

Public policy analysis and the criteria for evaluation of the public policy

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Abstract

Public policies constitute a huge importance in the lives of every citizen in each country. There are several different perspectives and concepts how policy is defined and some of those concepts are presented by famous scholars such as Thomas Dye, William Jenkins, Thomas Birkland, Moran Michael, Rein Martin, Robert Godin etc.

In regard of Public Policy Analysis, Michael Hill argues that some policy analysts are interested in furthering the understanding of policy (analysis of policy), some are interested in improving the quality of policy (analysis for policy), and some are interested in both activities. He presents some different kinds of policy analysis starting by studies of policy content. According to Hill Evaluation marks borderline between analysis of policy and analysis for policy. William Dum in his book on Public Policy Analysis argues that policy analysis is partly descriptive and relies on traditional social science discipline to explain the causes and consequences of policies. Warren Walker defines public policy analysis as a rational, systematic approach to making policy choices in the public sector. The Policy Analysis process generally involves performing the same set of logical steps and the steps that public policy analysis should be conducted.

Michael Kraft and Scott Furlong analyze some of the criteria for evaluation of the public policy such as: Effectiveness, Efficiency, Equity, and Political Feasibility.

In Kosovo, after the War ended, Education has been one of the most prioritized public policy by all Kosovo Governments. This Public Policy is developed at several levels, starting from preschool education up to higher education or University studies.

Keywords: Public Policy, Public Policy Analysis, Evaluation Criteria, Education Policy.

Introduction

There are several different perspectives and concepts how public policy is defined and some of those concepts are presented by famous scholars. Having in mind this broad horizon of public policy definition, we can argue that there is no unanimity on it. One of the definitions on public policy is of Thomas Dye, who defines public policies as: whatever governments choose to do or not to do (Dye, 1998). Another definition is provided by William Jenkins, who says that public policies are a set of inter-related decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve (Jenkins, 1978). According to Thomas Birkland, in academic studies of policy, the definitions for public policy are provided to understand the shape of the field we seek to study. Since there is no single definition that may be developed, Birkland discerns some key features to public policy definitions such as; public policy is made in response to some sort of the problems that require attention; policy is made on the "public's behalf"; policy is oriented toward a goal or desired state, such as the

solution of a problem (Birkland, 2011).

Public policies constitute a huge importance in lives of every citizen in each country. So, if policy makers' determinations are to have the full force of public policy, they must curry people with them. Furthermore, we can see the importance and the role that public policies have, presenting the perspective of distinguished scholars who argue that in order to make policy in a way that makes it stick, policy makers cannot merely issue edicts. They need to persuade the people who must follow their edicts if those are to become general public practice (Moran, Martin & Goodin, 2006). The public policy analyze has an important role because the final product of this analyze is advice. Being more specifically, it is advice that informs some public policy decision (Weimer, 2016). Andrew Heywood's explanation on what public policies are is that public policies are governmental formal and legal decisions and that those policies are connected between goals, actions and outputs (Heywood, 2008).

In the end, I can conclude that following the consultation of the literature, public policies are originated directly to the needs of the citizens. The Government should draft proper public policies, put them into the public open debate, select those public policies that should be implemented based on the priorities and citizens' needs. The implementation of these public policies should be observed and monitored by citizens themselves and meanwhile the public policy evaluation should be conducted by Independent Professional Agencies, aiming to reach the effectiveness and efficiency of a specific public policy.

Public Policy Analysis

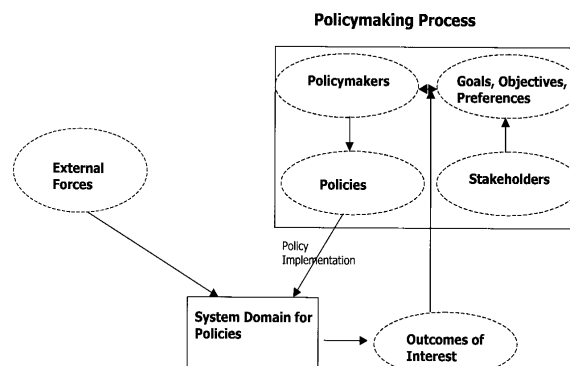
Michael Hill firstly argues that some policy analysts are interested in furthering understanding of policy (analysis of policy); some are interested in improving the quality of policy (analysis for policy); and some are interested in both activities. He presents some different kinds of policy analysis starting by studies of policy content, in which analysts seek to describe and explain the genesis and development of particular policies, another model is studies of policy outputs, with much in common with studies of policy content but which typically seek to explain why levels of expenditure or service provision vary, meanwhile the following one has to do with studies of the policy process, in which attention is focused upon how policy decisions are made and how policies are shaped in action.

On the other hand, Hill presents the analysis for policy and highlights these kinds or ways as the important ones. Evaluation marks the borderline between analysis of policy and analysis for policy. Evaluation studies are also sometimes referred to as impact studies as they are concerned with analyzing the impact policies have on the population. Evaluation studies may be either descriptive or prescriptive. The following way of the analysis for policy is Information for policy making, in which data are marshalled in order to assist policy makers to reach decisions. The other one has to do with the Process advocacy, in which according to Hill, analysts seek to improve the nature of the policy-making systems through the reallocation of functions and tasks, and through efforts to enhance the basis for policy choice through the development of planning systems and new approaches to option appraisal, meanwhile the final

one is Policy advocacy, which involves the analyst in pressing specific options and ideas in the policy process, either individually or in association with others, perhaps through a pressure group (Hill, 2005).

William Dunn in his book on Public Policy Analysis argues that policy analysis is partly descriptive. It relies on traditional social science discipline to explain the causes and consequences of policies. His explanation includes normative aspect as well, which refers to value judgements about what *ought* to be, in contrast to descriptive statements about what *is*. Policy analysis is designed to provide policy-relevant information about five types of questions which are as follows; regarding *the policy problems* what is the problem for which a potential solution is sought. The second question relies on *expected policy outcomes* and what are the expected outcomes of policies, the following question has to do with *preferred policies* that what policies should be chosen, another question raised by Dunn has to do with *observed policy outcomes* and the final one *policy performance* which aims to understand to what extent do observed policy outcomes contribute to the solution of a problem (Dunn, 2016).

Warren Walker defines public policy analysis as a rational, systematic approach to making policy choices in the public sector. He adds that this is a process that generates information on the consequences that would follow the adoption of various policies. Furthermore, Walker says that it uses a variety of tools to develop this information and to present it to the parties involved in the policymaking process in a manner that helps them come to a decision. Policy analysis is performed in government, at all levels; in independent policy research institutions, both for-profit and not-for-profit; and in various consulting firms. So, public policy analysis is not a way of solving a specific problem, but is a general approach to problem solving. It is not a specific methodology, but it makes use of a variety of methodologies in the context of a generic framework. Walker states the importance of a process where each step of which is critical to the success of a study and must be linked to the policymakers, to other stakeholders and to the policymaking process.

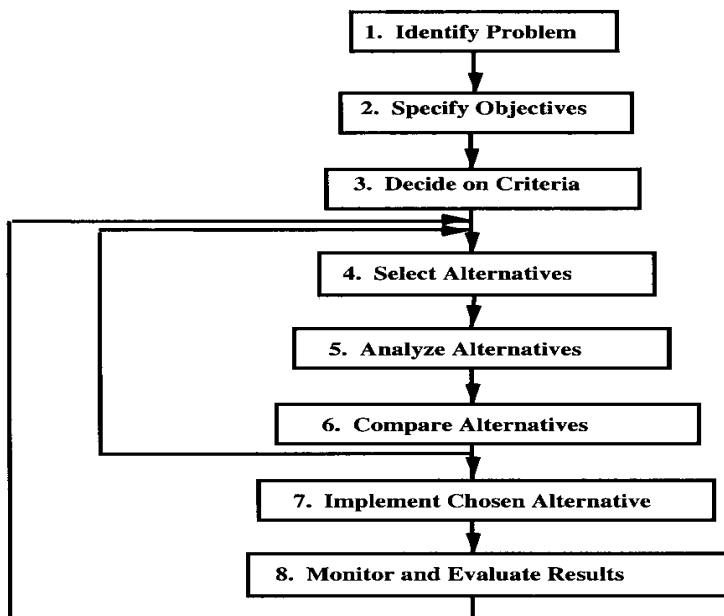


- **Elements in the policy analysis approach**

The policy analysis process generally involves performing the same set of logical steps. The steps that public policy analysis should be conducted are: *Identify the problem-* which involves identifying the questions or issues involved, fixing the context within which

the issues are to be analyzed and the policies will have to function, clarifying constraints on possible courses of action, identifying the people who will be affected by the policy decision, discovering the major operative factors and deciding on the initial approach. The following step is to *identify the objectives of the new policy*. In this step, the policy objectives are determined. The next following up step is *decided on criteria (measures of performance and cost) with which to evaluate alternative policies*. This step involves identifying consequences of a policy that can be estimated (quantitatively or qualitatively) and that are directly related to the objectives. It also involves identifying the costs (negative benefits) that would be produced by a policy and how they are to be estimated. *Select the alternative policies to be evaluated* is another way or method presented by Walker. He adds that this specifies the policies whose consequences are to be estimated. It is important to include as many as stand any chance of being worthwhile.

Analyze each alternative. This means determining the consequences that are likely to follow if the alternative is actually implemented. This step usually involves using a model or models of the system. This step is usually performed for each of several possible future worlds. The following up step is to *compare the alternatives in terms of projected costs and effects*. This involves examining the estimated costs and effects for each of the scenarios, making tradeoffs among them and choosing a preferred alternative (which is robust against the possible futures). *Implement the chosen alternative*. It involves obtaining acceptance of the new procedures (both within and outside the government), training people to use them and performing other tasks to put the policy into effect. *Monitor and evaluate the results*. Walker says that this is necessary to make sure that the policy is actually accomplishing its intended objectives. If it is not, the policy may have to be modified or a new study performed.



• Steps in a policy analysis study (Walker, 2000)

Evaluation criteria of the public policy

Michael Kraft and Scott Furlong analyze some of the selection and evaluation criteria of the public policy alternatives such as: *Effectiveness, efficiency, equity and political feasibility*.

According to them, **effectiveness** refers to whether a current policy or program or one that is being considered is likely to work. That is, how likely is it that the policy's goals or objectives will be achieved? They emphasized the role of a proposal's technical or administrative feasibility in effecting many policy areas such as; infrastructure, education, environment etc.

Efficiency is another criteria presented by Kraft and Furlong. This criterion refers to what a policy or policy proposal costs in relation to its expected benefits to society. Furthermore, efficiency is sometimes described as a desire to realize the greatest possible benefit out of the expenditures that government realizes. Thus, considering a policy proposal's economic feasibility means asking whether it is "affordable" or will be considered a good use of public funds in an era when all programs compete for such funds.

The following criterion presented by these two authors is **equity**. They provide an explanation arguing that this criterion refers to the consideration of what constitutes a fair or equitable policy choice. It may be a way to consider how a program's costs and benefits are distributed among citizens (that is, fairly or not). The criterion of equity is also a way to think about who is allowed to participate in policymaking processes, such as who gets to vote or who gets to speak at a public hearing. In a process of a distribution of Government spending, Government organizes public hearings with the public concerning the budgetary spending, aiming to be as much inclusive as possible and to include the citizens' proposals.

The last criterion that Kraft and Furlong present has to do with **political feasibility**. They argue that this criterion concerns how government officials and other policy actors appraise the acceptability of a proposal. Most often, references to political feasibility reflect a judgment about whether elected officials, be it Member of Government or Member of Assembly, are willing to support a policy proposal. In a democracy, policy makers must consider the preferences and potential reactions of the public, interest groups, and other government officials when developing policies (Kraft & Furlong, 2015).

Implementation of the Education Policy in the Republic of Kosovo – Higher Education (2011-2015)

It is hard to ignore today that the role of education in our societies is taking on increased importance. Education is now viewed as the key component to economic competitiveness in an increasingly global world and thus educational achievements and success are increasingly seen as a way to better handle the economic challenges facing today's societies (Peters & Pierre, 2006). Education is an essential prerequisite for economic growth and improvement of living standard in the contemporary economy. The endeavour of Kosovo to achieve these goals is necessarily dependent on the productivity of labour force. The quality of education, gross enrolment rates and the number of years spent on education are essential for human capital formation

and represent a key input in improving productivity and employment opportunities. Unemployment rate in Kosovo is generally high and data indicate that the low level of education and achievement decreases the employment opportunities.*

In Kosovo, last two decades Education has been one of the most prioritized public policy by all Kosovo Governments. This public policy is developed at several levels, starting from preschool education up to higher education or University studies. Based on the law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo, the main objectives of Higher Education are as follows;

- creation, development, protection and transmission of knowledge through teaching and scientific and research works;
- preparation of students for further studies, professional practice and lifelong learning through the acquisition and depth development knowledge and high level competences;
- offering opportunities for all inhabitants of Kosovo who are able to benefit from such education and to contribute to their society and country, throughout their lives.

Meanwhile, the organization of the Higher Education in Kosovo is based on the following levels;

- First level – three (3) to four (4) years of studies by which the student reaches 180, respectively 240 /ECTS/, and obtains Bachelor Diploma.
- Second level – one (1) to two (2) years of studies after completion of the first level by which the students reaches 60, respectively 120/ECTS/ and the student obtains Master Diploma.
- Third level – program of doctorate studies with academic and independent research scientific character.

Based on the Evaluation Report, Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2011-2016, prepared by the Ministry of Education in the Republic of Kosovo, I can argue that a concrete steps were undertaken concerning consolidation of higher education in Kosovo, aiming the harmonization of the legislation of higher education institutions. In Kosovo, there are seven higher education institutions and thirty private accredited institutions. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology had identified several objectives for the period of 2011-2016 (Kosovo Education Strategic Plan). Some of these objectives include: drafting of bylaws and harmonization of statuses of Higher Education Institutions based on the revised Law on Higher Education, study programs are in line with the labor market needs, an increased budget and improved efficiency in execution of the budget in line with the reviewed law, improvement of quality in teaching and scientific research. High Education Institutions have built capacity to generate additional resources through research projects, consultancy services, infrastructure and some other objectives as well. It is worth to emphasize that this report adds that the average rate of implementing targets within the sub-program for higher education of KESP 2011-2016, based on quantitative index is **2.5**. The mechanism for external quality assessment according to European Standards Guidelines (ESG) is in regular function. Despite this fact, the situation of the internal quality parameters such as teacher-student ratio and funding per student have not

been improved but it is worsened. As a consequence of this situation, this could have adversely affected the very low number of graduates in public higher education compared to the very large number of enrolments. The Kosovo Accreditation Agency is a member of European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (ENQA) and European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and has taken some steps to improve the equivalence system European Network of Information Centers - National Academic Recognition Information Centers (ENIC / NARIC) and the mobility of students. The low level of scientific research, lack of a unique funding formula that stimulates performance and disparities of higher education programs with the labor market remain challenges to be addressed in the upcoming years.

Regarding to the objective of linking higher education with the labor market, the report provides information that there is no active system for linking data of the labor market with education in Kosovo and furthermore there is no evidence that they were used in the reformation of vocational education profiles. The report emphasizes the urgent need that Kosovo has for a data processing system that would link its data with International Standards for the Classification of Education (ISCED), Eurostat, with the data of employment categories of International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) and economic sectors of Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community (NACE). The quantitative linking with the labor market does not necessarily imply that the workforce reached the appropriate level of quality.

Moreover, the report identified two structural problems that the labor market in Kosovo faces related to the extent and quality of the education system. Initially, it finds that the rate of demand in the labor market is low and the trend of employment generated in recent years does not guarantee employment of graduates. Secondly, there is the problem of inconsistency in the quality of training and the labor market - there are few economic sectors that are faced with the lack of adequate skills.

According to the report, Kosovo have not yet developed a methodology for the financing of the higher education institutions to promote the effectiveness and accountability, despite the fact that KESP and the Law on Higher Education provided this. However, since 2011, financing in higher education have increased. Financing is increasing as nominal amount, but also as a percentage of gross domestic product and government budget. In fact, in 2014, this financing amounted to 0.91% of gross domestic product, thus approximated to the EU average of 1.13%. (See table 1).

Table 1: Expenditures on higher education

Type of expenditure	2011	2012	2013	2014
Financing in higher education (mil. €)	34.63	37.62	41.02	50.76
Expenditures in Education as % of GDP	4.60%	4.70%	4.30%	4.70%
Expenditures in HE as % of GDP	0.73%	0.77%	0.77%	0.91%
Expenditures in Education as % of KCB	15.50%	16.00%	15.70%	16.50%
Expenditures in HE as % of KCB	2.45%	2.61%	2.79%	3.19%

Source: Evaluation report. Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016

Table 2: Expenditure per student capita

Type of expenditure	2011	2012	2013	2014
Expenditure per student capita (EUR)	689	661	646	703
Expenditures per student as GDP % per capita	28.50%	24.89%	21.69%	21.48%

Source: Evaluation report. Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016

Public expenditures per student as GDP % per capita for the period of 2011-2014 show that these expenditures are declining because of the increasing number of students and the continued growth of the GDP, as shown on table 2.

The idea behind the measures related to this target was to spur the state and create suitable conditions for the generation of self-revenues by public institutions of higher education, exempting, in this case, revenues from the students. Development of relevant regulations by institutions of higher education is envisaged as a first measure. The other measure is related to the development of mechanisms for generating revenues within institutions of higher education, such as project offices, consultancy services and similar. In this regard, public institutions have relied on public communications offices and have not established such services and as the report supposes it could perhaps have been due to lack of funds. Law on Higher Education envisages building of effective mechanisms for transparent funding that promotes accountability.

Another objective of the education policy in Kosovo for more than a decade has been the management of the quality and increase the level of scientific research. The management of the quality has its evaluation dimensions; internal quality assurance dimension which has been based on several criteria such as: drafting and implementation of programs which aim the improvement of teaching methodologies, revision of criteria for selecting the academic staff, students' results during their studies and the formation of various administrative mechanisms within the academic units. All the public and private Higher Education Institutions have established their quality assurance office. The external quality assurance dimension is mainly connected to external evaluation of programs and institutions, the achievements of the academic staff in teaching and scientific research work, academic staff mobility and mobility of students, international cooperation etc. Meanwhile, from the internal dimension, quality assurance is assessed based on the self-evaluation reports, institutional mechanisms for quality assurance in management, in teaching, scientific research, infrastructure, academic programs, students' performance during their studies, financial performance etc. Kosovo has not applied any external evaluation mechanism regarding to the assessment of the students' achievements, therefore, there could not be any ranking of students' progress in their studies. The percentage of students that complete their studies on time is about 35%. However, there is an increasing trend of those unemployed graduates, whose percentage is about 13% in 2014.

Based on the data presented by Webometrics Edition, which cooperates with some of the most prestigious evaluating Higher Education international institutions, in July 2015, ranked the University of Prishtina in 4060th place in the list and taking into

consideration that other Universities in the Western Balkans are above Kosovo in that ranking list, that is an indicator and signal that the Higher Education in Kosovo needs significant improvements and enhancements.

Teacher-student ratio is another indicator of quality assessment. In public institutions of Higher Education in Kosovo, the average of the students per a professor who is regular staff member is 62, and this ratio is considerably the highest in Kosovo, compared to some other regional countries, e.g.; Romania 29, Albania 24, Serbia 23, Macedonia and Moldova 17, Slovenia 14, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bulgaria 12 and Croatia 9.

Regarding to the scientific research, Kosovo does not stand in a good position. According to the data presented in the Evaluation Report, Kosovo during the period of 2003-2013, in total had 826 indexed scientific papers in two main data bases worldwide, such as Web of Science and Scopus. This shows that Kosovo is far behind compared to other regional countries concerning to scientific research work (Montenegro 1849, Albania 2133, Bosnia and Hercegovina 6195, Macedonia 6187, Bulgaria 38122, Slovenia 48454, Serbia 49068 and Croatia 56461). In this context, the budget that Kosovo spends on scientific research work is very low (0.10% of the GDP). Meanwhile, other regional countries' expenditures on scientific research and development are: Montenegro 0.40%, Serbia 0.70%, Croatia 0.80%, and Slovenia 2.60%.¹

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