

# Public policies

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## **Abstract**

*Public policies are defined as “the amount of government activities, made directly, or through some agents, through the influence that those activities have on the citizens lives” (Peters 1999), or “what the governments decide to do, or not to do” (Dye 1992), “covers both: action and inaction, decisions and non-decisions” (Hall and Jenkins 1995). The politic process consists in the collective action of citizens, for the provision of goods and public policies. Next, we analyze public policy as being the collective actions that have to satisfy citizen’s preferences, even if they are of government, governance, or other type.*

*In conclusion, public policies, expressed in all their forms, can lead to an institutional harmonization in society; they are having as much priority as the citizens and their needs.”*

**Key Words:** *public, policy, citizens, society, institutional, decisions, governmental.*

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The concept of public policy may be defined as what governments choose to do or not do, or a course of action for a specific purpose, followed by an actor or a group of actors in addressing a problem. The study differs from the academic research policy traditional approach in that they are applied facing by the design and development of solutions to problems society, as well as submission of arguments based on assumed values.

Public Policy Analysis:

1. Information in support of policy: the identification of those useful information to support policy, with the express purpose of contributing to the formulation, development and implementation policy as such;
2. Policy support: all test articulated to influence the political agenda. The transfer part can be applied in this case, both Political analyst (who became an actor when he intends to influence the political agenda) and political actor, who becomes its own policy analyst.

Kenneth Heinz defined public policy as the firm decisions characterized by consistent behavioral both from those who do, as well as from those who comply. Public policy is meant to promote generally accepted social values (freedom, equality, welfare), and it is the state's responsibility to develop and implement public policies or to intensify those and impose these values in society.

Public policy can be characterized by formal or institutional criteria: national policy, local political and governmental policies or by groups of people to whom they are addressed. It all depends on the use to the analyst. Typologies most commonly used are those of classified public action based on the theory of social change in that structure.

The typology of public policies that are based on coercion (as Lowi) is as follows:

- *Regulatory policy* is a public action consisting of adoption of rules affecting authoritarian behavior recipients. States require or prohibit: Road Code for example, establishes some rules of

behavior. In this case it is the maximum coercion. In short, the freedom of individual recipients has limited policy interests, their interests are transformed by decree.

- *Protective regulatory policies* are those that attempt to protect the general public from the adverse effects of private business, such as pollution, the consumption of forged, fraudulent business transactions. Business is often resistant to regulation and therefore, regulatory agencies tend to be almost continuous.

Decisions are taken as a basis for negotiation and compromise, since neither affairs, nor regulators can fully dominate policymaking process.

- *Distributive policy* is an action power that authorizes public special cases mentioned by name. Building is prohibited without permission objectives (regulatory policy). But if to build it requires a permit, the public authority is granted on a case by case (distributive policy).

In this case, the citizen is the beneficiary of a public action that attaches favor, privilege (an annuity estate and land, rising land prices) and an accompanying administrative document assigned.

- *Redistributive policy* is the adoption by the public criteria which gives access to certain benefits. Redistributive policy is characterized by the actions it intends to amend; the allocation of wealth, property, personal rights and civil rights.

- *Constitution policy* means that public action defines rules for power; for example, by revising the constitution of a country, by undertaking institutional or administrative reforms. In such a case, coercion affects the weak and indirect recipients.

Public policies are made by administrative subsystems consisting of actors facing a public issue. The term actor in the social sphere includes both actors and actors from state structures, some being more involved in the administrative process, while others are simply audience. The actors involved in the public policy process can be both individuals and groups.

Their number varies according to country or area, and may change over time.

### **Policy cycle**

The process of making public policy consistently pursues the same pattern, regardless of the nature and scope of the policy that will be implemented.

Specifically, the public policy cycle is in fact a logical deductive process, where the actor pursues a path decision stages to find the solution to a real problem of society.

Public policy process is a cycle more or less closed. Evaluation of the results, whatever form it takes, precedes problem solving phase. This phase is not necessarily the previous phase: phases can be interleaved, chronological order may be reversed or even certain functional activities may not occur at all in the process.

For example, a policy may disappear, because it is never implemented or it can be done without anyone thinking to tie the results.

Then there is the decision taken by a public authority and which were not preceded by any business forms or solutions do not respond to a request policy or a previously identified problem.

The process is thus characterized by phenomena that go in different directions: an activity that logically precedes a condition to the next, a phase that logically precedes it back condition and a phase that would normally be earlier to the problems. This is true both for the actors and activities.

How actors distribute tasks in the different phases of governmental activity is very important. Entering the stage actors in a stage or another input chosen or imposed, determines the nature of the action programs. Actors, issues, solutions, decisions are not necessarily stable: it can change over time, can adjust and redefine can disappear or reappear, as the evolution of political action.

**Problem definition and inclusion on the agenda**

Policy problem is a condition or situation in which needs or dissatisfactions, for whose correction is required government intervention. Not every problem can get to get a solution through a public policy measure, which is why the process of agenda setting is a selective one, the various institutional actors trying to bring issues to the attention of the government. We can say, therefore, that there are many kinds of books:

- *Public Agenda*, gathering all the problems perceived by members of a community;
- *Institutional Agenda*, cumulating all the problems that policy makers aim to solve in a certain period of time;
- *Media agenda*, which acts as a facilitator between the public and institutional agenda, but sometimes can advance their priorities.

Initially, studies with a strong pluralist focus thought that public issues always go the public agenda in the institution. It was found later that such a view is not entirely true. In political activity one can distinguish two stages:

- Definition phase of a problem, formulation of applications;
- Inclusion in the agenda, which involves analysis applications stimuli and problems, and formulating proposals to address the problems identified.

The origin of social demands and needs that this request is supposed to average is in the sphere of politics. There is total transparency, direct link between social and political; which means that it needs not defined and no states in a state of perfect vision. It is selective.

Public issues are those human needs, regardless of how they are identified, and that can not be met through the market. Many of these issues are controversial, reaching to a stake. The stake is any issue around which initiates a debate, controversy, subject to contrasting values. A bet does not exist in itself, but in

relation to specific actors, that, in most cases, have different priorities to each other.

Once the problem was acknowledged publicly by the public authority, it is forced to choose from the range of possible answers that you can provide in relation to an application for inclusion on the agenda.

### **Making the decision**

The first key element for a successful policy is the correct definition of the problem and identifying its causes, as throughout later the public policy process depends invariably. A poorly structured problem or the causes of which were not detected correctly can lead to a failure of public policy.

Typically, the decision means by which the outcome of a choice between two or more alternative possibilities of action that could lead to the achievement of the same objective. The whole process to reach this conclusion is known as "Decision-making". The main approach that has been taken into account in the study of decision-making processes used the analogy of the overall process of decision making and problem solving. The general steps of this process are as follows:

1. *Defining the problem;*
2. *Finding alternatives for action;*
3. *Evaluation of alternatives;*
4. *Selecting alternative.*

Policy-makers, given the pressure of citizens, have a great inclination to translate problems into solutions, without a prior diagnosis. Some devices are sometimes made public without knowledge of their actual usefulness. We must not overlook the fact that the diagnosis is a game of power and an integral part of public policy making. Analysis and diagnosis of the current situation can be made from the following:

-Identifying the target group will be affected by this policy, analyze the main characteristics of the public and the relationship between this group and public agencies and private partners;

-Inventory conducted by government actions, analysis of the consistency and links between them, conflicts of logic and interests of actors involved, the study analyzes the previous evaluation;

-Identifying the effects of the external environment on the phenomena observed in the target population;

- Highlighting the major interactions between citizens, public authorities and external environment;

- Analysis of the relevance of the public action.

Legitimization is a central element in a political system that involves authority approval obligation support. One way to measure it is to analyze the legitimacy of government support available for making it. David Easton makes an important distinction between two types of support: *focused and diffuse*.

*Focused support* comes from favorable attitudes and predispositions stimulated by results that are perceived by citizens as meeting their demands as they occur or even anticipating them.

Instead, *diffuse support* refers to "reserve of favorable attitudes or good will that helps members of a community to accept or condone the results they do not agree or effects they consider contrary to their wishes".

Disappointments can be accepted short and intermittent, but maintain over a long period of discrepancies between results and expectations may deteriorate the basic support for the political system.

The public can learn to support the government through the circulation of information and the use of symbols, but in time, breaking the association between the symbol and the program leading to the separation of the symbol of the program, then the government must bear the cost of that separation.

### **Policy implementation**

Once it has obtained the consent of all the optimal variant policy makers to address the problem, it must be made

known to all concerned, to foster the creation of legitimacy on the solution.

Both policy formulation and its implementation will involve many participants with different ways to understand the problem that the policy seeks to address policy goals.

*The implementation phase* is the process by which the policy must achieve the objectives set. At this stage, decisions are binding and must be put into practice. Implementation is the phase during which public policy papers and effects are generated from the regulatory framework of intentions, texts or political discourses (Meny, Thoening, 1989: 32).

Those who are formally responsible for implementing the public policy never act alone, but in cooperation or through other social actors or through individuals, groups or institutions: with prefect local factors, ministry and collaboration with Ministry B municipality relying on private associations or NGOs.

Beneficiaries of the decisions, citizens or groups of individuals rarely remain in a state of passivity. They interact directly through relationships they have, or indirectly through the network represented more or less by authorized factors responsible for the implementation and involved in the decision making.

Most authors talk about the existence of four theoretical models of policy implementation:

- *The authoritarian* - which focuses on tools and instructions and orders for management, planning, control, hierarchy and accountability;
- *Participatory model* - refers more to indirect instruments of control, such as setting goals, spontaneity, training, adaptation, negotiation, cooperation and trust, as methods and conditions to be followed in the implementation;
- *The coalition of actors* - resulting from the assumption of a plurality of actors involved in the updating of certain



policies and communicating between them, negotiating, compromising, and at the same time sharing the same common set of values and striving to achieve the same objectives.

- *Learning model* - in which those who legislate policy are attempting to gradually achieve the optimal solution, optimizing the structure of their goals and the techniques used to achieve them.

Finally, coordination policy is a sine qua non of successful implementation. Policy implementation should be approached as a process from a triple perspective: political, managerial and administrative. Implementation of a policy can not be done without understanding the concept of administrative capacity, without which we can not talk about the effective functioning of state institutions. Simply increasing the administrative capacity may be an impediment to achieving results because it depends partly on how it is organized and carried out and how staffing and their attitude functions.

However, implementation of policies involving several actors requires the development of shared vision by them, influencing and persuading supporters and opponents, negotiating commitments, conflict resolution, cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, establishing work schedules participatory ways. All, in a word, is coordination, which often represents a potential source of conflict.

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