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THE REQUEST FOR A BRIDGE BETWEEN POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICIES

Theoretical
article

Keywords

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state,
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Abstract

The paper aims to reveal that there is a stringent need for a bridge or a well connection between public policies and Politics, if that state's systems intends to work on a good way. A public policy, no matter if it is about health, education or other important environment can be sustainable and can be followed by good results just in the case it is sustained by the political and governmental environment belonging to that state.

There are met definitions and comparisons of different views both on the political side as well as the communities' side. As a concept, the good governance lead to a better understanding of the appropriate public policy decision-making, related on eight leading principles.

Introduction:

Policies can be regarded as political, management, financial and administrative operations which aim to achieve certain goals. Policies can be applied to government, private sector organizations and groups, and to individuals.

The public policy represents the settled and decided head to all the action taken in the administrative executive departments in one state concerning the appropriate matters in relation with the institutional activities and with the law. Its basic instruments after which they rule, are the national constitutional laws and regulations. Besides the two ones are also important the judicial regulations and interpretation that are under the legislation rules. The public policy has like aims to reckon the issues as efficiently and effectively as possible, to sustain the policies and the institutions of the Government, to serve the justice and make incentives for the citizens to better involve themselves in the public policy.

Literature review

Dean Kilpatrick (2000) considers public policy as a sum of “courses of actions, regulatory measures, laws and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives”. It can be determined through the mobilization, advocacy or education of groups or individuals and also by interest groups. This process determines all the time some expects or efforts from the opposing interest groups as for influencing it in their favor.

The one of the most compulsory in the public policy represent the law, more precisely legislation and appropriate provisions of international or constitutional law. For example, the aggressors of women are treated differently depending on the law in a certain area.

Public policy are met in constitutions, legislative acts and judicial decisions (Schuster, 2009). In the United States this idea refers to the decision taking and the analysis of governmental decisions rather than the result of policies. John Peter sustains that public policy making represents a system that is complex, dynamic and interactive where problems on the public sector are identified and prevented as the actual policy is reformulated with a new policy. The issues in the public sector may begin in several different ways and demand feedback on policy in the same time of international, nation or local level.

After Kilpatrick, in the public policy making a large number of interest groups and individuals try to be more successful and to work together in order to influence policy maker to act in a certain way. The numerous actors inside the public policy process, like civil servants, politicians, representatives of the industry, apply a variety of instruments and tactics to gain their

objectives, as well as sustaining their proposes in the public, managing to educate pro and cons or mobilizing supporters on a subject in particular. They can draw, codify and make formal the policies, and also asses or approve them. This actors work on their own or involved in a group. They can be also involved in a parliamentary group, in the administration, in a council, a political group, or just from an interest group. Their attitude can vary according to the context. Many of these actors are relevant inside the public policy activity, but the ones that are the most important concerning decision making are government officials because they have to accomplish ethics in the public sector and to take in account the needs of its stakeholders.

In the same time with the change of society, the public policy system known a change. This change was in the direction of purpose orientation, where is continuously increasing, trying to have important results and paying attention to those decisions that have to be immediately taken. Another development that influenced the development of public policy system was the technology because it started to be dependent, connected and difficult. All these shifts are believed to be some contests to the actual public policy system and determine it to evolve in order to continue being effective and efficient.

Over the past decades, Government made reforms that were mostly interested in altering the money value, the effectiveness and efficiency of the nowadays policy procedures and the means through which it determines the power of policymakers to meet the population’s needs. The players in the policy making are involved in a procedure that directs the decision making to the accomplishment of the aims and in a more independence of organizing their job.

After the Thei Geurts studies (2011), public policy is also “a choice that government makes in response to a political issue or a public problem”, that can rest on norm or value. The purpose of the policy in general would be to surpass the latter two in a specific situation. In the meantime, the public policy make reference to the actions that Government takes and also its decisions and the intents that it has to make them more clear.

In the paper “Public Policy Making: the 21st Century Perspective”, Geurts emphasize the fact that the process of policy making is characterized by the coexistence of a political and a production dimension and the interaction between the elements and mechanisms in these dimensions. “The political dimension includes activities such as proposing initiatives, practicing advocacy, mobilizing stakeholders, holding consultations, building opinions and taking positions. There are many stakeholders and participants and they vary according to the policy intention.”

“Policy makers are involved either in making policy or in influencing policy. The policy maker is a person who has the power to influence or determine policies and practices at a local, regional, national or international level.”

An overview of the relation between public policies and Politics and their stakeholders

Besides direct stakeholders, there are other participants that have an important role in influencing the policy making, particularly media and citizens. They try to influence administration and politics using various ways, such as television, radio, newspapers and the Internet. Also, they try to influence policy making by facts, perceptions and the risk of damage to reputation, which prove to be effective ways of changing policy making.

Public problems may originate from the media or from public opinion, from parliament or political parties, from international organizations, from government departments, or from public authorities. According to Thei Geurts, the time needed to transform an objective or an intention into a law can vary. It can be short or extremely long, because some policy intentions take years to become law. Achieving agreement in an international framework with numerous different actors on an issue that concerns social values can take long time.

Policy making defines the intention and the course of action according to the “Public Policy Making: the 21st Century Perspective”. As an outcome some procedures, regulations and of course laws were defined in order to have appropriate opinions for executing a policy, meaning applying it.

In accordance with what was said in previous rounds, the public policy represents an endeavor to mitigate the disparities from a norm and a stage. The policy maker take choices and respond to issues according to certain principles of leading that is the good governance principles. It is a view that defines the guiding principles, notions and guidance that the administration integrate in order to advocate the wishes of political ground concerning their assimilation and structure in accordance with the shifts in society and technology. United Nations describes good governance of Government relying on eight elements as it follows: responsive, transparency, orientation, equity and inclusiveness, efficiency and efficacy, rule of law, participation, accountability.

All the eight proposition of governance spot an impingement on each activity and execution of public policy making, not depending of the group that is concerned. As for to be applied they have to be consistent and coherent and they also demand cooperation, implication and openness in making the decision. In this way it brings the

Government more near to the citizen and are defined laws and regulations more clear and better to be applied.

Policy analysis is principally concerned with describing and investigating how and why particular policies are proposed, adopted, and implemented. This is the theoretical side of policy studies. A policy option must be evaluated in the light of what policy analysis reveals about its chances of being adopted, the probable effectiveness of the option, and the difficulties of implementation (Cochran,2012). A proposal for increased spending for high school education, for example, would need to be tested against data on the impact of increased spending on student achievement levels. Advocates of fundamental restructuring of the health care system need to take into account the political inertia favoring only incremental reform. Policy analysis is not, however, value neutral. Robert A. Heineman says that policy analysts want to discover which policy proposals best fulfill important public values.

Those who would sharply separate policy analysis from fundamental social values make a grave mistake. Policy analysis without awareness of ethical perspectives is lame. This is particularly true when evaluating the impact of policy. Ethical principles must be brought to bear on the discovery of the good and bad effects of policy. Such principles not only measure success and failure; they also provide insight into consequences that otherwise would not be revealed.

Stated that policy evaluation involves collecting and analyzing information about the efficiency and effectiveness of policies. The aim would be to specify which targets or policies were accomplished and to better the performance of public policy. By assessing it, it can be observed that it has in the same time dimension on empirical as well as normative field.

The first field, make reference to the values, acceptances and position of the society in general, but also to their individual and certain groups with the ones that evaluate the public policies. The individuals that have disparate values and beliefs rely on the evaluation of public policy through the second field, the normative one. Evaluation, therefore, is always political. Progressives, conservatives, socialists, feminists, and anarchists differ fundamentally in their understanding of such concepts and in their ranking of them. Conservatives, for example, believe that free competition and protection of private property are the fundamental values to be pursued by economic policy. Socialists, however, see just distribution of the social product as the principal value. Different policy evaluators and different political groups, then, will evaluate public policy differently. Normative perspectives come into play, not only in

assessing the goals of policy but also in analyzing how well policy accomplishes the desired goals.

As World Health Organization has drawn a tree that bridges public health policy to Politics, all environment request a bridge following this pattern. Also, "The World Health Report 2008: Primary Health Care" underlines the fact that "more than 100 states have developed a national medicine policy. Availability of these policies were efficient in making costs lower and medicines safer and rationally used."(WHO, 2008).

As figure 1 shows, the elements of the tree are grouped in two main groups: the trunk and the foliage with the fruits. The trunk contains major elements as:

- political will and legal framework;
- the right medicines;
- enough good quality medicines;
- good price;
- rationale use;
- trained staff.

The foliage and the fruits highlight the importance of having a National Medicines Policy because it can ensure : availability, affordability, effectiveness correct usage, safety and a better health for all.

Also the goals of a National Medicine Policy is to define the national objectives, set governmental priorities on short term and medium to long term; to ensure the effectiveness in terms of essential medicines at a price individuals can buy them etc.

Conclusions

I consider the model applied in medicine that links public health policy to Politics can be applied in all fields and they can bring good results in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and economy. Having a well defined bridge between public policies and Politics, it will be met a harmony in the whole state system.

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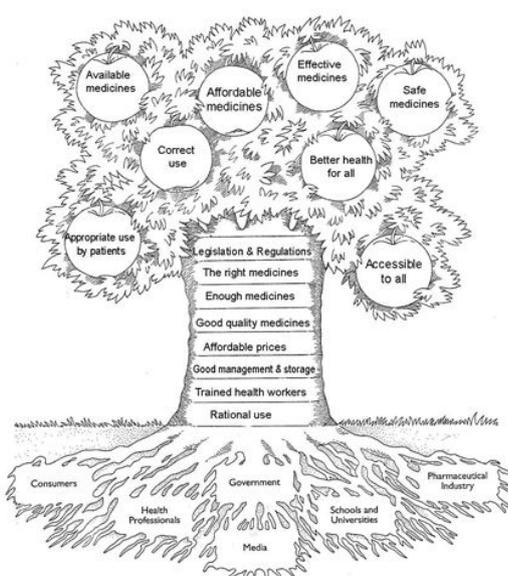


Figure 1- The connection between public health policy and Politics, Source: WHO