2013 at 13.15 — 15.00. Auditorium 1 (Old Theology Building) 1441/012

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Justus Hartnack was professor of Philosophy at the University of Aarhus 1954 - 71. A series of annual lectures in his honour were inaugurated 2002. John McDowell and Onora O'Neill are among the former Hartnack lecturers. This year's Hartnack lecturer is Professor of Philosophy Nancy Cartwright, University of Durham .

## Presentation

A good policy decision requires a mix of considerations: Who benefits? Who suffers? Who pays? How much? What are possible good side effects? Bad ones? Will the effects last? Etc. Central among these are issues of effectiveness and legitimacy: Will the policy achieve the desired ends? And, is it morally, politically, culturally acceptable? Few policies will be all to the good for all concerned; few have only a moral upside and no moral downside. So it is inevitable that a balance be struck. In particular it can be perfectly acceptable to adopt a policy that is morally questionable or that has morally negative aspects if we can be sure it will achieve good ends, so long as the balance is reasonable and we operate within a range of what is at least morally permissible. My concern is that we often get this balance wrong because we are overconfident in our predictions about what our results will be. We are overconfident because we make deep mistakes about methods, objectivity and causality. I will illustrate the dangers with examples, especially from child welfare policy.



*Nancy Cartwright is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Durham and at the University of California, San Diego. She is past President of the Philosophy of Science Association and the American Philosophical Association.*



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