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PUBLIC POLICY AND MECHANISMS FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION IN MODERN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Hadeer Maad Waheeb[1], Asst. Prof. Dr. Omar jumaah imran[2]

[1,2] College of political science, University of Baghdad, Iraq.

Abstract:

Public policy is generally concerned with government plans programmed to achieve specific objectives within specific period that may serve one or more sectors of society.Some authors consider it as being related to basic government decisions that define and determine the life of citizens. The features of that policy are determined through decisions and laws that are enactedby their legislative powers and implemented by their administrative authorities. This in turn justifies the saying of politics is at the mercy of administrators.Therefore,this study addressesthese issues throughtwo sections. The first section defines the conceptual framework of public policy in terms ofits origin and development, its definition and characteristics. While the second section discusses the specific mechanisms of public policy in relation to its levels and types, and the process of policy-making.

Introduction:

No country or government, regardless of its capacities, economic capabilities and material and human resources, can meet the demands of its citizens and keep pace with the development of life in order to address and overcome their problems at once. This is achieved only through government's implementation of public policies aimed to overcome all the economic, security or health problems they face in addition to achieving their futureplans. Accordingly, public policy is a relatively modern concept, through which the political reality of political systems is analyzed at present by

knowing how this policy is emerged, how it is implemented and what its expected implications are on individuals and groups in any society.

Research Problem:

Public policy is a complex dynamic interactive product within a specific intellectual system, in which certain basics are shared as determined by the political system. These basics may be issued byformal or informal institutions including the constitutional regime, the mechanism adopted by the regime, the three legislative-executive-judicial authorities, political parties, public and private interests, the rights to and expression of opinion, and the natural resources available to the country.Consequently, it is believed that the process of public policy-making is not easy because it includes multiple determinants, influences and variables.

Research Significance:

The public policy attempts to achieve long-term strategic objectives, short-term tactical objectives, and real-time and daily functional objectives, seeking to achieve a public interest. In order to reach those objectives, the following questions must be answered:

1. What mechanisms does the state use to formulate public policies?
2. Which authority is responsible for making public policy?
3. What are the stages and levels of public policy and the problems accompanying them?

This study therefore discusses these questions through presenting detailed explanation of the problems of public policy and those involved in policy-making, its processes, levels and stages.

Research Method:

This study follows different theoretical schools, regardless of the exploratory studies exploringpublic policy by reviewingthe literature in this field.It also deals with a specific problem and hypothesis that embodies an expected relationship between two dependent and independent variables.Therefore, it can be said that it is an exploratory study that does not necessarily derivefrom a specific hypothesis.

Section One: The Conceptual Framework of Public Policy

Public policies are one of the manifestations of the States success and failure to justify its existence according to the concepts on which many beliefs are based. These beliefs have established the welfarepolicy for the State to embrace its citizens, securethe basic needs for their survival as well as the means of their well-being. This section deals with the emergence and development of public policy, its definition and characteristics.

The Emergence and Development of Public Policy:

As an activity, societies knew and worked with different forms ofpublic policy in the past. However, its contemporary concept differs according to the diversity of successive civilizations with their different systems and ideologies.These civilizations include:

a. Mesopotamian civilization:

It experienced diverse administrative organization including Babylonian civilization, where Hammurabi, the sixth Babylonian king (1751 B.C./ 1793 B.C.), was the first to undertake the administration of the politically unified State from his capital Babylon. He organized the expenditure and tax affairs and established the oldest two schools in history, one in Saba and the other in Kish.Then, he founded the army and made service compulsory in it, as well as establishing the first legal law in 1770 B.C. that governed relations between the rulers and the people and between the people themselves (Al-Obaidi, 2019).

b. Pharaonic Civilization (Ancient Egypt)

It witnessed the prominent forms of administrative development and government organization symmetrically with high degree of efficiency in considering public affairs through territories, various legislations, and grievances (Al-Da'jah, 2020).

c. Chinese Civilization:

It also witnessed significant progress in political organization. Chinese were the first to require scientific qualifications for appointment to public office.

d. The Greek Civilization:

It adopted different forms of politics and its scholars were interested in this. Plato stated that in this system, the function of the State is to find the most appropriate ways to satisfy needs and regulate services.

e. The Romanian State:

It also defined the model of realistic practice of public policies at the time, which resulted from the legal nature of this State, the geographical division of its territories,itsregime and its relationship with the Emperor (Salem, 2016).

f. Islam:

Islam paid a great attention to the issues of society in the field of politics and regime as approved by the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah in the State, government and Caliphate.It established the highest values and principles underlying the policy of justice, equality,and unity. It assigned the right man to the right place, in addition to contributing to the development of political and administrative thinking and providing rules forShura, leadership and power, which can be understood through writings of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sina in the school of Islamic rationality (Al-Jundy, 2013).

From a modern perspective, public policies are paid a great deal of attention theoretically and practically.Scholars, politicians and administrators are interested in studying policy. In fact, policy passed throughdifferent phases as follows:

1) The Pre-World War (I) Phase:

Philosophers, scientists and political thinkers were very interested in the issues of societies and ways to organize and regulate them in a certain form.This interest was reflected in the traditional effort, which lasted a long time until reaching thehumanitarian and social life in the mid-19th century, when European universities at the time were studying politics and governance as a branch of moral philosophy.This interest was limited to the policies produced by governments as well as referring to the forces that contribute to developing policies and their impact on society. This is

achieved by dealing with institutional construction, focusing on the philosophical
protocol of the government, examining its systems, such as federalism, separation of
powers, legal reference, powers and duties of official departments, affairs of
parliament, the president, the courts, government relations and the work of the three
authorities (legislative, executive and judicial) (Al-Fahdawi, 2001).

2) The Phase between World War I and II:

This phase witnessed a growing interest in the science of politics, which became a
branch of social sciences, following its independence from moral philosophy during
the subsequent phase. It received a great support within the field of scientific and
cognitive competence. This led to viewing politics as a face of the law and the
interactive relationship between official institutions through a constitutional set
comprising the rules governing inter-institutional relations in legal frameworks. In
addition, policies are an integral part of the society, representing its social and
psychological activities.The social and natural phenomena and behaviors (e.g.,
epidemics, wars, disasters and floods, which are the result of Allah's will according to
societal beliefs) were far from the intervention of politics.These issues have changed
from the state of narrow-scale politics in the nineteenth century to the new state of
universalpolitics in the twentieth century. This is achieved in accordance with the
association mechanism through which a non-political matter finds itself falling within
the category of political affairs and issues (Zeinulabidine, 2009).

3) The Post-World War (II) Phase:

In thisphase, public policies received wide attention. The focus was on the concept of
public policies, how they are formulated, their objectives, intention and methods to
implement them within an analytical framework according to the priorities and
potentials available.This is attributed to the increasingdemandsthat requirethe State
intervention toencourage the economic activity, rebuild the national economy, and
direct the resources to meet the needs of the public. In addition to accommodate the
growing economic growth in the required services and the necessity to provide them
such as education, health, infrastructure, job opportunities, trade and productive
sectors, etc. This in turn requires the improvement ofgovernment institutions within
the framework of public policies. Necessities were an important requirement in
building the economic developmental structure and improving its deteriorating
conditions by developing and implementing many comprehensive public policies in
society (Al-Fahdawi, 2001).

Despite all the above, it was only in the early 1950s that the science of public policy
acquired its idiomatic meaning by the political economist Harold Lasswell. Lasswell
examined the essence of the reciprocal and distributional processes involved in
policy-making and implementation in his book "Politics: Who Gets What, When, and
How".In 1951, he published a book with Daniel Lerner, entitled "The Policy
Sciences: Recent Developments in Scope and Method",addressing the analytical
framework of public policy. Lasswell statesthat there is a clear trend in social sciences
transcending their specialized limits. This trend has two positions: first, there is an
interest in the information requiredin the policy-making process, i.e., how it is
implemented.As for the second position,it is concerned with the development of
information content and its interpretation for policy makers, as it is beyond the scope
of political science (Samir, n.d.).

Interest in policy studies continued until the early 1970s and became increasing in the field of analyzing the outputs of the political system. This is due to the worsening social problems inside the United States between blacks and whites and US involvement in the Vietnam War.Hence, the US institutions necessitated analyzing these constraints and developing the bases for the policies addressing them. This resulted in increased interest in the analytical studies of policy within the information, intelligence and research centers. Policy analysts often formulated policies and positions of US towards many issues in the 1980s, particularly the focus on economic problems like inflation, unemployment, government expenditure and problems of international trade and the Middle East (Samir, n.d.).

These developments in the field of public policy studies during this phase have affected its conversion from description to analysis through time phases until it became the subject of comparative studies in the late 1970s among different countries. This development and attention is due to a range of factors, the most important of which are dependence on computer in data analysisand the focus of behavioral current on public policy (Al-Obaidi, 2019).

In the 1990s, attention to public policies continued to shift to the requirements of the twenty-first century.Accordingly, there was a change in the role of the State and an increase in the levels of interaction between private and public sector institutions and organizations, as well as the increasing roles of multinational corporations, international and non-governmental organizations in formulating priorities for policy and determining its path. This role emerged in response to the change in the concept of sovereignty, an acceleration in information achievements and a communications revolution.This gavethe international non-governmental organizations, such as human rights organizations, the rapid ability to intervene in the internal policies of States, as well as to influence the content of these policies (Al-Khafaji, 2014).

New writings also emerged highlighting the role of new actors in public policy, the role of large companies and humanitarian organizations in influencing a number of public statements, the impact of other sectors (non-governmental organizations) in policy-making.Certainly, this contributed significantly to the development of modern trends, which consider public policies as only a collective outcome of formal and informal interactions between a number of influencers and actors at the domestic and central levels.In this view, public policy is an expression of the will of the actors and influencers who are usually members of an organized network that is now known as the Political Network (Al-Fahdawi, 2001).

Therefore, the development of interest in public policy is the result of the influence of scientific studies and approaches and their contributions to political science in relation to the political process and the performance of the political system. Each approach hasa role in the development of the field of public policy in accordance with its own determinants, whether elitist, collective, systemic or based on the choice of efficient policies in understanding public policy.

Section Two: Definition of Public Policy and its Characteristics

The literature on policy generally categorizes its definitions into three main patterns, as it is either a dependent variable, an independent variable or both. When different factors affect policy, it is considered a dependent variable, but when policy affects other factors, it is considered an independent variable. Moreover, when policy is treated as a process, it is both a result and a cause (Khushaim, 2001).

Definition of Public Policy:

The Public Policy Encyclopedia defines policy as a set of basic objectives and agendas accompanied by a set of decisions, determining how they can be implemented (Hussein, 2014). Philip Cooper defines public policy as an answer or a response to a particular problem, emphasizing that public policyis an answer or a solution, but not the best solution. Heclo defines it as a working method designed to implement certain objectives. This definition limits the function of public policy to the implementation of certain objectives and not to make them. Furthermore,it does not specify the quality of the objective, and whether the problem solving is part of these objectives or not? (Najy & Sahili, 2016).

Nael Abdul-Hafiz (cited in Al-Obaidi, 2019) defines public policy as an authoritative assignment of values, as well as an approach aimed to dealing with vital societal issues and problems. While Najwa Ibrahim (cited in Salama & Samir, 2014) defines public policy as a means of achieving the objectives of the political regime, reflecting the balances of active and influential political forces in that regime.Hence, it is associated with the values, ideology and political objectives adopted by the ruling elite, and the alternative political values and objectives adopted by opposition parties and forces.

Public policy contains options for government activities in the public interest. It represents a set of decisions taken by politicians and implemented by the government to achieve the general objectives of the State regardless of the nature of this regime, which can be a monarchy, republican or tribal. It can be generalized through publicconferences and committees (Mubarak, 2012).

Abdullah (cited in Nouri, 2017) defines policy as plans, agendas, public objectives, or all of them together, showing the direction of government future action so as to obtain the political support. This means that public policy is the effectiveness of disposing theState resources and the government controlsthis process. Carl Friedrich states that public policy is a proposed agenda for a person, a group or a government within a specific environment to define the targeted opportunities and determinants to be overcome in pursuit of achieving an intendedobjective or purpose (cited in Nouri, 2017).

Some non-governmental or informal forces may also contribute or influence the designing and development of certain public policies, deriving their specificity from being made by the authorized powers and the political regime (Al-Khazraji, 2004).

Based on the above, it is clear that public policy is a conscious and deliberate plan aimed at achieving the immediate and future objectives and aspirations of society within a coherent process of activities, tools and mechanisms. Some concepts of public policy are defined as follows (Anderson, 2010):

a. It includes goal-oriented actions and does not include the random and spontaneous actions of some officials.
b. It includesagendas and procedures coordinated by government leaders, not individual and neglected decisions. For example, decrees adopted for legislation, as well as decisions implementing these laws.
c. Public policy includes all actual decisions that regulate and control trade. It deals with inflation or aims at the housing problem and does not deal with the acts to be done by the government.This is not a public policy for determining

wages because promises and aspirations represent matters different from those of public policy.

Characteristics of Public Policy:

Public policy reflects the existence of specific principles and characteristics that can be generalized, and therefore there is one better method, specific functions, and ideal characteristics that are adhered to within the framework of the decision-making process. These characteristics are (Al-Da'jah, 2020):

a. The legal authority of public policy is the constitutional institutions of the State and the access to legal power through the Constitution and the laws governing the circulation of power in the performance of its duties towards society and its due character, because violating it leads to the punishment of its holder.
b. Public policy is logical and rational. In other words, an alternative or alternatives, which can be achieved according to the available potentials.
c. It is a purposeful activity, i.e.,it includes goal-oriented actions and does not include the occasional and spontaneous actions of some officials.
d. It is a clear answer and an actual consequence, i.e.,it represents real problems with a clear impact. This requires that its results be sensitive and responsive.
e. It is of a comprehensive social nature. When public policy is approved, it applies to all persons in a comprehensive and unified manner.
f. It is an expression of the balance among interest groups.If public policy is a manifestation of social will, then it is a containerof the trends and desires of groups with a direct interest in it.
g. The continuation and renewal of public policy, i.e., public policy is a means of creating, preventing or limiting the meaningful change. Therefore, it requires two elements: (1) continuity to the extent where the change to be postponed is achieved. (2) Renewal, i.e., adaptability, realization of attitude variables and benefit from feedback.
h. Public policy can be negative or positive, public or secret. It is positive when real measures are taken to address the problem, and public authorities do not take any action.It is negative when making a decision on an issue that requires government intervention to be solved, which may be one of these: the government must take a neutral position on the issue;the government should also ask its officials to use a system to address the controversial problem or direct intervention by the government, which is the dominant means.
i. Public policy reflects the political feasibility, i.e., prior assessment of the expected effects of the policy adopted must be made.

Public policy is a collective process in which jurisprudence is presented and influenced by currents and ideologies. It is subject to knowledge, theoretical basics, and rational and technical methods. It discusses decisions and then issued by official authoritiesthat are authorized legally and constitutionally.However, this motivates scholars toexamine it, and the participation of many people in developingits ideas and alternatives. Public policy deals with issues and problems that are of public concern and have a global character, but this does not mean that it addresses issues of interest to a segment or group sympathetic to a large audience of citizens (Al-Kubaisi, 2008).

Mechanisms determining public policy:

The cognitive approach to public policies can be determined by defining the comprehensive concept that combines the trilogy of State, resources and agendas with the trilogy of activity, efficacy,and results.Each public policy has a life cycle, with the intention of coming up with outputs that ultimately meet the requirements of citizens. Moreover, each public policy has a set of characteristics that characterize it. Therefore, this section addressesthe levels and types of public policy and the policy-making process.

    a. Levels and Types of Public Policy:
    1. Levels of Public Policy:

Public policyhas different levels, which are divided into three, the most important of which are (Al-Obaidi, 2019):

1) The general level "Mado Politics": it includes demands and inquiries of interest to public opinion or multiple segments and groups of society, such as parties, low-income people, employees and workers,as well as problems of low wages and high prices of goods and services.
2) Partial level or partial policies: they are conducted in response to a problem or request from a particular entity or region, such as exempting a company from payment, tax reduction or setting up a housing project for employees of an institution.
3) Domestic level or domestic policy: they dealwith issues and problems related to provinces, regions or communities.

Based on the level, scope and areas of participation, policy is dividedinto three levels (Al Hussein, 2012):

1) The partial level: it includes the efforts and activities of individuals, companies and small communities that are successful in persuading the government to adopt policies that are beneficial to them.
2) In-between level: it focuses on specialized functional areas, such as regulating the work of airlines, or private universities. This level includes relations among legislative authorities, administrative institutions and interest groups.
3) The overall level: it occurs when society as a whole is concerned about a particular issue that attracts the attention of government action leaders at the national level.

It is noteworthy that overall policies are distinguished from other policies in terms of the intervention of the presidents (executive power leaders) because they reflect the public interest. The issues raised by the president usually have a special priority over other issues that are discussed,as being apublic policy guide.The most prominent example of this is the role of the US president (Nixon) in policies directed to combating poverty in the United States of America. As for the domestic level, meeting demands and solving domestic or regional problems is often entrusted to local or regional governments, each with its own independence and powers to collect and analyze information, determine priorities, formulate the necessary policies associated with each of them in the light of their powersand responsibilities in coordination with the central agencies (Al-Mubarak & Abboud, 2016).

2. Types of Public Policy:

Public policies have certain types including political, social, economic, financial and educational policies (Al-Awama, 1999).

The Public Policy-Making Process:

The public policy-making process is influenced by a range of factors, they include: surrounding security conditions; social, political and economic pressures; personal considerations; leadership characteristics; psychological motivations; multi-roles; nature of observance of procedural rules;and institutional functions (Al-Mubarak & Abboud, 2016).The public policy-making process undergoes a range of stages as follows (Dunn, 2016):

1) Setting the agenda: the staff who are elected and appointed put problems on the general agenda. Many of these problems are not being addressed at all; while others are treated after a long delay. For example, the legislative officer and co-sponsors of a State preparea draft addressed to the Health and Social Welfare Committee for study and accreditation, and the draft remains with the Committee without a vote.

2) Policy-making: the staff design policy alternatives to deal with a particular problem. These alternatives are in the form of executive orders, court decisions and legislative laws. For example, a particular State court takes into account the prohibition of usingthe standardized attainment tests, such as SAT test, because they are discriminatory against women and minorities.

3) Adopting policies: a particular policy is adopted with the support of the legislative majority, or by the consensus of agency directors, or by a court decision, as in the case of Roe against Wade, where Supreme Court judges reached a majority agreement prohibiting women from abortion.

4) Implementing policies:the administrative units implement the adopted policy and prepare the financing and human resources that are in line with the policy. For example, the city fund treasurer hires more staff to ensure compliance with the new law, which imposes taxes on hospitals that are no longer tax-free.

5) Evaluating policies:the government audit and accounting units determine whether executive agencies, legislatures and courts are in line with the legal requirements of the policy and achieve its stated objectives or not.

There are other stages of policy-making process as follows (Hussein, 2014):

1) Public Policy-Making:

The Public Policy-making process represents the first phase of policy-making. It indicates the political and non-political processes and actions taken by the government with the intention of reaching agreement on the definition of the problem, identifying alternative solutions and the basis for differentiating them.This prepares for the selection of the alternative proposed as a binding policy involving a satisfactory solution to the problem or the proposal submitted to the government. Given the different nature of public problems requiring government treatment, the differences of the parties concerned that interact under the political regimeare complex, dynamic and divided by the diversity of their components each of which has its own different contributions. These parties determine the basic steps, and are characterized as being future-oriented and seeking to achieve the public interest by the best means.

2) Identifying the Overall Problem :

The preparation of public policy begins with informing the government of a particular position, issue or problem. The government is aware of the problem, either through a government department, civil society institutions, parties, the press or the people in general. It may require reviewingthe laws or policies already applied, or taking arrangements on a completely new position or area that the government had never come close to, such as the problem of environmental pollution.

3) Gathering Information and Facts:

This requires consultation with the parties concerned with the problem under consideration without stopping at the limits of the official policy-making authorities, but it extends to consultations with civil society institutions and other voluntary bodies, the formation of parliamentary and ministerial committees for investigation, and hearing the views of experts and technicians. These parties would represent sources of access to information that would help clarify and define the main problem and think about the options and alternatives that are subsequently adopted to address it.

4) Preparing Proposals of Public Policy:

They require a local and political balance between alternative solutions and choosing an alternative that reconciles conflicting interests as much as possible and achieves as much public interest as possible. This policy-making forces of government and civil society institutions target those affected by the problem, public institutions and administrators who have contacts and knowledge of the problem or the issue that falls within their jurisdiction. It is very likely that this step will lead to the emergence of supporters and opponents, and the identification of points of difference and agreement.

5) Adopting the Chosen Alternative to Public Policy:

This means finding the solution in which it was declared.This refers to the government in the form of a law or official decision with the value of legislation and binding authority, which are an integral part of public policy.They are sub-policies within the framework of policy objectives and means.

6) Implementing Public Policy:

The public policy process is necessary to make public policy a living example of work and performance and to convert it into actions.This process is understood on this basis and all the limits or space between the declaration of policy and its real impact are taken into account. This reflects the true expression of real events and the effort performed, advice and feedback in the framework and environment of the organizations and executive governing bodies involved in its work and necessary tasks. The main purpose of this phase, therefore, is to work to achieve policy, its principles and the plans that should be implemented.

7) Feedback:

It is the last stage in the policy-making process whereby the policy makers know its strengths and weaknesses, and its expected and unexpected effects. These matters are known through reports submitted by executive officials. There are two types of institutions involved in policy-making, namely formal authorities (legislative, executive, and judicial authorities)and informal authorities (non-governmental)

represented by political parties, public opinion and civil society institutions (Al-Da'jah, 2020).

Conclusion:

This study dealt with public policy and the mechanisms of its development and implementation. It found that studies dealing with public policy are relatively new.Public policy is considered the most important basis of the existence of States in terms of application, even if it is not done actually. Achieving well-being is an input to the process of making public policies, while its outcomes are decisions of public policy that take place within the framework of the legislature. The American model is the previous and most successful experiment and is one of the models that can be taken in the field of the emergence, development and success of public policies.

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