



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

**PUBLIC POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE
DES 317**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
COURSE GUIDE**

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DES 317:

PUBLIC POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE

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Module I

Meaning and Nature of the Concept of Public Policy

Contents

1. Meaning and Nature of the Concept of Public Policy
2. What is Public Policy?
3. Importance of Public Policy
4. Features of Public Policy
5. Types of Public Policy
6. Theories of Public Policy
7. The Main Areas of Public Policy
8. Conclusion
9. Tutor Marked Assignment

References

INTRODUCTION

The course, Public Policies and Governance(*DES 317*), is a core course which carries three (3) credit units for Undergraduate students in the department of Development Studies, faculty of Social sciences at the National Open University of Nigeria

(NOUN). It is also available as an elective course for students pursuing other programmes in related departments and faculties in the university. This course guide introduces students to the themes and perspectives surrounding the concept of public policies and governance and the factors responsible for policy failure in Governance across the globe. Also included in this course guide are instructions on how to make the best out of the course and how to tackle the embedded tutor-marked assignments (TMA's). The course is carefully designed to accommodate tutorial sessions during which a facilitator will take the class through the intricate areas of the course and ensure extensive comprehension.

COURSE CONTENT

This course introduces students to the different definitions of public policies and Governance, as well as the various theories and perspectives in public policies and governance. This course also discusses the dimensions of social development and development concerns in Nigeria.

COURSE AIMS

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the concept of public policies and governance as an aspect of development studies. The overall direction of the course is broken into specific objectives. These objectives are summarized below in the form of what students are expected to know on the successful completion of the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to meaning and definitions of 'social development' as well as dimensions of social development.
- To expose student to the various characteristics of social development
- To expose students to development theories and perspectives in social development

- To expose students to the emerging issues in social development practices in Nigeria.
- To expose students to the issues surrounding rural development and how they connect to social development in Nigeria
- To expose students to the key social development challenges in Nigeria and how they impact on social development.

WORKING THROUGH THE COURSE

To successfully complete this course, students are required to study each of the units in every module, read the suggested materials, and texts on the course, and also read the references attached to every discussion. Each unit contains self-assessment exercises in addition to Tutor-Marked Assessments (TMAs). Furthermore, at some point in the course, each student will be required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. This course should take about fifteen weeks to complete, after which there will be a comprehensive examination.

STUDY MODULES AND UNITS

There are three (3) modules of eleven (11) units in this course guide; all of which should be studied carefully to acquire a complete understanding of the content of the course. The modules and the units are designed to enable students grasp the complexities in the arguments, and make meaningful contributions to the scholarship driving the course.

MODULE ONE: Understanding the concept of Social development

- Unit One: The meaning and Definitions of Social Development
- Unit Two: Factors and Agents of Social development
- Unit Three: Dimensions of Social development
- Unit Four: Implications and Challenges of Social development

MODULE TWO: Social development theories and Practice

- Unit One: Development theories and Social development
- Unit Two: Approaches to Social development (Statist, Enterprise, Populist, etc.)
- Unit Three: Politics, Governance and Social development

Unit Four: Theoretical perspectives in social policy and Social development

MODULE THREE: Social development theories and practice Nigeria

Unit One: Social development challenges in Nigeria

Unit Two: Rural development and Social development in Nigeria

Unit Three: Politics and Gender issues and Social development in Nigeria

REFERENCES AND OTHER RESOURCES

Every unit contains a list of References and texts for further reading. Students are expected to get those textbooks and materials listed get as many as possible, especially as these textbooks and materials are carefully selected to deepen the knowledge of students on the course. Some of these texts include

ASSIGNMENT FILE

There are **twenty-four (24)** assignments (TSA's) in the different units of this course guide, and students are expected to attempt all of them by following the schedule prescribed for them in terms of when to attempt the homework and submit same for grading by your tutor.

Module One

Module Two

Module Three

ASSESSMENT

Your assessment will be based on tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) and a final examination which is written at the end of the course. The TMA's will be submitted at the completion of the entire modules and presented to the Tutor. Students are expected to turn in their TMAs at the due date as it constitutes a major part of the grades.

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMAs)

Assignment questions for the 11 units in this course are presented at the end of each module. The TMAs usually constitute 30% of the total score for the course.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

The final examination will be of three hours' duration and have a value of 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions which reflect the types of self-assessment practice exercises and tutor-marked problems you have previously encountered. All areas of the course will be assessed. You should use the time between finishing the last unit and sitting for the examination to revise the entire course material. You might find it useful to review your self-assessment exercises, tutor-marked assignments and comments on them before the examination. The final examination covers information from all parts of the course.

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

One of the greatest advantages distance learning offers is that the programme is fluid and allows students to determine their own reading time. However, while that is an advantage, it has been observed to make some students complacent too. Thus, this section provides a guide to help students get the best out of the course.

First note that each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how the particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let students know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use these objectives to guide your study. When you have finished the unit, you must go back to them and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If you make a habit of doing this, you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course and getting the best grade.

The main body of the unit is designed in a self-explanatory way and guides students through the key issues in the unit. There are also self-assessment questions attached to

the end of every unit titled Tutor Marked Assessments. You should do each self-assessment exercises as you come to it in the study unit.

The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you have any challenges understanding the discussions, do well to consult your Tutor. Remember that your Tutor's job is to help you, so do not hesitate to call and ask your Tutor to provide the help.

1. Read this Course Guide thoroughly.
2. Organize a study schedule. Refer to the 'Course overview' for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units.
3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your Tutor know before it is too late for help.
4. Turn to the introduction of each unit you come across and see the objectives for the unit.
5. Work through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit you will be instructed to read sections from your set books or other articles. Use the unit to guide your reading.
6. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study material or consult your Tutor.
7. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then move on to the next unit.

8. When you have submitted an assignment to your Tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next units. Keep to your schedule.
9. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your Tutor's comments, both on the tutor-marked assignment form and also written on the assignment. Consult your Tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.
10. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this Course Guide).

COURSE MARKING SCHEME

The table presented below indicates the total marks allocated to the two key components of the course: assessments and examinations. The various assessments in the course will amount to 30% of the students' entire score, while the final examination will be 70%, making a total of 100%. Students are expected to score at least 50% to pass the course.

Assessment	Marks
Assignment (TMA's and Assignments)	30%
Final Examination	70%
Total	100%

COURSE OVERVIEW

The table presented below indicates the modules, the units, number of hours per week and assignments to be taken by students to successfully complete the course.

Module	Title of Units	Weekly activities (Max Hours)	Weekly activities (Min Hours)
1.	The meaning and Definitions of Social Development	3	2 ^{1/2}
	Factors and Agents of Social development	2	1 ^{1/2}
	Dimensions of Social development	2	1 ^{1/2}
	Implications and Challenges of Social development	2	2
2.	Development theories and Social development	3	2 ^{1/2}
	Approaches to Social development (Statist, Enterprise, Populist, etc.)	3	1 ^{1/2}
	Politics, Governance and Social development	2	1 ^{1/2}
	Policies for Social development	2	1
3.	Social development challenges in Nigeria	3	1 ^{1/2}

	Rural development and Social development in Nigeria	2	1 ^{1/2}
	Gender issues and Social development in Nigeria	2	1
Total maximum and minimum hours per week		26	18

COURSE CONTENT

MODULE ONE: Understanding the concept of Social development

Unit One: The meaning and Definitions of Social Development

Unit Two: Factors and Agents of Social development

Unit Three: Dimensions of Social development

Unit Four: Implications and Challenges of Social development

MODULE TWO: Social development theories and Practice

Unit One: Development theories and Social development

Unit Two: Approaches to Social development (Statist, Enterprise, Populist, etc.)

Unit Three: Politics, Governance and Social development

Unit Four: Policies for Social development

MODULE THREE: Social development theories and practice in Nigeria

Unit One: Social development challenges in Nigeria

Unit Two: Rural development and Social development in Nigeria

Unit Three: Gender issues and Social development in Nigeria

CONCLUSION

On successful completion of this course, a student would have developed critical thinking skills for efficient and effective discussion of the issues surrounding the phenomenon of development and social development in Nigeria. However, to gain a complete understanding of the course content, students are advised to read intensively and extensively, including literature from other academic fields.

MODULE ONE

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC POLICIES

MODULE CONTENTS

Unit One

Unit Two:

Unit Three:

Unit Four

UNIT ONE: What is Public Policy

1.1 Introduction

This unit introduces students to the concept of public policy. It explains what Public policy means and its main features. It also examines the different types of public policy and the theories that have tried to explain them. It then gives examples of the types of public policy areas. That are of importance to countries and how due to globalisation, Public Policy is becoming more transnational as the world grapples with shrinking borders and new issues and concerns that are emerging.

2. What is Public Policy?

We begin by examining what Public Policy means. The study of public policy has gained more attention in recent times but it is important to appreciate that policy making has been in existence since the formation of any kind of community. There has always been a need to develop the basic foundations and laws that will govern the community of people and how their concerns can be addressed and their lives can be improved. These processes formed the basic foundation of public policy development. So, whether we are examining a small village, city or nation, policies have always existed in one form or the other all with the overriding goal of improving the lives of the citizenry, the security of the state and ensuring good relations with the wider society.

Prior to the emergence of the nation state, the task of developing policies was the responsibility of the paramount ruler or in some cases a group of elders nominated to provide guidance. As societies evolved and nations states emerged, these responsibilities were primarily carried out by the state through elected officials. It does not matter what system of government is being operated, policies will exist and only differ in the priority areas and the process of their development.

Anyebe (2018:8) defines Public policy *‘as the direction that governments lay down in order to take decisions or ‘as a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or a matter of concern’* (Anderson, 1997 cited in Anyebe; 2018:8). However, the whole concept of public

policy continues to be examined and this has led to the emergence of several definitions of the concept. One prominent definition has been that public policy is *‘what government intends to do to achieve certain goals’* (Anyebe; 2018:8). Nevertheless, it has been noted that public policy goes beyond just deciding to do something and must also involve *‘actual resource allocation presented by projects and programmes designed to respond to perceived public problems and challenges requiring government action for their solution.’* (Anyebe; 2018)

It can thus be said that public policy is *‘a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives’*¹. Importantly as Osman (2002) notes, public policy making is not merely a technical function of government; rather it is a complex interactive process influenced by the diverse nature of socio-political and other environmental forces. These various forces, such as social, cultural and environmental, form the policy context and results in variations in policies and affect the output and impact.

This brings us to the essence of public policy, which is that it must be goal oriented and that they are instruments to achieve goals. We should note that the statement of a goal does not make it a policy. Every government policy is the aimed at achieving some goal, either aimed at the majority of the population- such as a poverty alleviation programme or aimed at some specific section of the population -such as a policy aimed at reducing maternal mortality or assisting people living with disabilities. Whenever governments develop policies, they must find ways of translating these into goals.

We began by stating that public policy is simply defined as what government actually decides or chooses to do and this assumes government actions are geared towards improving the lives of their citizens. This positive inference shows the way in which governments try to deal with the concerns of the citizens and how it aims to better

¹ <https://www.definitions.net/definition/public+policy>

their lives and this involves actions that cut across different sections of government, including the legal and administrative (Orizu, Chinyere, and Tochukwu. 2012)

It has been argued that the development of policies is not the sole prerogative of government. Citizens also advocate for policy. However, few of such are implemented by government because these are the ones that have an effect on the citizens of a country and only then can they be public policy (Dlakwa; 2008 cited Orizu, Chinyere, and Tochukwu. 2012).

3. Importance of Public Policy

Why is public policy important? In every society there are always issues of concern and these need to be tackled and as countries have grown in size, the number of issues has multiplied. Managing health issues such as reducing infant and maternal mortality, improving standards of education, improving national and individual food security and reducing poverty have all become issues of greater concern around the world. Governments thus have a responsibility to identify the areas of concern and come up with policies that can address such issues. Public policies usually have a clear purpose and a time frame to achieving their goals. Once a goal is decided the policy is devised in such a method that it determines the course of action needed to achieve that goal.

The concept of public policy gained greater traction after the second world war when the devastation from the war raised many socio-economic issues that required attention and needed to be addressed. The period was also of great importance to the emerging colonial states because colonialism had, depending on how it was examined, drained many of the colonial states of their resources and the focus had not been on the improvement of the state rather the concern was with maintaining law and order and extracting resources from the colonies to the home country. As greater demand for independence gained momentum, the issues that were of importance to the citizens started getting greater attention and needed to be addressed.

Another period that has seen the emergence of new concerns and issues has occurred as the world has become more globalised and the borders between countries have

shrunk and in some cases are fluid. This has resulted in new global policies having to be developed by the community of nations to address these issues. As Cochran and Malone (2014:2) note:

‘public problems are more complex, interconnected, and global than in the more agrarian society at the turn of the nineteenth century. These policy problems require rigorous analysis along with an understanding of the strategies needed to turn imaginative policy ideas into practical problem solving in making policy choices.’

Some of the issues include the increasing number of migrants from countries such as Libya and Syria, who due to the devastation of the wars are trying to make their way to Europe or the United states. The same is true for many citizens from South America who are also trying to make their way to North America particularly the United states. International organisations such as the International Office of Migration (IOM), which is a United Nations (UN) body are working with countries to develop policies on how these migrants and refugees should be treated. There is also the issue of women and slave trafficking that has become an issue of concern and the increasing role of the worldwide web in spreading information where, hate speech and fake news and fraud are becoming more common.

How are nations meant to tackle this? There is the need for a broad international legal framework to be developed to handle this.

In developing countries, the examination of public policy has been from a largely developed world perspective. This has resulted in poor policy development and implementation in developing countries and might explain why many of these countries are still tackling socio-economic issues. Osman (2012) notes that current policies are not reflective of the public policy process in developing countries because they have been developed from studies of industrialised countries.

4. Features of Public Policy

We can now examine the main features of Public Policymaking. The Public Policy process is seen as being '*a very intricate process*' that involves several interconnected components that interact on different levels'² It has been observed that while some of the parts of the process are clear and observable, others are difficult to see and could have unforeseen effects on the expected outcomes of the policies,

Secondly, public policy is seen as being part of a dynamic process because it is a continuous process that occurs within a structure and is said to change with time and this make it complex. The reason for the complexity relates to the different institutions and actors that affect the way public policy is shaped and how the components can affect the expected outcomes. Each component can affect the public policy because of their differing features and values³. Public policies also allow for decision making and provide the foundation for how government intends to achieve its goals. It is also seen as a way of looking at the future which injects some amount of uncertainty and risk.

While the changing nature of governance has seen more actors in the public policy process it can be argued that these actors only compliment the functions of government and do not displace it. All policies inevitably are developed by government even if there are numerous non-government stakeholders in the development process. Policies are also seen as being in the public interest and this relates to the supposition of positivity of public policies that had been discussed earlier. All policies are developed with an expectation of maximum benefits to the largest number of people and are developed with inputs from several government agencies that cut across the legislature, the executive and the judiciary.

5. Types of Public Policy

We have discussed the nature and importance of public policy and we must now examine the different types of public policy. The first type of public policy is the Substantive public policy that is concerned with the '*general welfare and development*

² Public Policy.NIILM University, India

³ ibid

*of the society, the programmes like provision of education and employment opportunities, economic stabilization, law and order enforcement, anti- pollution legislation etc. are the result of substantive policy formulation.*⁴ These types of policies are focused on improving the overall welfare of the citizens of the state without bias to any section of society.

The second type of public policies are regulatory in nature and are mainly concerned with issues such as *trade and business regulations and public utilities* etc. The task of implementing such policies are usually carried out through state agencies such as the utility companies. In Nigeria the Nigeria Electricity Power Authority (NEPA) or Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) was one such agency before the whole sector was privatised even though the transmission arm was retained as a public entity. Some of the policies that are considered regulatory are usually to manage behaviour. These can include, mandatory seat belts for drivers, speed limits, non-smoking in public place and the four child per couple policy aimed at managing population growth. Some of these regulatory policies, reward good behaviour and sanction bad behaviour.

The next type of public policy are distributive policies that target certain sections of society and can involve the provision of welfare and health services. In Nigeria we have policies such as the Basic education policy that guarantees 9 years of free basic education which targets children up to the age of 15. Others can include highways, transfer of goods and services and health services.

We then have redistributive policies that are aimed at bringing about *basic social and economic changes*. Certain public goods and welfare services are disproportionately divided in the middle of certain segments of the society, these goods and services are streamlined through redistributive policies.

⁴ Different Types of Public Policy <https://essayrx.com/article/different-types-of-public-policy>

6. Theories of Public Policy

The definition of public policy as stated above indicates that government is the key actor in identifying and developing public policy. While this was largely the case when the state was the dominant actor in governance, as the role of the state was rolled back and the market was given bigger prominence, other actors such as private actors Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and advocacy groups have begun to play bigger roles in determining how public policy is developed. Over the years several policies were developed to try and understand how we could understand the development of public policies. Here we will examine some of the theories that try to explain how public policies are developed.

One of the theories that attempt to examine the factors that determine how public policies are determined is the Political Systems Theory. This theory treats government as an organic being that responds to concerns in the society and then converts these into policies. Anyebe (2018) notes that the theory was developed by David Easton (1965) where he notes that ‘public policy may also be seen as a political system’s response to demands arising from its environment.’ Anyebe (2018) further notes that Anderson (1997) states that political systems are *‘those identifiable and interrelated institutions and activities (what we usually think of as government institutions and political processes) in a society that make authoritative allocations of values (decisions) that are binding on society* (Anderson, 1997 cited in Anyebe, 2018:13).

There is also the elite theory that argues that public policy is determined by the direction of a country’s elites. The theory is based on the belief that in every society, there are the few elites and the masses and due to their closeness to power and influence, these elites determine how public policy is shaped. At the core of this theory is that *‘public policy can be regarded as reflecting the values and preferences of a governing elite’* (Anyebe; 2018:10) with the argument being that ‘public policy is not determined by the demands and actions of the people or the masses but rather by ruling elite whose preferences are carried into effect by political officials and agencies

with the elites believing that *‘they alone have the ability to determine the policies to promote the welfare of the masses and implement them* (Anyebe, 2018:10). These policies take a top to bottom approach, from the elite to the masses.

This theory can be summarised as follows as set out by *Dye and Zeigler (1975)* where they note that society is divided into the few who have power and the many who do not have and it is the few that determine policies based on their values. They further note that even among the few, those that govern are those that are on the upper echelons of society. This last assumption is debatable in developing countries where values are subject to cultural norms that are varied and while elites might have similar goals of maintaining their position in society and imposing their values on society, there will be areas of contention based on self- interest which can create fractures within that group. They further observe that while the transition between the masses to the elite position is slow it must be continuous so as to ensure ‘stability and avoid revolt with ‘only non-elites who have accepted the basic elite consensus can be admitted to governing circles.

Changes in public policy will be incremental rather than revolutionary (Anyebe, 2018:10) and allows for responses to events that threaten a social system with a minimum of alteration or dislocation of the system. It is assumed that elites have a greater influence on masses than masses have on them. This approach is contested between adherents (sociologists) and opponents (political scientists) who disagree on the foundations of the theory.

The Group theory (pluralists) is based on the foundation that policies emerge through demand from organized groups. It argues that there are no groups that have the monopoly of power with dominance decided by the qualities of the group members. The lack of monopoly of any group results in consensus between the competing groups to develop policies. Public policies are thus seen as the equilibrium reached through the compromises reached in the group struggles. This theory will have a greater effect in a homogenous society where there are fewer groups and less contestation. In plural societies, there will be greater struggles and less chance of

creating public policies that are acceptable to all. In societies where, different groups have control of the policy making process, what will be observed is that policies will change depending on the group in power. (Anyebe, 2018; Osman, 2002)

However, this theory has been criticised for ignoring the power dynamics inherent in different groups. More financially buoyant groups will tend to have greater influence on the public policy process. The theory also ignores the role policymakers have in deciding which policies should be pursued.

There are number of issues that affect how powerful groups and hence the level of influence they will have in the policy making space. Anyebe (2018) identifies some of these factors such as;

- Wealth
- Organisational skill
- Leadership quality
- Bargaining skill
- Access to decision-makers

This theory when applied to a plural country like Nigeria can provide a foundation to understanding how public policies are developed and how the various actors and factors intersect to reach a compromise or state of equilibrium. This will be further examined when we discuss the stakeholders and actors in the policy making process.

It has also been argued that public policy is also affected by self-interest. The rational choice concept states that if we agree that elected officials/policymakers shape policies then it can be argued that such policies will be shaped to fit their self-interest instead of a national interest. It is thus argued that policymakers, in this case politicians will develop policies that will not hurt them politically. This kind of policy development will negatively affect policy outcomes and this will be examined later in the course.

Another theory is Incrementalism that was developed by Charles Lindblom in 1959. The argument is that due to a number of competing interests, developing acceptable new public policies might be bogged down in competition (Obi, 2016). Because of this most policy makers will focus on making slight variations on existing policies. So, public policy will just be '*a continuation of past government activities with only incremental modifications*' (Anyebe, 2018). Sutton (1999) notes that this theory is remedial, focusing on making small rather than major changes and is rather conservative (Cochran and Malone, 2014) because it does not create new policies, rather it uses existing policies as a base for new policies. However, the proponents of this theory argue that it allows for quicker development of public policy, because it reduces contestation between different groups.

7. The Main Areas of Public Policy

We have discussed the nature and meaning of public policy, the types and the concepts that have tried understanding how policies are developed. Here we look at the various types of public policy areas. These include but are not restricted to the following areas and as new concerns emerge, new policies are developed to form part of a country's public policy.

The various policies could include;

- a. Child and Family Policy
- b. Cultural Policy
- c. Economic Policy and Public Finance
- d. Education Policy
- e. Energy, Environmental, and Science Policy
- f. Global Conflict
- g. Health Policy
- h. Poverty Eradication Policy
- i. Food security Policy
- j. International Development

k. Social Policy and Inequality

l. Urban Policy

One new area of global concern has been the low level of development around the countries of the global south where high poverty levels and high rates of infant and maternal mortality remains a challenge. There are also issues of climate change and girl child education all resulted in the development of the Sustainable Development Goals. These resulted in countries developing new policies to address the issues highlighted in the SDG document if they did not have specific policies already in place.

8. Conclusion

This unit has introduced students to the concept of Public Policy. It has examined the nature, features and types of public policies. The unit has also introduced the various theories that have emerged trying to explain and understand the concept of public policy.

The unit is a foundation to understanding the relationship between Public Policy and Governance. Governance is basically the way in which nation states are run and there is an obvious link between governance and public policy development and implementation. The types of public policies that emerge are tied to politics and political action⁵. As new governance has emerged, the manner in which policies are implemented has also evolved. It is argued that governments are now trying to balance efficiency over ethics⁶.

The next unit will focus on the explaining the concept of governance before we proceed to and connect and examine the relationship of public policy and governance especially in the context of developing countries.

⁵ Public Policy.NIILM University, India

⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/governance/Public-policy>

9. Tutor Marked Assignment

1. What do you understand by Public Policy and why is it important?
2. Examine one of the main theories of Public Policy and its relevance in explaining public policy development.
3. Identify one global event since the turn of the century that has affected the way public policy has changed.
4. As a global public policy, what effect did the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have in solving some of the worlds' problems?
5. Taking one area of Public Policy, examine its success or challenges in Nigeria

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Module II

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What is Governance?

1.Introduction

This module forms the second part of the Public Policy and Governance Course. It focuses on the issue of governance that has taken a greater significance as more countries are being democratized and new areas of what governance should look like are emerging.

The unit discusses the concepts of Good governance and ethics and examines the role of ethical behaviour and standards in government. The most important aspect of this unit is to study how idea of good governance can be applied to public sector administration. This is important because unlike most organisations, the public sector's goal is to enhance and improve the wellbeing of citizens through the effective implementation of public policies.

2. Defining Governance

The idea of governance is said to be as old as the first communities and since the beginning of the millennium there has been an increased interest in the term. Although the idea was initially on public sector management, Simonis (2004) notes that there was a gradual shift of focus in the late 1980s and early 1990s at the end of the cold war. The change began when international organisations such as the World Bank began to use it as a condition for extending credit to developing countries. Gisselquist (2012:2) states that in 1989, the World Bank 'declared that 'a crisis of governance' underlay 'the litany of Africa's development problems.' This began a period where the international organisations realised that market-based policies with the market as the driver of growth and development were failing while aid resources were not being managed properly. The focus was now on to find out the reason for the failure and this was placed squarely on the shoulders of poor governance and this began the call for the need for good governance (Gisselquist: 2012).

Because of this reason of poor governance that had seen many countries continue to grapple with lack of development and developmental issues such as poverty, poor health and education services, international bodies such as the United Nations and World Bank began to focus on ‘good’ governance to ensure that these global issues are properly tackled.

Like many concepts, defining governance within a restricted corridor remains contentious with a wide range of definitions trying to provide some understanding of the concept. Some of the definitions such as the initial World Bank definition are broad covering issues such as rules, enforcement mechanisms, and organizations.⁷

The World Bank has further expanded this definition and states that;

"Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development"

This has been additionally redefined to include more criteria and give it a more normative perspective. One of the new definitions is that governance is;

"...the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them."⁸

The normative aspect of the term is still being contested because, some argue that, for example, the exercise of power can be found in different kinds of governments and even though there has been emphasis on democracy as the ideal form of government and in essence governance that can provide development⁹, Fukuyama (2013) argues that governance should be seen as ‘a government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services, regardless of

⁷ World Bank's 2002 World Development Report "Building Institutions for Markets

⁸ ibid

⁹ See, Sen Development as Freedom

whether that *government is democratic or not*¹⁰. He argues that ‘good’ and ‘bad’ governance can be found in all types of government even though recent trends have been to link ‘good’ governance to democracy. He goes on to state that the idea of governance has taken a more normative slant, with criteria being developed to explain what is required for effective governance.

However, Fukuyama argues that contrary to that push for a more normative perspective for understanding the idea of governance, ‘the quality of governance is different from the ends that governance is meant to fulfil’ and that governance was ‘about the performance of agents in carrying out the wishes of principals, and not about the goals that principals set.’ He saw government as an organisation and governance was about the execution of its goals by its agents irrespective of whether the goals were good or bad as opposed to normative slant currently being attached to it.

The fact that some criteria have been developed to define what good governance should resemble comes with its own problems. The criteria include accountability, transparency, anti-corruption, rule of law, advancement for women, democracy and decentralization. But Botchway (2001) notes that, defining these criteria makes it difficult because they are value-laden, making it hard to find an acceptable form of good governance.

3. The Evolution of Good Governance

The previous section has attempted to define the idea of governance and how this has evolved into the current idea of good governance. When the international institutions began to focus on good governance as a criterion for the provision of aid and other kinds of assistance to developing countries, there was a need to create a framework that can be used as a platform for what constitute good governance.

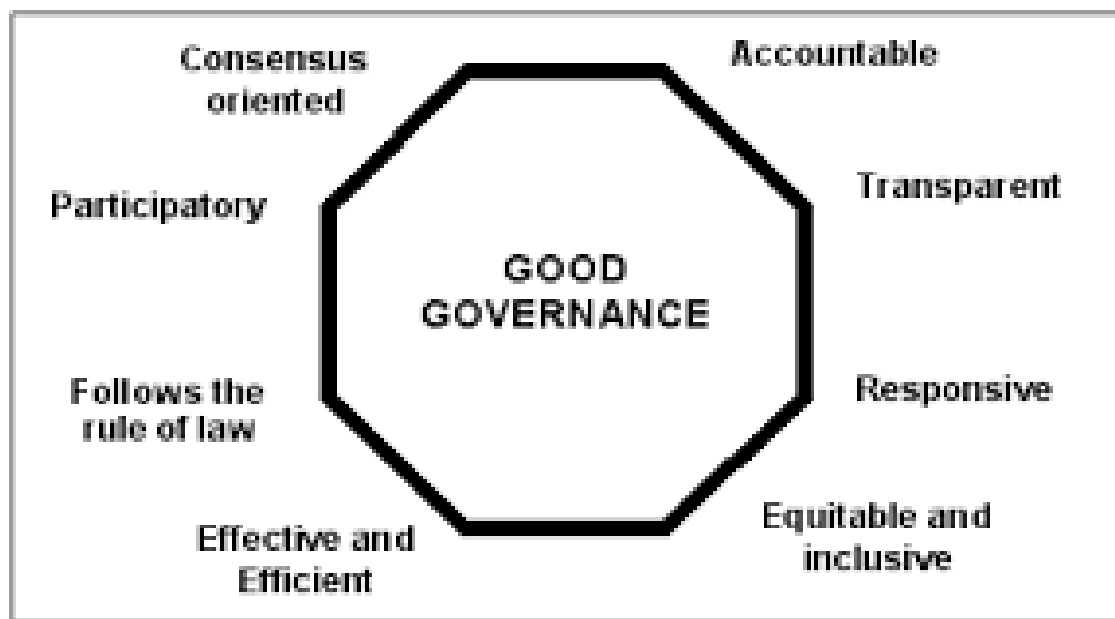
A number of characteristics were identified for what entails good governance where it was said to be one that was ‘participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable,

¹⁰ emphasis mine

transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. Aside from these, it was also assured that corruption was minimised in these countries and the voices of fringe groups were heard during the process of decision making (Gisselquist, R.M 2012). This is depicted in the figure below;

Figure I

Principles of Good Governance by the United Nations



Source: What is Good Governance? United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Available at www.unescap.org/pdd

Most analysts have generally agreed on these characteristics as representative of what good governance should look like and we will examine the components of each of these characteristics.

3.1 Participatory

The participatory aspect of good governance is that every citizen that meets the criteria must have a voice in the decision-making process 'either directly or through

legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests.’ This is based on the foundation built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively.

3.2 Rule of law

Under this, it is expected that all laws and their implementation should be ‘fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights. This to ensure that everyone can trust the law to uphold their rights, rather than a situation where only the powerful can be assured of their rights being guaranteed.

3.3 Consensus Oriented

The idea behind a Consensus oriented decision-making process is to ensure that all citizens are guaranteed a common minimum when they are unable to get what they want to the fullest. It focuses on reaching a consensus in a community where there are many competing interests that cannot all be satisfied.

3.4 Equitable and Inclusiveness:

Good governance is meant to ensure an equitable society with citizens having equal opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

3.5 Effectiveness and Efficiency

It is expected that good governance will allow for the maximum use of resources that results in optimal outcome that meet the needs and address the concerns of the community

3.6 Accountability

It is stated that because governments are accountable to the people, good governance means that governments must be accountable to the citizens they serve. There is a call for greater accountability of government institutions to the public.

3.7 Transparency

Information flow should be free and easily accessible to the public so that they can monitor and, in some cases, make the institutions more accountable. There should also be a free media.

3.8 Responsive

The United Nation's framework also states that 'good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe'¹¹. This is important because it builds trust between the stakeholders and government which is important in how the citizens see government.

4.0 Frameworks of Good Governance

These eight characteristics form the basis of good governance and it is against these that many international institutions have tried to expand the concept further. We will examine a number of these concepts as they provide better understanding of what good governance should look like.

4.1 The UNECA Concept

The United Nations commissioned a project to monitor African states as they try to provide good governance. The project consisted of 28 countries in the five sub-regions

¹¹ What is Good Governance? United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Available at www.unescap.org/pdd

of Africa. To measure how far these countries had gone in improving. Governance, six components were identified as the basis for measuring their success. These were;

- An inclusive political system that engages and receives with inputs from all sections of the society.
- The existence of an impartial and credible electoral administration with an informed and active citizenry.
- Strong institutions especially the public sector, legislative and administrative institutions.
- A government that is transparency and holds itself and can be held by the society for all decisions it takes.
- Sound public sector management that has its goal as stable macroeconomic conditions, effective resource mobilization and efficient use of public resources.
- Observance to the rule of law in that protects personal and civil liberties and gender equity, and ensures public safety and security with equal access to justice for all.

4.2 The ADB Concept

The second approach was developed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2001-2002. The ADB's Poverty Task Force produced a proposal intended to serve as an input for the implementation of the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy of the Government of Vietnam.

The task force identified five key areas of governance where improvement was required. These were

- The need for a more efficient public service;
- A more transparent public financial management;
- wider access to justice and ensuring universal application;
- more participative and responsive government; and
- a government that fights corruption at all levels.

From these five parameters, the task force developed eight core indicators, which are that government must

- make information publicly available regarding services, policies and planning arrangements at all levels.
- Improve access of the poor to basic government services such as health, education, infrastructure, water and power at the local level.
- increase the level of budget transparency regarding provincial and local taxation, budgeting, and spending patterns in each sector.
- Greater government focus at the national level, the level of expenditure that is targeted to pro-poor purposes is predictable from year to year.
- ☐Extent to which the decisions and verdicts of courts and tribunals are publicly available.
- ☐A more responsive local government that ensures effective service delivery to the poor
- ☐Extent to which the Grass Roots Democracy Decree has been implemented in each commune so as to improve opportunities for public participation.
- Improve anti corruption laws Extent to which laws combating corruption are effective.

The Poverty Task Force then proceeds to propose, for each of the preceding core indicators, a number of outcome and process indicators.

4.3 The APRM Concept

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a mutually agreed instrument voluntarily acceded to by the 54-member States of the African Union. The instrument is meant to be a self-monitoring mechanism intended to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that will lead to political stability, sustainable development and regional and continental integration through sharing of experiences and of successful best practices, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building.

The main principles of the APRM processes are the following: national ownership and leadership, transparency and broad-based participation.

The APRM developed a questionnaire for each of its four core areas. This had clear objectives, standards and codes, criteria and indicators that assessed the programmes and policies of the participating countries. The questionnaire can be summarised as follows:

4.3.1 Political Governance

Under this core area are six clear objectives that are as shown below;

- The prevention and reduction of intra- and inter-state conflicts
- Entrenchment of constitutional democracy that will ensure free and fair competition for power and upholding the rule of law
- The promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights, civil and political rights; and the rights of women, children, and all vulnerable and excluded groups
- The guarantee of separation of powers, especially the independence of the judiciary and the legislature
- The accountability and efficiency of public office holders
- Focusing on tackling political corruption

4.3.2 Economic Governance

Under this core area there are 4 objectives and these are;

- Macro-economic policies and sustainable development
- The need for clear and focused government policies and good public finance management
- Making anti-corruption a goal and
- The promotion of regional integration

4.3.3 Corporate Governance

Under the corporate governance core area, we have 5 objectives, namely;

- Improving the enabling environment for economic activities
- Improving social responsibility
- Good business ethics
- Fair treatment of all stakeholders
- Accountability of corporate officers and directors

4.3.4 Socio-Economic Development

The socio-economic development aspect of the mechanism has 6 objectives and these are;

- States should focus on becoming more self-reliant
- the member states should put greater focus on ensuring sustainable development and reducing poverty
- States should improve the outcomes in key social areas, including education, and health especially combating HIV/AIDS
- Members should make access to social services, water, sanitation, energy, finance, shelter, and land more affordable
- Member states should make gender equality one of their main focus areas; and finally;
- States should encourage broad based participation in development by all stakeholders

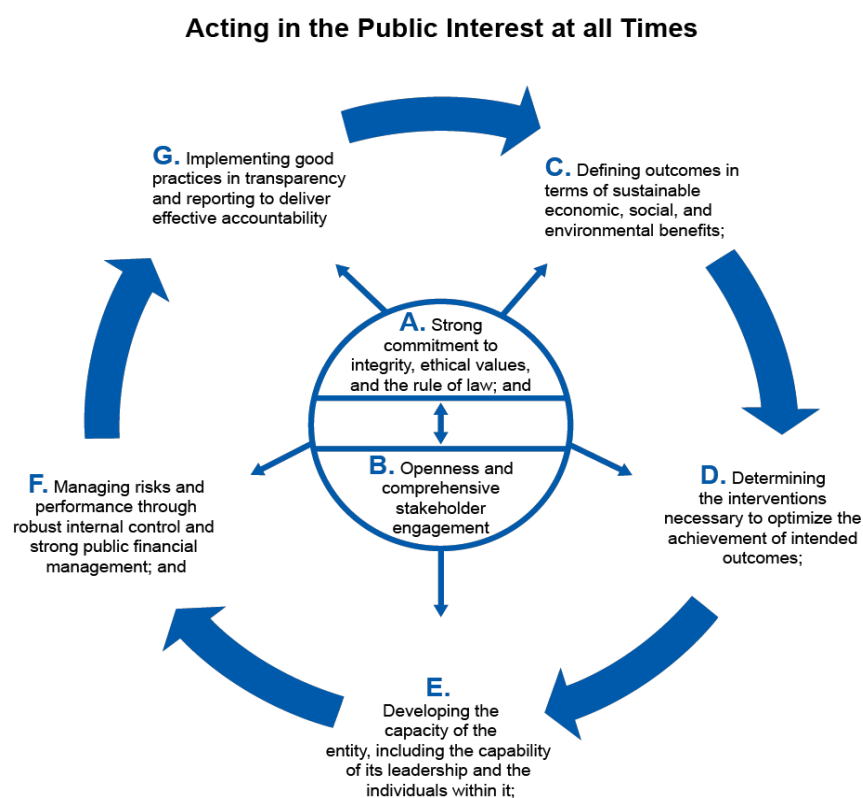
These frameworks discussed have similar characteristics with the focus on anti-corruption, an independent judiciary, an enabling environment for businesses, a free press, a democracy that allows for representation, the fight against poverty and improved girl-child education. These have become the foundation for countries as they develop their public policies making sure these are observed as they develop their public policies.

Appendix I provides other frameworks that provide the characteristics of good governance as developed by other regional and global institutions.

5. The Nexus Between Public Policies and Governance

The previous sections have discussed the concept of governance and the key features that are required for good governance. Figure II provides a graphic illustration of the relationship between good governance and public policy. This provides a working framework of how we can understand the interlink between the two. This section examines how these work together and why it is important. The first aspect is the need for a strong commitment to integrity, ethical values and the rule of law and we shall examine these individually.

Figure II Relationships between the Principles of Good Governance in the Public Sector



Source: Good Governance in the Public Sector Consultation Draft for an International Framework (2103) Consultation Draft. International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)

5.1 High Integrity

The argument is that because the public sector has the responsibility for the management of a large proportion of a country's resources through taxation and other sources, in the provision of social services to the citizenry, they are expected to adhere to a high level of integrity and be accountable for their actions. They are also expected to abide by existing legislations and government policies in the completion of their duties. Due to this, the public sector is expected to 'encourage and enforce a strong commitment to ethical values and legal compliance at all levels'¹² When we discuss high integrity, we refer to a situation where the foundation of governance (or the government) is the promotion of a culture where serving the public interest is the norm. There should be processes that clearly state what is expected by public officers in the execution of their duties. These include codes of conduct and clear performance assessment and reward processes.

5.3 Openness and Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement

We know that public sector institutions are established and are run to improve public welfare and because of this, there is a need for openness about their activities. Their activities are expected to have '*clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation*'¹³ so that all stakeholders can engage with them effectively.

5.4 Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

The concept requires that the goals and plans of the public sector must be sustainable so as to ensure continuity in the institutions responsible for implementing the public policies. Stakeholder inputs, which could be different, is important to ensure that the

¹² Good Governance in the Public Sector Consultation Draft for an International Framework (2103) Consultation Draft. International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)

¹³ *ibid*

competing needs and concerns are balanced given the limited resources available to implement the policies.

5.5 Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of intended outcomes

In order to achieve its goals, the public sector must get the right mix of legal, regulatory, and practical intermediations. This is important to ensure that the goals of the policies are achieved.

5.6 Developing the capacity of the entity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

The Public sector must ensure that it has the right structures, leadership and the people with the rights skills and mindsets to execute its policies. Because of changes in personnel of the entity and the environment in which the entity operates, there will be a continuous need to keep developing its capacity as well as the skills and experience of its leadership and individual staff members.

5.7 Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

It has also been suggested that the entities mandated with executing public policies should have effective performance management systems in place so that they can effectively and efficiently deliver the services required. There must be risk management and internal control processes in place to ensure that they deliver on the goals. The institutions should also have strong financial management systems in place that enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery, and accountability.

5.8 Implementing good practices in transparency and reporting to deliver effective accountability

The idea of accountability is a cornerstone of good governance and forms the foundation for the policy making process. Accountability is supposed to be effective so that stakeholders understand and can respond to any issues that arise while the activities are being implemented.

6.0 Conclusion

This module has examined what we understand by governance and how since the late 1980s onwards there has been a push for good governance. This was based on the premise that the inability of governments to provide the services for their citizens has been due to poor or bad governance. The foundations of good governance have been incorporated into public policy processes especially in developing countries where it has become a requirement for accessing aid and international funding.

The next module will examine the policy making process, from identification to development, implementation and evaluation.

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¹⁴ World Bank's 2002 World Development Report "Building Institutions for Markets

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ See. Sen Development as Freedom

whether that *government is democratic or not*¹⁷. He argues that ‘good’ and ‘bad’ governance can be found in all types of government even though recent trends have been to link ‘good’ governance to democracy. He goes on to state that the idea of governance has taken a more normative slant, with criteria being developed to explain what is required for effective governance.

However, Fukuyama argues that contrary to that push for a more normative perspective for understanding the idea of governance, ‘the quality of governance is different from the ends that governance is meant to fulfil’ and that governance was ‘about the performance of agents in carrying out the wishes of principals, and not about the goals that principals set.’ He saw government as an organisation and governance was about the execution of its goals by its agents irrespective of whether the goals were good or bad as opposed to normative slant currently being attached to it.

The fact that some criteria have been developed to define what good governance should resemble comes with its own problems. The criteria include accountability, transparency, anti-corruption, rule of law, advancement for women, democracy and decentralization. But Botchway (2001) notes that, defining these criteria makes it difficult because they are value-laden, making it hard to find an acceptable form of good governance.

3. The Evolution of Good Governance

The previous section has attempted to define the idea of governance and how this has evolved into the current idea of good governance. When the international institutions began to focus on good governance as a criterion for the provision of aid and other kinds of assistance to developing countries, there was a need to create a framework that can be used as a platform for what constitute good governance.

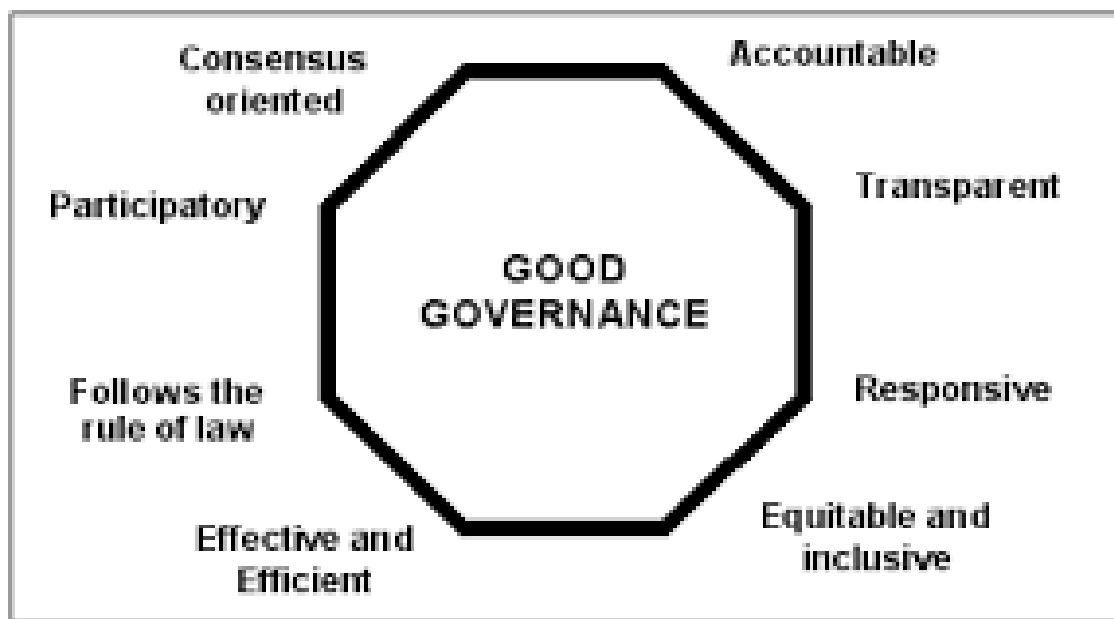
A number of characteristics were identified for what entails good governance where it was said to be one that was ‘participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable,

¹⁷ emphasis mine

transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. Aside from these, it was also assured that corruption was minimised in these countries and the voices of fringe groups were heard during the process of decision making (Gisselquist, R.M 2012). This is depicted in the figure below;

Figure I

Principles of Good Governance by the United Nations



Source: What is Good Governance? United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Available at www.unescap.org/pdd

Most analysts have generally agreed on these characteristics as representative of what good governance should look like and we will examine the components of each of these characteristics.

3.1 Participatory

The participatory aspect of good governance is that every citizen that meets the criteria must have a voice in the decision-making process 'either directly or through

legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests.’ This is based on the foundation built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively.

3.2 Rule of law

Under this, it is expected that all laws and their implementation should be ‘fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights. This to ensure that everyone can trust the law to uphold their rights, rather than a situation where only the powerful can be assured of their rights being guaranteed.

3.3 Consensus Oriented

The idea behind a Consensus oriented decision-making process is to ensure that all citizens are guaranteed a common minimum when they are unable to get what they want to the fullest. It focuses on reaching a consensus in a community where there are many competing interests that cannot all be satisfied.

3.4 Equitable and Inclusiveness:

Good governance is meant to ensure an equitable society with citizens having equal opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

3.5 Effectiveness and Efficiency

It is expected that good governance will allow for the maximum use of resources that results in optimal outcome that meet the needs and address the concerns of the community

3.6 Accountability

It is stated that because governments are accountable to the people, good governance means that governments must be accountable to the citizens they serve. There is a call for greater accountability of government institutions to the public.

3.7 Transparency

Information flow should be free and easily accessible to the public so that they can monitor and, in some cases, make the institutions more accountable. There should also be a free media.

3.8 Responsive

The United Nation's framework also states that 'good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe'¹⁸. This is important because it builds trust between the stakeholders and government which is important in how the citizens see government.

4.0 Frameworks of Good Governance

These eight characteristics form the basis of good governance and it is against these that many international institutions have tried to expand the concept further. We will examine a number of these concepts as they provide better understanding of what good governance should look like.

4.1 The UNECA Concept

The United Nations commissioned a project to monitor African states as they try to provide good governance. The project consisted of 28 countries in the five sub-regions

¹⁸ What is Good Governance? United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Available at www.unescap.org/pdd

of Africa. To measure how far these countries had gone in improving. Governance, six components were identified as the basis for measuring their success. These were;

- An inclusive political system that engages and receives with inputs from all sections of the society.
- The existence of an impartial and credible electoral administration with an informed and active citizenry.
- Strong institutions especially the public sector, legislative and administrative institutions.
- A government that is transparency and holds itself and can be held by the society for all decisions it takes.
- Sound public sector management that has its goal as stable macroeconomic conditions, effective resource mobilization and efficient use of public resources.
- Observance to the rule of law in that protects personal and civil liberties and gender equity, and ensures public safety and security with equal access to justice for all.

4.2 The ADB Concept

The second approach was developed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2001-2002. The ADB's Poverty Task Force produced a proposal intended to serve as an input for the implementation of the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy of the Government of Vietnam.

The task force identified five key areas of governance where improvement was required. These were

- The need for a more efficient public service;
- A more transparent public financial management;
- wider access to justice and ensuring universal application;
- more participative and responsive government; and
- a government that fights corruption at all levels.

From these five parameters, the task force developed eight core indicators, which are that government must

- make information publicly available regarding services, policies and planning arrangements at all levels.
- Improve access of the poor to basic government services such as health, education, infrastructure, water and power at the local level.
- increase the level of budget transparency regarding provincial and local taxation, budgeting, and spending patterns in each sector.
- Greater government focus at the national level, the level of expenditure that is targeted to pro-poor purposes is predictable from year to year.
- ☐Extent to which the decisions and verdicts of courts and tribunals are publicly available.
- ☐A more responsive local government that ensures effective service delivery to the poor
- ☐Extent to which the Grass Roots Democracy Decree has been implemented in each commune so as to improve opportunities for public participation.
- Improve anti corruption laws Extent to which laws combating corruption are effective.

The Poverty Task Force then proceeds to propose, for each of the preceding core indicators, a number of outcome and process indicators.

4.3 The APRM Concept

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a mutually agreed instrument voluntarily acceded to by the 54-member States of the African Union. The instrument is meant to be a self-monitoring mechanism intended to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that will lead to political stability, sustainable development and regional and continental integration through sharing of experiences and of successful best practices, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building.

The main principles of the APRM processes are the following: national ownership and leadership, transparency and broad-based participation.

The APRM developed a questionnaire for each of its four core areas. This had clear objectives, standards and codes, criteria and indicators that assessed the programmes and policies of the participating countries. The questionnaire can be summarised as follows:

4.3.1 Political Governance

Under this core area are six clear objectives that are as shown below;

- The prevention and reduction of intra- and inter-state conflicts
- Entrenchment of constitutional democracy that will ensure free and fair competition for power and upholding the rule of law
- The promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights, civil and political rights; and the rights of women, children, and all vulnerable and excluded groups
- The guarantee of separation of powers, especially the independence of the judiciary and the legislature
- The accountability and efficiency of public office holders
- Focusing on tackling political corruption

4.3.2 Economic Governance

Under this core area there are 4 objectives and these are;

- Macro-economic policies and sustainable development
- The need for clear and focused government policies and good public finance management
- Making anti-corruption a goal and
- The promotion of regional integration

4.3.3 Corporate Governance

Under the corporate governance core area, we have 5 objectives, namely;

- Improving the enabling environment for economic activities
- Improving social responsibility
- Good business ethics
- Fair treatment of all stakeholders
- Accountability of corporate officers and directors

4.3.4 Socio-Economic Development

The socio-economic development aspect of the mechanism has 6 objectives and these are;

- States should focus on becoming more self-reliant
- the member states should put greater focus on ensuring sustainable development and reducing poverty
- States should improve the outcomes in key social areas, including education, and health especially combating HIV/AIDS
- Members should make access to social services, water, sanitation, energy, finance, shelter, and land more affordable
- Member states should make gender equality one of their main focus areas; and finally;
- States should encourage broad based participation in development by all stakeholders

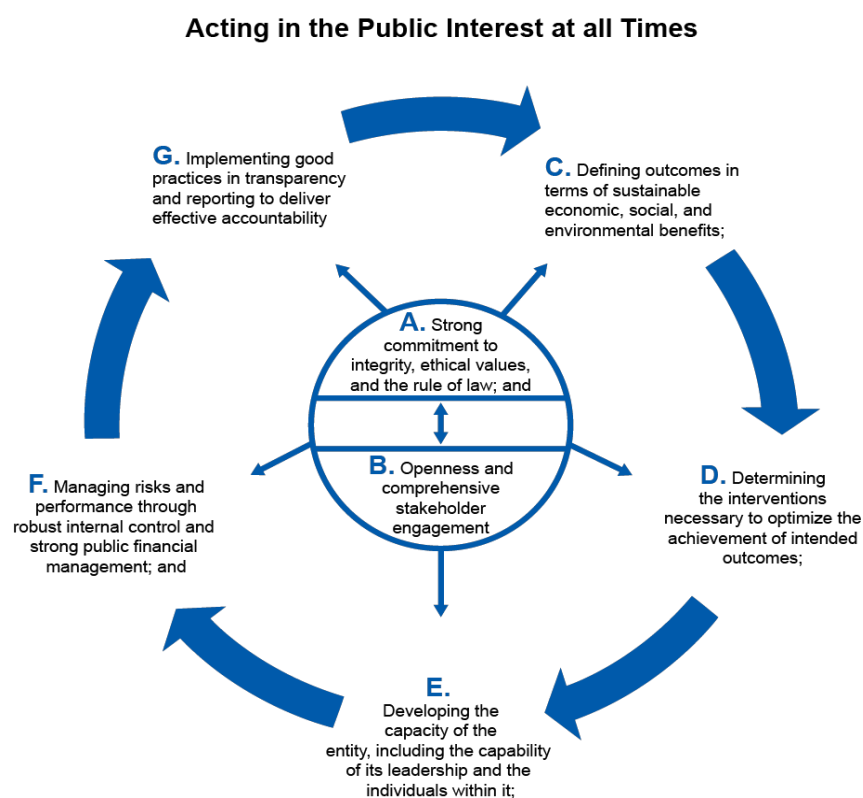
These frameworks discussed have similar characteristics with the focus on anti-corruption, an independent judiciary, an enabling environment for businesses, a free press, a democracy that allows for representation, the fight against poverty and improved girl-child education. These have become the foundation for countries as they develop their public policies making sure these are observed as they develop their public policies.

Appendix I provides other frameworks that provide the characteristics of good governance as developed by other regional and global institutions.

5. The Nexus Between Public Policies and Governance

The previous sections have discussed the concept of governance and the key features that are required for good governance. Figure II provides a graphic illustration of the relationship between good governance and public policy. This provides a working framework of how we can understand the interlink between the two. This section examines how these work together and why it is important. The first aspect is the need for a strong commitment to integrity, ethical values and the rule of law and we shall examine these individually.

Figure II Relationships between the Principles of Good Governance in the Public Sector



Source: Good Governance in the Public Sector Consultation Draft for an International Framework (2103) Consultation Draft. International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)

5.1 High Integrity

The argument is that because the public sector has the responsibility for the management of a large proportion of a country's resources through taxation and other sources, in the provision of social services to the citizenry, they are expected to adhere to a high level of integrity and be accountable for their actions. They are also expected to abide by existing legislations and government policies in the completion of their duties. Due to this, the public sector is expected to 'encourage and enforce a strong commitment to ethical values and legal compliance at all levels'¹⁹ When we discuss high integrity, we refer to a situation where the foundation of governance (or the government) is the promotion of a culture where serving the public interest is the norm. There should be processes that clearly state what is expected by public officers in the execution of their duties. These include codes of conduct and clear performance assessment and reward processes.

5.3 Openness and Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement

We know that public sector institutions are established and are run to improve public welfare and because of this, there is a need for openness about their activities. Their activities are expected to have '*clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation*'²⁰ so that all stakeholders can engage with them effectively.

5.4 Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

The concept requires that the goals and plans of the public sector must be sustainable so as to ensure continuity in the institutions responsible for implementing the public policies. Stakeholder inputs, which could be different, is important to ensure that the

¹⁹ Good Governance in the Public Sector Consultation Draft for an International Framework (2103) Consultation Draft. International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)

²⁰ *ibid*

competing needs and concerns are balanced given the limited resources available to implement the policies.

5.5 Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of intended outcomes

In order to achieve its goals, the public sector must get the right mix of legal, regulatory, and practical intermediations. This is important to ensure that the goals of the policies are achieved.

5.6 Developing the capacity of the entity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

The Public sector must ensure that it has the right structures, leadership and the people with the rights skills and mindsets to execute its policies. Because of changes in personnel of the entity and the environment in which the entity operates, there will be a continuous need to keep developing its capacity as well as the skills and experience of its leadership and individual staff members.

5.7 Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

It has also been suggested that the entities mandated with executing public policies should have effective performance management systems in place so that they can effectively and efficiently deliver the services required. There must be risk management and internal control processes in place to ensure that they deliver on the goals. The institutions should also have strong financial management systems in place that enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery, and accountability.

5.8 Implementing good practices in transparency and reporting to deliver effective accountability

The idea of accountability is a cornerstone of good governance and forms the foundation for the policy making process. Accountability is supposed to be effective so that stakeholders understand and can respond to any issues that arise while the activities are being implemented.

6.0 Conclusion

This module has examined what we understand by governance and how since the late 1980s onwards there has been a push for good governance. This was based on the premise that the inability of governments to provide the services for their citizens has been due to poor or bad governance. The foundations of good governance have been incorporated into public policy processes especially in developing countries where it has become a requirement for accessing aid and international funding.

The next module will examine the policy making process, from identification to development, implementation and evaluation.

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Module III- The Public Policy Process

Contents

1. Understanding the Policy Cycle
2. Stages Heuristics Model
3. Multiple-Streams Framework
4. Punctuated-Equilibrium Framework
5. Diffusion Models
6. The Advocacy Coalition Framework
7. Conclusion
8. References

1. Understanding the Policy Cycle

The previous modules have laid the foundation for understanding what public policy is and its relationship with good governance. It showed that public policy is basically what governments intend to do and what they actually do. It has a normative foundation and has set goals that need to be achieved. This module examines the whole policy process from identification to evaluation and the new ideas around policy making such as evidence based.

Anderson (2003) states that the policy process in itself is conflictual because it involves managing different interests, ideas and values between different parties. Because of the very nature of policy making, the process will involve negotiation, bargaining and compromises between different interest groups. It then becomes important for us to understand the way the policy process is developed.

Examining the policy process is seen as the foundation for appreciating how policies are developed. While the policy process approach is the most commonly used approach, there are other approaches that will need to be examined to determine the best approach to use to develop and understand the policy making process.

There are several models of policy making and it will be useful to examine these so that we are aware of the alternatives ways of approaching the policy making process.

2. Stages Heuristic Model

Gultekin (2014) has examined the different policy making ideas, noting that there are several ways in understanding the policy making process. One such model is the Stages Heuristic model that was developed by Laswell (1956) and has initially had seven stages but is now limited to five or six stages. This remains one of the common ways of examining the policy making process. It divides the process into five, namely; agenda setting, policy formulation, policy legitimation; policy implementation and evaluation. Anderson (2003) notes the process has some advantages namely that *'the policy-process approach centres attention on the officials and institutions who make policy decisions and the factors that influence and condition their actions.'* It becomes

important for us to understand the complex nature of social problems and how these are to be addressed. Having knowledge of who makes the decisions of how these problems will be addressed becomes critical.

The first stage is the problem identification. It is stated that ‘the first step to solving a problem is recognising there is one’ This thus becomes the starting point in the policy making process, recognising that there is a problem that needs to be addressed. Every day we hear of societal problems through different sources that include the media advocacy groups, politicians and citizens (d, however it is not all of the issues that are highlighted that necessarily require a public response. Before the policy process begins a few questions need to be answered. These are that;

Does a problem exist?

Can anything be done about it?

If the answers to these are no, then the issue is discarded but if the answer is yes then the process can proceed. This now requires the development of the problem statement that involves; getting clarity about the problem; stating the boundaries of the problem; clear goals and objections of the policy solutions; identifying the key actors/stakeholders; identifying the cost and benefits and finally reviewing the problem statement to see that it is in line with the initial issue.

Some of the problems during this stage are that;

- We assume that all problems require a public solution;
- confusing the need for short- versus long-term solutions
- assuming that individual problems are problems that require public response

Source: Anderson. J.E (2003) *Public policymaking: An introduction*

This stage is crucial as it sets the stage for the whole policy making process.

The next stage of this model is Agenda setting which refers to the issues identified by the government or decision makers to be tackled. The policy process begins with the identification of a problem (Gultekin; 2014:46) and it is important to note that the stakeholders/actors define problems differently and this affects how the policy to tackle the issue will be shaped. Basically, the agendas are shaped by the specific priorities of policy makers and this results in only those issues that are important to policy makers and actors forming part of the policy agenda. During this stage, in the policy formulation the actors and stakeholders play an important role in determining which issues need to be tackled. These actors/stakeholders include, 'parliament, government, public bureaucrats, political parties, pressure groups, think tanks and the media' (Ozgur, H and Kulac, O. 2017:147) These actors ask questions such as;

- What is the plan to deal with the problem?
- What are the goals and priorities?
- What are the costs and benefits to achieve goals?
- What are the positive and negative externalities in each alternative?

Source: Cochran and Malone, 1999: 46 (cited in Ozgur, H and Kulac, O. 2017:147)

The next stage under this model is policy legitimization and this refers to the selection of the policy needed to tackle the problem and getting the required political support. Even though several options can be identified, it is the one that has been selected after negotiations and compromise between the various stakeholders/actors that will go through the legitimization process. The public influence plays an important role in determining which policy is selected especially where the policy makers understand that they need to meet the demands of their constituents ((Ozgur, H and Kulac, O. 2017:147).

Once the policy has received the necessary political support, the process of implementation then begins. This is considered the most critical stage (Gultekin, 2014) where the goals of the policy are transformed into actions ((Ozgur, H and Kulac, O. 2017:147). Importantly, we must note that even though the policy has been enacted,

the manner in which the implementers approach it will determine its success or failure.

After the policy has been implemented, it becomes necessary to track whether it is meeting its set out goals and outcomes. This is because as already noted, policies are developed to address existing or perceived problems and it thus becomes important to ensure that it is meeting these goals and outcomes.

This model has been widely used for a number of reasons. Firstly, by dividing the process into separate parts, it is easier for each stage to be analysed separately so that their strengths and weaknesses can be assessed. The model also assumes that there is a separation of power between legislators and bureaucrats, with the former legislating policy and the latter implementing it. The problem here is that the model takes the democratic system of government as the default system and ignores the other types of political systems that exist.

The model is also seen as providing a check and balance between policy makers and implementers. This separation is desired so that the policy makers are also not the implementers of policies, which could result in arbitrary policies being developed. It also ensures that each part of the process can be assessed on its own merit allowing for the appropriate checks and balances (Gultekin; 2014). The model is also seen as enabling analysts to see the process in its various parts and how these parts fit.

Another advantage of this approach is that it is a workflow that shows how the process starts and ends and how they are interlinked (Anderson, 2003;) Anderson also notes that the flexibility of the process allows for change and refinement along the line such that *'additional stages can be introduced if experience indicates that they would strengthen description and analysis.'*

The Model has its criticism, with one these being that it ignores causal factors that can affect the policy process across the various stages with critics arguing that the model 'is not a real theory to test different sets of hypotheses concerning policy cycle'. They also argue that the way in which the process is sequenced is problematic because it

ignores how previous policies can affect the development of new ones since new policies are based on the foundation of existing with new policies versions of older policies. Policies do not exist in a vacuum and are affected by different interests and other policies. It is also seen as oversimplifying the process understating the complexity that is inherent in the process. However, the Stages Model is also seen as being able to incorporate other models into the different stages so as to get a more robust analysis of the policy-making process.

One of the most important observations regarding this model is that it should be seen as how the policy making is perceived to be not necessarily how it ends up. While it is generally thought of as linear, this is not always the case. It is also seen as not being able to accommodate all the complexities that are involved in the policy making. Process. The model is also seen as having shortcomings in explaining how major changes that affect the policy making process occur and this is seen as a weakness because it treats all policies with the same logic (Gultekin; 2014)

Another very important issue revolves on the fact that the model does not consider the context of policy making across countries especially between developed and developing countries, which not taking to account how countries adopt policies from other countries to solve similar societal issues.

The Stages model still remains one of the widely used frameworks that examine the policy process.

3. Multiple-Streams Framework

A model that has been developed to examine the policy process is the Multiple-streams (MS) framework and was developed by John Kingdon and has its foundation from a previously developed problem-solving framework known as the garbage can model. This model is based on three pillars; fluid participation, problematic preferences to deal with problems, and unclear technology. The model's emphasis is on agenda setting and specification of alternatives. MS framework is attentive to

complexity and deals with policy process under ambiguity (Gultekin; 2014). Ambiguity is defined as thinking of problems in several ways.

The framework identifies three streams of *policy actors and processes* during the policy making process. These are the Problem Stream; the Policy Stream and the Politics Stream. As already noted there are usually several societal problems but not all of them gain traction and this model tries to explain why some gain attention while others do not. This is where the problem stream comes into play. It contains all the data around the various problems and it tries to explain why some problems get traction and others do not and this could be due to several reasons.

The first is; the choice of indicators to determine the severity of a problem can affect how the problem is perceived. Problems are said to get attention *'based on how they are 'framed' or defined by participants....using evidence to address uncertainty and persuasion to address ambiguity*²¹.

Secondly, an event can bring the issue to public attention. The current COVID 19 pandemic is one such event that has pushed for a global policy on pandemics so as be ready for future occurrences. Thirdly, the feedback from existing policy programs can highlight previously unforeseen issues that will now need new policy to address (Gultekin 2014;57). Also, even where a problem gains the attention for a solution, the possible solutions are numerous and this can be problematic in picking the right one. The MS model thus recognises that individuals are usually unable to pick the right solution due to factors outside their control.

The second stream is the Policy stream which is concerned with the possible solutions to the problems that have been identified. Gultekin (2014) states that these solutions could include policy ideas that are developed in policy communities that consist of bureaucrats, politicians, analysts, academicians, interest groups. These policies then

²¹ <https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/2013/10/31/policy-concepts-in-1000-words-multiple-streams-analysis/>

go through the process of revision and final adoption after series of stakeholder meetings and conferences.

The final stream is the political stream that includes all members of the democratic process because as already acknowledged politics plays a major role in policy choices and development. Gultekin (2014) notes that Kingdon identifies three elements that are critical in this stream. These are the national mood, pressure groups, and administrative and legislative turnovers. Politicians are very conscious of the national mood which is the way the majority of a country thinks, even where it goes against their own opinions. There are instances where the politicians must try and educate the general public about the need for a new policy that is being proposed. They must also carry interest groups along to ensure that the policies that are being proposed do not meet resistance and also for their political survival. An example of this is the AfCFTA policy that required a lot of sensitization by the Nigerian government due to resistance from some sections of the business community.

Even though the MS model provides an alternative to the Stages approach, a few key issues have been raised around its use. Firstly, it is argued that the three streams are not enough it is not enough to explain policy process because they are said to be independent and really should be interlinked. It is argued for policies to succeed; the three streams must intersect at some point and these points of intersection are referred to as policy windows (Gultekin; 2014) and these open when an event of great magnitude occurs.

In essence, the National mood, pressure from interest groups and changes in government all play a significant role in the policy making process and it is when there is an interlink between all three that we can see the development of a coherent public policy. As already stated all three streams interact when a policy window opens or as stated by Gultekin (2014), a window of opportunity that is seized upon by policy entrepreneurs who ‘attach problems to solutions and present them to receptive political audience.’

4. Punctuated-Equilibrium Framework

Another framework that examines the policy making process is the punctuated-equilibrium (PE) model. This was developed in the 1990s by Baumgartner and Jones (Gultekin; 2014). This model focuses on providing reasons why some policies can change drastically while others remain static and unchanging. The argument is that the PE model follows the incremental process with most policies remaining stable. The model however recognises that there are instances when, due to major events or crisis there might be some drastic changes in policy. Other changes may occur if there is a shift in public perception in the policy.

The foundation of the PE model is that it tries to explain both policy stability and policy change. The model is interested in policy definition because it recognises that the way problems are defined will affect the agenda setting process and the manner in which policies are developed. It notes that policies are usually evaluated to determine if they have met their goals and outcomes. Where they have, incremental changes are made and where they have not, it creates an opportunity to make major changes going forward.

This model is seen as an improvement on the Stages model because it focuses on the decision-making process to provide a clearer picture of those responsible for how policy decisions are made. It does this by examining the role of the various actors and interest groups in the process allowing us to understand the debate, negotiation and compromises that take place in order to accommodate these various interest groups and allow for the passage of the policy document. Because the model argues that new policies are only incremental changes of existing policies, it only expects minor changes to existing policies because that is the only way it can accommodate the various groups.

One of the main criticisms of this model is that it focuses on the American policy process and little work has been done of how effective it will be in understanding policy making processes in other systems.

5. Diffusion Models

The policy diffusion framework also tries to explain its focus which is to understand how states adopt policy innovation (Gultekin; 2014). The model states that the policy adoption is ‘a function of both the characteristics of the specific political systems and a variety of diffusion processes.’ Like it has been noted, this model also argues that policies are incremental, arising from already existing policies, but notes that there are instances of policy innovation (Gultekin; 2014). Also, it notes that many policies are not necessarily new policies developed but could be policies adopted from other countries. The argument is that when the policies are adopted by other countries, it is not adopted wholesale, rather it begins the policy development process afresh. This is referred to as a policy diffusion (Gilardi, Shipan and Wueest 2020).

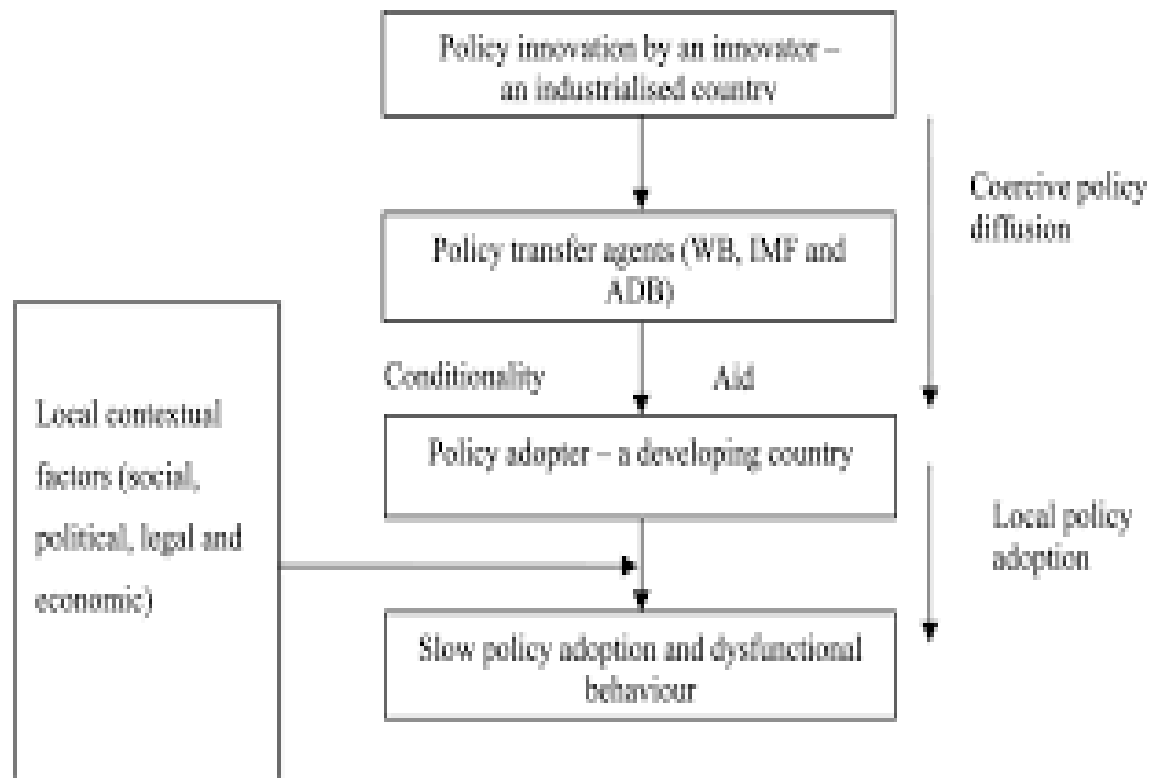
Gilardi, Shipan and Wueest (2020) further argue that it is important to examine the manner in which problems are defined across countries and how this affects whether or not certain policies are adopted or not. This model argues that there are normally internal factors such as social, economic, and political factors that affect how policies are adopted. Secondly, the model argues that states try to mirror ‘acceptable’ standards from regional or global standards. Nations try to emulate policies that have been successful elsewhere so as not being seen to be left behind. One such example is the laws against smoking that were adopted in in a few countries and were subsequently adopted by other countries.

Another reason why policies are adopted could be due to pressure from citizens and policy entrepreneurs who have seen the success of the adoption of certain policies from other countries. This could be coupled with pressure from advocacy groups and the news media.

The diagram below shows an example of how a policy diffusion process can occur.

Figure I

The Policy Diffusion Process



Source: Ranjith Appuhami, Sujatha Perera & Hector Perera (2011) Coercive Policy Diffusion in a Developing Country: The Case of Public-Private Partnerships in Sri Lanka, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 41:3, 431-451, DOI: [10.1080/00472336.2011.582713](https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2011.582713)

This model is seen as being superior to the more commonly used stages model because, unlike the stages model it takes into consideration the relationship between countries and how policies can move across borders. Also, in a federal system of government, it does the same thing by allowing policies to move across states. The model notes that the greater the interaction between policy makers across all national levels of government and across countries results in a higher chance of policy diffusion (Gultekin; 2014). It further notes that countries with greater proximity will tend to adopt similar policies. This is simply because they tend to share regional

similarities that allows for similar policies to be adopted and also because they compete with each other.

Another idea of the diffusion model is the Leader Laggard model that states that states will follow other states that are seen as leaders in 'inventing and establishing new policies (Gultekin; 2014). This is why policies from United States of America tend to affect the rest of the world, while German policies tend to affect countries in the European region. The same can be said about Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt in Africa and in the western, southern and northern African regions respectively.

The Vertical influence model argues that in a Federal system of government, the federal unit can affect the states in policy formulation. This model can be seen operating where EU policies affect all the nations in the union and how Russia's policies affect countries of the former Soviet Union (Gultekin; 2014).

6. The Advocacy Coalition Framework

This model was developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith to explain the policy making process. The Policy making process was seen as containing multiple actors and levels of government that needed understanding. It was also seen as containing a high level of uncertainty and ambiguity that took many years to from the development stage to the implementation and outcomes stage²²

The model was based on a number of key foundations namely;

That actors take part in the process to translate their beliefs into tangible actions. These beliefs are made up of core beliefs and actors hold these beliefs as the foundation form policy making. Within this framework an advocacy coalition is identified. This coalition is made up of a number of actors and stakeholders that share similar beliefs and are willing to work together to actualise such beliefs.

²² <https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/2013/10/31/policy-concepts-in-1000-words-multiple-streams-analysis/>

That ACF is also seen as part of a learning process where ‘learning takes place through the lens of deeply held beliefs, producing different interpretations of facts and events in different coalitions. The process is also seen as a political process with the different actors using information to exercise power.

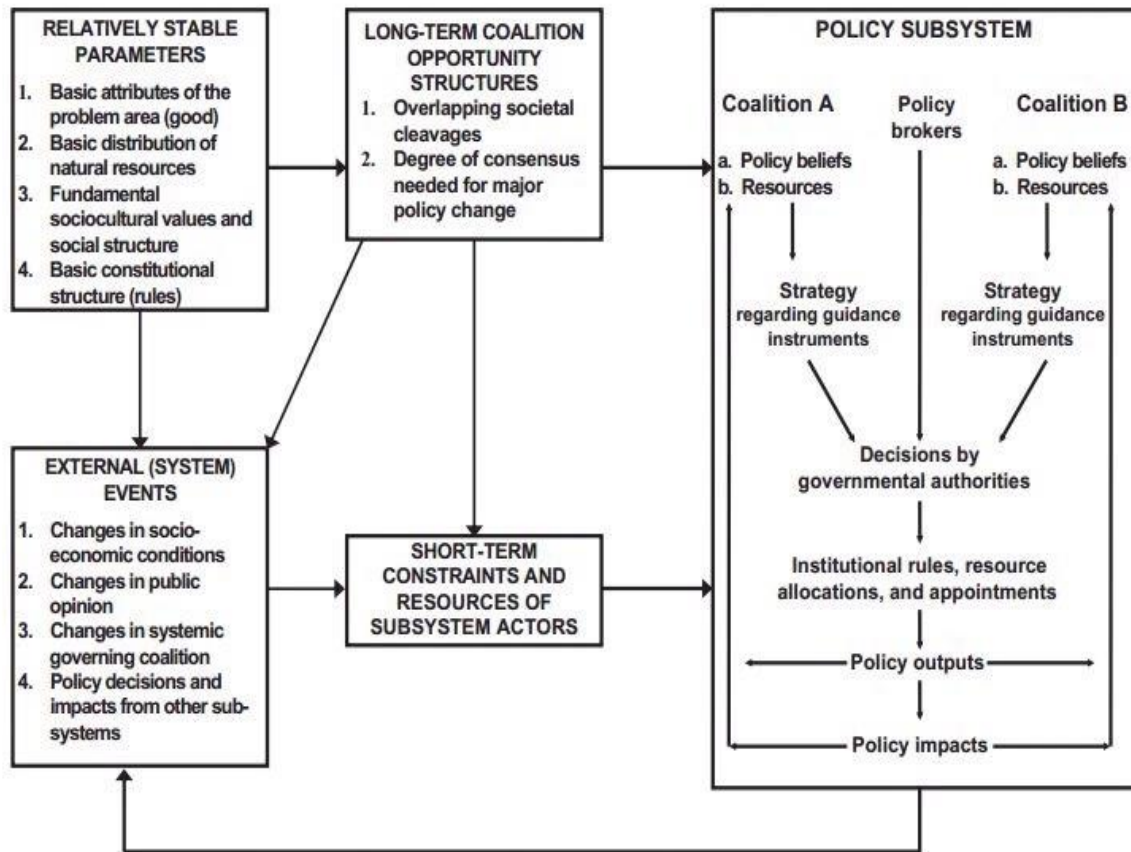
The framework also contains Subsystems with the different interest groups competing to dominate the policy development space. Within the subsystems are the Policy brokers that mediate between coalitions during the process. Like some of the other models already discussed also recognise that policy change is slow and may take decades. However, just like the other systems, this model also recognises that there are instances where unplanned major events can result in rapid and major policy changes that would have not usually occurred²³.

Such an instance was the September 11, 2001, twin tower attacks that allowed for a change in global terror policy with the United States of America taking the lead. There are also instances of internal shocks that usually result from a policy failure that can then lead to a major policy shift. What is important in the two cases is that there will not be any change unless the coalitions react and demand for change.

²³ <https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/2013/10/30/policy-concepts-in-1000-words-the-advocacy-coalition-framework/>

Figure II

The Advocacy Coalition Framework



2007 Advocacy Coalition Framework Flow Diagram

Source: Sabatier, P. and Weible, C. (2007) 'The Advocacy Coalition Framework: Innovations and Clarifications' in Sabatier, P. (ed.) Theories of the Policy Process. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

While the ACF was developed initially to examine the policy making process in the United States, it has now been used to examine the process in other countries.

7. Conclusion

This module has examined the various frameworks that are currently being used to analyse the policy making process. While the stages model remains the most widely known, its linear foundations oversimplifies the process by ignoring the multiple layer of complexities that exist in the process. This is what led to the development of new alternatives to understanding the process. Each of these models/frameworks are similar in that they recognise the slow pace of change of policy with only incremental changes observed in policies over a long period of time. Each of these also understand the complexity and number of actors involved in the process and the negotiations and compromises that have to take place during the process.

One important observation by the diffusion model is that new policies have been seen to be adopted from other countries through a diffusion process. It notes that this adoption process begins a new policy making process in the country that seeks to adopt the new policy. The alternative policies also recognise that even though change occurs over a long period of time, there are usually instances where catastrophic events, either internal or external, can result in the development of new policies to deal with the threats.

While the stages model tries to simplify the process, the alternatives provide a better way to understand the process by incorporating all the complexities within the process so that we can produce better and more robust policies by injecting all the uncertainties and ambiguities into the process.

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