

The Concept of Public Policy Analysis

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Abstract: *On the basis of comparative study of public policy analysis, it is difficult to underrate or downplay the illustrious contributions of an eminent American public policy scientist in the name of Professor Robert A. Goldwin who has greatly assisted social scientists to view public policy analysis as an earnest, systematic and deliberate attempt to measure the costs and benefits of various policy alternatives and to evaluate actual or proposed governmental activities [R. A. Goldwin: 1980:29] and to provide policy – makers with neutral and objective advice pertaining to the best programme in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness [Fredrick S. Lane: 1982:384 – 5 and Jenkins – Smith, 1982:89]. This forms the subject of this article.*

Keywords: *public policy analysis, aid, costs and benefits, policy alternatives, evaluate and proposed governmental activities.*

I. Introduction

Public analysis is an aid or useful tool for both elected political office – bearers and top appointed public policy – makers to make decisions and thus eventually conceptualize, digest, and adopt policy (ies) that will be in the public interest.

II. The Purpose Of The Article

The express purpose of this article is to: (a) define the concept of public policy analysis and (b) delineate the subject – matter of public policy analysis as a significant tool to both political science and public administration.

III. The Concept Of Public Policy Analysis

1.1 Relevant questions

What precisely is meant by public policy analysis?

What is the subject – matter of public policy analysis?

1.2 Possible answers, examples and illustrations

Five answers may be offered in an attempt to define public policy analysis.

- a. According to Robert A. Goldwin [1980:29] the concept ‘public policy analysis’ can be viewed as an earnest attempt to measure the costs and benefits of various policy alternative and to evaluate actual or proposed governmental activities.
- b. It is an aid for elected public office bearers and appointed public policy – makers to make decisions and thus eventually conceptual, digest and adopt policy that will be in the public interest [op. cit., 1980:44].
- c. Furthermore, public policy analysis is concerned with the conditions and structures that will enhance the efficiency of public officials [Fedrick S. Lane:1982:384 – 5].
- d. According to Jenkins – Smith [1982:89], public policy analysis is also a systematic attempt to provided policy – makers with neutral and objective advice pertaining to the best programme in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- e. In addition to the above mentioned contributions, public policy analysis is an aid to provide ‘evidence’ for decisions already made or to determine whether existing programmes should be discontinued [Barry Bozeman 1979:267].
- f.

1.3 Critical analysis of the subject – matter of public policy analysis

A critical analysis of the contributions of Professor Robert A. Goldwin [1980], eminent American public policy analyst, views the concept of public policy analysis as a systematic and deliberate endeavour to;

- a. Measure the costs and benefits of the existing policy and various policy alternatives; and
- b. Evaluate actual practical results, and or proposed governmental activities [S. B. M. Marume: academic work No. 10 of 1988].

1.4 The subject – matter of public policy analysis

To be more understanding, comprehensive, and useful, it is strongly argued that modern public policy analysis should do four main things, namely;

1. Consciously analyzing public policies themselves;
2. Deliberate examining the public policy control systems;
3. Comparatively measuring the possible/probable economy, costs and benefits of the actual and various public policy alternatives; and
4. Systematically evaluating the actual practical results produced by a specific public policy [Marume: 1988].

1.4.1 Consciously analyzing public policies themselves

Public policy analysis as deliberate endeavour: is consciously analyzing in a systematic manner public policies themselves in order to determine their suitability, comprehensiveness, relevancy, reliability, appropriateness, and applicability.

1.4.2 Deliberately examining public policy control systems

Public policy control is used to mean:

- a. The deliberately detailed, systematic, and meticulous act of monitoring by authorized knowledge public functionaries at given times of all the administrative activities.
- b. Carefully monitoring that all the operations at all times and at all levels of the public authority are being purposefully carried out in accordance with the policies made, with the plans adopted, with the objectives predetermined, with the orders given, with the instructions issued, and with the principles laid down;
- c. With the objectives of achieving the actual, desired, anticipated, expected, and required practical public policy results within the given time frame.
- d. Economically, effectively, and efficiently utilizing optimally all the resources made available; and
- e. Vigorous implementing where this is not being achieved, the corrective action to bring about conformity and compliance, or making the necessary and appropriate adjustments.

1.4.3 Comparatively measuring possible/probable economy, costs and benefits

Public policy analysis also comparatively measures the possible/probable economy, costs and perceivable benefits of the various public policy alternatives or of several ways in which a public policy may be implemented.

To obtain full appreciation of the probable economy, costs, and benefits, a comparative analysis of all the various alternative ways of implementing public policy is made.

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Systematically evaluating actual practical results produced by a specific policy

Emphasizing the significance of evaluation techniques the modern social scientists say:

There is no necessity for working social scientists to allow the political meaning of their work to be shaped by the accidents of its setting, or its use to be determined by the purposes of other men. It is quite within their powers to discuss its use to be determined by the purposes of other men. It is quite within their powers to discuss its meaning and decide upon its uses as matters of their own policy.

1.4.4 Systematically evaluating actually practical results produced specific public policy

1.4.4.1 C. Wright Mills:

Evaluation research deserves full recognition as a social science activity which will continue to expand. It provides excellent and already – made opportunities to examine individuals, groups, and societies in the grip of major and minor forces for change. Its applications contribute not to a science of social planning and a more rationally planned society but also to the perfection of social and psychological theories of change.

1.4.4.2 Charles R. Wright:

Evaluation is a systematic process of judging the worth-whileness of some activity, and evaluation research is seen as the specific use of the scientific methods for the purpose of making an evaluation. Thus evaluation can be viewed as the determination of the economy, costs, and benefits of public policy alternatives would be; and evaluation research is seen as the specific use of the scientific method for the purpose of making an evaluation.

1.4.4.3 Evaluation assesses:

Actual practical results produced by specific public policy, or proposed programme. A typical evaluation, which aims at improving policy itself and programme decisions, proceeds through five stages:

- determining fairly accurately the decision makers needs;
- designing;
- implementation;
- reporting; and
- dissemination

It is important to note that evaluation research and public policy analysis often resemble each other as elaborate below:

Evaluation research asks about

- The kind of change that is desired;
- The means by which this change is to be brought about;
- The criteria according to which such change can be recognized; and
- The related results and effects.

1.4.4.4 Summary on the evaluation aspects of public policy analysis

Assessing actual practical results produced by a specific public policy or proposed governmental activities.

A typical evaluation, which aims at improving policy itself and program me decisions proceeds through five stages:

- determining fairly accurately the decision – makers needs
- structuring and designing;
- implementation;
- reporting and
- dissemination.

It is important to note that evaluation research and public policy analysis often resemble each other as elaborate below.

Evaluation research asks about:

- The kind of change that is desired;
- The means by which this change is to be brought about;
- The criteria according to which such change can be recognized; and
- The related results and effects

The idea of evaluation research is to assess what actual practical results are produces by a specific public policy, what the costs and benefits are of public policy alternatives or several ways in which a policy may be implemented.

Public policy analysis, on the one hand, focuses on analysis or policies themselves and on the probable effects of various policy alternatives, while evaluation research, on the other hand, examines actual programmes based upon empirical input and retrospective analysis.

a. Evaluation research as a methodology assesses;

- Actual practical results produced by a specific policy;
- Probable costs and perceived benefits of public policy alternatives.

b. Public policy analysis focuses on

- Systematic analysis of public policy themselves;
- Examination of public policy control systems;
- Measurement of possible/probable economy, costs and benefits of various public policy alternatives.
- Evaluation of actual practical results produced by a specific policy.

c. Further comments on public policy analysis indicate that:

- Public policy is a more comprehensive analytical tool than evaluation research;
- Public policy analysis is an essential aid for elected and appointed policy – makers to make informed public decisions and thus eventually adopt policy that will be appropriate, realistic and be in the public interest.
- Additionally public policy analysis concerns itself with the conditions, structures, institutions, actions, activities, processes and means that will enhance the economy, efficiently and effectiveness of official operations.

Therefore, public policy analysis is a systematic, rational, comprehensive and deliberate endeavour to provide public policy makers with clear, neutral, honest and objective advice which is based on valid and proven facts pertaining to the best programme in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and economy.

In addition to the above arguments, public policy analysis is a practically useful aid to provide evidence for decisions already made to determine whether existing programmes should continue or not, or to make the necessary and appropriate adjustments.

d. Critical differences between evaluation and public policy analysis

The idea of evaluation research is to assess what practical results are produced by a specific public policy, and what the costs and benefits are of alternative public policies or several ways in which a policy may be implemented.

Public policy analysis on the one hand, focuses on analysis of policies themselves and on the probable effects of various policy alternatives; while evaluation research, on the other hand, examines actual programmes based upon empirical input and retrospective analysis.

1.5 Evaluation research as a methodology assesses

- Actual practical results produced by a specific policy;
- Costs and benefits of alternative public policies;

1.6 Public policy analysis focuses on

- systematic analysis of public policies themselves;
- examination of public policy control systems;
- measurement of possible probable economy costs and benefits of various policy alternatives
- evaluation of actual practical produced by a specific policy

Further comments on public policy analysis indicate that:

- Public policy analysis is a more comprehensive analytical tool than evaluation research
- Public policy analysis is an essential aid for elected and appointed policy makers to make informed public decisions and thus eventually adopt policy that will be appropriate, realistic and in the public interests.
- Additionally public policy analysis concerns itself with the conditions, structures, institutions, actions, processes, means that will enhance the economy efficiently and effectiveness of official actions

Therefore public policy analysis is a systematic rational and deliberate endeavour to provide public policy makers with clear comprehensive, neutral and objective advice which is based on valid and proven facts pertaining to the best programme in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and economy. In addition to the above arguments policy analysis is a practically useful aid to provide evidence for decisions already made to determine whether existing programmes should continue or not, or to make the necessary and appropriate adjustments. On the basis of the above, public policy analysis may summarized form be defined as a systematic, scientific and deliberate endeavour to identify?

1. The public policies themselves in terms of the following attributes

- suitability
- authoritativeness
- comprehensiveness
- legitimacy
- relevancy
- reliability
- rationality
- appropriateness
- applicability
- implementability

2. The public policy control systems as

- Monitoring by authorized functionaries of all associated public activities to given times/intervals
 - Ensuring operation at all levels at all times are being purposefully carried out in accordance with the public policies made, plans adopted, objectives predetermined, orders given, instructions issued and principles laid down
 - With the objectives of achieving the practically achieved results against the desired, expected, anticipated and required targets;
 - Optimally using resources allocated for the purpose intended;
 - Implementing where this is not being achieve corrective action or making necessary and appropriate adjustments
3. The comparative measurement of possible/probable economy, costs, and benefits of the various public policy alternatives; and
 4. The evaluation of the actual practical results produced by a specific policy.

Recommendable courses of action on the basis of public policy analysis

The desirable expectation of public policy analysis are that:

- public policy makers must accept the objective truth and results of scientific investigations;
 - public policy makers must correctly relate share; debate and compare the results of studies; and
 - policy makers must act timeously and decisively on recommendations of public policy analysis
- Contributions to public policy analysis by management development training institutions (training institutions):

Main functions include:

- training
- research
- consultancy

Mission objectives and strategies of management development training institutions for relevance to the reform process;

In order to match the expectations of governments involved in public strategies service reforms the missions objectives and strategies of management development institutions should be transformed and aligned with the government's reform orientation. They should bear in mind the environmental changes currently going on in the public sector. These include:-

- Changes in the philosophy of the government where market – orientation entrepreneurship, good governance and accountability are being emphasized;
- Restructuring of the public service which includes downsizing or rightsizing, decentralization, deregulation.
- Changes in the societal value systems emphasizing: efficiency and effectiveness
- Responsiveness and accountability
- Customer – care
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Openness versus confidential reports.

Management by objectives implies: that

a. In strategic plans thorough preparation of them for, say five years with:

- a clear vision
- clearly stated mission statements
- predetermined aims, goals ends
- clear objectives
- achievable plans
- measurable targets
- perceivable strategies
- specific time frames and
- a state of physical and financial implications

b. Clear work measurement standards (performance measures) the demands and expectations of civil society on the need to improve policy development and service delivery how brought pressure to bear on the state to seek and maintain issues of:

- equity
- quality
- quantity
- coverage of the policy management

The characteristic sought of an effective and comprehensive service are defined as four performance measures:

- *quantity*; provides a comprehensive service
- *quality*: has a clarity or purpose, inherent logic, accuracy, range of options, adequate consultation and practicability of implementations
- *time*; meeting the reporting deadlines of projects
- *costs* performed within agreed budgetary provisions

These performance policy measures are generally demanded by the consumers who are no longer passive but active in the policy development and management. Governments are, therefore, expected to develop a policy which is relevant to its priorities of high quantity and quality and efficiently produced. In essence, the consumers expect value for money.

Critical skill, capabilities and competencies

In order for the management development training institutions to be particularly relevant and useful to governments in public policy analysis, they should:

- a. acquire specialist knowledge in relevant areas of public administration so that they will be strategically and advantageously positioned to render professional advice on policy matters, formulation, adoption, implementation, control and evaluation, reviews, reformulation and interpretation and policy priorities;
- b. acquire critical skills including negotiations, lobbying, presentation, and lytica and monitoring skills which they and their clients need to cope with public policy analysis; and
- c. acquire special attributed in networking and exchange of programmes; recognizing the need to increase local capacities to meet the demands for training, research and consultancy, it is highly recommended the need for professional networking at local, regional and international levels. It is recommendable, and call on all management development training institutions within the respective countries in order to build up formidable teams of multi disciplinary public policy analysts to undertake the required teaching research and consultancy needs.

Training and development priorities

By far the most important instrument for accelerating the institutionalization processes is continuous relevant training of staff and management development for top officials. The staff in the training units should always upgrade their skills and knowledge in teaching, research planning, monitoring and evaluation. They should also be in a position to use the latest technological instruments, such as computers and other communications technologies.

Training contributes to behavioural and attitudinal changes as well as the breaking down of barriers, resistance and rigidities. Training programmes should focus not only on their daily activities, but also on change management, policy decisions – making processes, inter – governmental. Coordination and civil society’s organisations such as labour unions, interest groups, formers, professional staff associations such as teachers, nurses, doctors, and lawyers, and other non – government or community based organisations relevant to public policy making processes.

The training policy units should be able to tap the knowledge, skills and information of national universities, colleges, management institutions and other institutions of higher learning. It may also work closely with regional and international organisations that deal with research, policy and planning issues.

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Section A

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Section B:

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1. Profiles of contributors and photographs



Samson Brown Muchineripi Marume: a former senior civil servant for over 37 years in various capacities and 10 years as deputy permanent secretary; ten years as a large commercial farmer; well travelled **domestically** within Zimbabwe; **regionally** [SADC countries: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Swaziland, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and DRC]; and **Africa** [Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Libya, and Uganda]; and **internationally** [Washington, New York and California in USA; Dublin and Cork in Ireland; England in United Kingdom; Netherlands, Spain (Nice), France, Geneva in Switzerland, former Yugoslavia-Belgrade; Rome and Turin in Italy; Cyprus –

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