

تحليل السياسات العامة: إشكالية المنهج وأوجه القصور في التقييم

Public Policy Analysis: Methodological Problematic and Evaluation Deficiencies

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المخلص:

من المتعارف عليه في مجال تحليل السياسات العامة أن عملية التحليل لا تقتصر على مرحلة واحدة، بل تمتد لتشمل مرحلتين قبليّة وبعديّة لعملية صنع السياسات، حيث ترافق جميع مراحلها بدءاً من الصياغة مروراً بالتنفيذ وصولاً إلى التقييم، كما تشمل دراسة تأثير السياسات القائمة على الخيارات المستقبلية، وهو ما يمنحها بعداً استراتيجياً مهماً. ومع ذلك، قد يمثل هذا البعد أحد التحديات الجوهرية، إذ تتأثر عملية التقييم بمجموعة من العناصر المتداخلة، أبرزها التداخل بين مناهج صنع السياسات وتحليلها، إضافة إلى عوامل أخرى تختلف حدة تأثيرها تبعاً لطبيعة السياسة ومجالها ومستواها وأهميتها ونطاقها وبيئتها الداخلية والخارجية، ومع تعدد هذه العوامل تبقى إشكالية المنهج في تحليل السياسات العامة هي العنصر الأكثر توجيهاً وتأثيراً في هذه العملية.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: تحليل سياسات عامة، دورة السياسة العامة، تنفيذ السياسات، التخطيط الاستراتيجي، بيئة السياسة العامة، فعالية السياسات، صناعة القرار.

Abstract:

It is widely recognized in the field of public policy analysis that the process of analysis is both ex-ante and ex-post to the policymaking process itself, as it accompanies all stages of policy development, from formulation and implementation to evaluation. Moreover, it also involves examining the impact of existing policies on future policy choices, which gives it a strategic dimension. However, this dimension may represent one of the fundamental challenges in public policy analysis, as the evaluation process within this context is influenced by a set of interacting elements. Among the most prominent of these is the overlap between the approaches of policy-making and policy analysis, in addition to other factors whose degree of influence varies depending on the nature of the policy, its field, level, importance, scope, and its internal and external environment. Despite the multiplicity of these factors, the methodological problem in public policy analysis remains the most directing and influential element in this process.

Keywords: Public Policy Cycle, Policy Implementation, Strategic Planning, Ex-ante and Ex-post Analysis, Policy Environment, Policy Effectiveness, Decision-Making

Introduction:

The practical framing of public policy analysis reflects societal crises, developments, global wars, and the associated economic transformations, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries. Governments of various formations have sought to analyze their policies to address imbalances and enhance efficiency. Furthermore, some nations have held joint conferences between the academic and applied political sectors at the level of universities and legislative and local councils to bolster the understanding and evaluation of public policy analysis. Consequently, this has established methodological horizons for public policy analysis that have evolved over time, especially since the 1990s, as developments have influenced its units of analysis, policy issues and content, as well as its methodology and schools of thought.

Regarding units of analysis, they have expanded in terms of actors and their growing roles in making and prioritizing those policies. The scope of focus on the content and issues of public policy has also widened with the entry of new variables, such as globalization in its various dimensions, the growth of international relations, the increasing number of human rights organizations, the development of various sciences, and the emergence of problems and crises at the societal level that have led to questioning state models. This has been reflected in the methodology of policy analysis, which in turn has evolved to include quantitative, qualitative, and comparative methods as well. This was accompanied by the emergence of intellectual currents and schools; some focused on the technical dimension in policy analysis, considering that phenomena are governed by utility and thus provide them with rational economic interpretations. Consequently, proponents of this current believe that using quantitative measurement tools to differentiate between policy alternatives when making decisions (policies) is the ideal method for analysis.

On the other hand, a political current also emerged whose proponents argue that politics and influence are the determinants of decision-making (policies) and their outcomes. Consequently, this current maintains that the process of analyzing these policies should focus on the roles played by political and social forces (interest groups) in the actual making of such policies. Many other currents in public policy analysis have also appeared, including, but not limited to, the current open to the external world, which employs policy comparison, etc. From this perspective, this article takes shape in an attempt to answer the fundamental overarching question: Can

public policy analysis methodologies constitute a problem that may lead to evaluative pitfalls by analysts of different orientations at the end of the analysis process?

Study Objectives:

This study aims to achieve a set of academic objectives that contribute to uncovering the depths of this cognitive field, which can be summarized into two core objectives:

1. Demonstrating the overlap between public policy-making methodologies and the subsequent transition of that overlap into the analysis process, which creates deficiencies in the analysis of the public policies themselves.
2. The overlap of public policy analysis methodologies causes a significant problem that primarily reflects on the policy evaluation process, as evaluation is the core stage in the analysis process.

Study Hypotheses:

This brief study attempts to adopt two core hypotheses that constitute potential answers to the study problem formulated in its general question, as follows:

1. The existence of a clear overlap between policy-making methodologies across their various classifications and the reflection of that overlap on the analysis process.
2. Evaluation, as a stage of public policy analysis, is negatively affected by the overlap of methodologies used in the analysis process, causing total or partial deficiencies in the analysis process.

Study Importance:

This study derives its importance from its attempt to highlight a core element in the process of public policy analysis, given the fundamental significance of this multifaceted scientific field, not only at the level of the political system but also at the organizational level. The macro-transformations occurring within any political system are reflected directly and simultaneously on the level of its micro-units, including economic organizations, institutions, and public bodies.

Study Methodology:

This scientific article attempts to investigate the subject of public policy analysis in terms of methodological issues and evaluative pitfalls, utilizing the descriptive-analytical approach. It limits itself to presenting the overlap between certain analysis methodologies and how they reflect on the level of public policy evaluation, leaving room for further in-depth academic study in this field.

Researchers' Perspectives on Public Policy Analysis:

Gilbert views public policy analysis as a process of identifying policy alternatives that achieve the maximum desired goals within the environmental framework and its complexities, drawing on Herbert Simon's ideas in his writings on economic systems (Gilbert G. R., 1984). Meanwhile, Thomas Dye perceives policy analysis as a process of describing public policy content and evaluating the impact of environmental variables on its nature and on society (Thomas R. Dye, 1972). As for Roberts and Edward, they consider policy analysis to be the study of how public policy is formed and the impact of various environmental elements throughout the different stages of that formation, from inception through implementation to evaluation and follow-up (Roberts G. & Edward A., 1991). Conversely, Olaniyi views policy analysis as a systematic interpretive process to evaluate the impact of policy options in dealing with various problems, thus allowing this methodology to be used in decision-making (Olaniyi J. O., 1991). From here, we see how researchers' perspectives vary regarding the essence of public policy analysis; some focus on holistic aspects, while others focus on causes, consequences, and decision patterns, whereas some focus on public policy processes and the nature of content. However, the entire analysis process, as indicated by most researchers, does not deviate from the analytical interest in studying and interpreting the behavioral orientation of the political actor and studying the causes and problems that led to that orientation according to a scientific methodology that attempts to produce effective solutions to those problems or develop theories applicable to public policy-making in its various fields and levels. Additionally, analysis should include policy content, the information required for its formulation, its various processes, as well as decision support and enhancement processes, while considering its outputs, evaluation methods, and the scientific approaches used in the analysis process within the framework in which the analysis process unfolds.

Public Policy Analysis Characteristics :

The characteristics of public policy analysis can be summarized in a set of points focusing on its most prominent analytical qualities as follows:

A methodology with a future-oriented vision concerned with identifying strategic options based on the reality of current policies and existing problems to evaluate their effectiveness, uncover their deviations, and attempt to formulate corrections in new policies. It is also an approach built on studying societal issues and problems while considering the society's value and cultural dimensions; it is characterized by innovation and creativity in its assessment of achieved data and in utilizing retrieved information, also possessing a preventive dimension in this regard.

It employs research methodologies and methods in studying problems and evaluating options. It has both a normative and qualitative nature in differentiating between these options, thereby considering priorities in the trade-off and in the formulation of conceptions (Al-Fahdawi, 2016).

Public Policy Analysis Stages :

- Stage One: Identifying the nature of the public policy problem as an undesirable situation or a position requiring intervention. This comes from describing it, studying its nature, and knowing its dimensions, boundaries, correlations, and causes.
- Stage Two: Developing a set of alternatives to solve that problem and evaluating those alternatives with the aim of selecting the best possible alternative for implementation.
- Stage Three: Following up on the implementation of the selected alternative and evaluating the effects and outcomes resulting from the application of that alternative (Al-Munufi, 1987).

Public Policy Analysis Objectives :

The fundamental objective of public policy analysis is arguably to enhance and elevate the public policy-making process (Al-Jasour, 2009). However, there are other objectives that manifest clearly in the analysis process, as it enables an understanding of public policies, measures the extent of their success, and assesses their impact on society. It also necessitates determining a stance toward them, etc.

Conditions for Public Policy Analysis:

To facilitate public policy analysis, it is of paramount importance to gather sufficient information regarding the policy to be analyzed within the framework of the transformations and complexities occurring in its environment. The analysis process also requires an understanding of the values, intellectual trends, and beliefs manifested in the behaviors of the policymakers, as well as their competencies and expertise. This is to construct realistic conceptions of all variables surrounding the policy to be analyzed and its internal and external environments, with the aim of employing scientific models and methods in the analysis that align with the type of those policies, their objectives, and the nature of those goals (Al-Dajah, 2020).

Public Policy Analysis Responsibility:

The responsibility for public policy analysis primarily falls upon public policy analysts of various orientations, whether they are research centers, government institutions, or non-profit organizations. It may also be entrusted to government authorities or those who have gained experience in practicing political work, including individuals, political parties, civil society organizations, the media, and profit-oriented organizations—whether national or international—as well as security agencies and community organizations, etc. (Al-Fahdawi, 2016).

Public Policy Analysis Methodologies and Tools:

Public policy analysis methodologies are numerous, but in all their branches, they generally fall under two broad types of scientific methods: the first is called quantitative methodologies, while the other is called qualitative or descriptive methodologies. To use either of these methodologies in the analysis process, it is essential to identify the type of public policy, its field, and its level—whether it is distributive, developmental, social, etc. Additionally, its objective must be identified—whether it is a quantitative or qualitative goal—as the nature of that goal is considered one of the most prominent determinants in the analysis process and in employing the appropriate methodology, approach, and tool in this regard.

Most researchers indicate that public policy analysis methodologies fall within the framework of two main approaches, despite the existence of other classifications that include more than two. Generally, according to this binary classification, the first approach studies the determinants of public policies and their surrounding context, while the second approach addresses

the study of the outcomes resulting from public policy-making. Accordingly, a brief study of some public policy analysis methodologies under these two main approaches will be addressed as follows:

First: The Determinants Analysis Approach:

1) Systems Analysis Methodology

The basis of the systems methodology lies in the biological and natural sciences, which study a unit as a system consisting of a group of elements that interact based on a relationship of interdependence to achieve a common goal. In public policy analysis, this methodology relies on structural-functional theory and handles policy analysis in a manner similar to the traditional economic approach (building market mechanism models) of Herbert Simon, presented in his book *Administrative Behavior*. There, he discussed decision-making rationality in his theory of "bounded rationality," based on a purely economic vision that enables the decision-maker to make a rational decision based on economic evaluations of alternatives, considered as complete information that prevents personal inclinations from interfering in decision-making. David Easton is considered the pioneer of this approach, presenting his systems theory in the early 1950s. He posits that political interactions in society collectively constitute a general system of behavior, such that the political system cannot be isolated from the overall social system. Therefore, he views politics as a system consisting of inputs, outputs, processing, and feedback. Inputs consist of societal demands, support, and resources, while processing represents policy operations in handling inputs and the mechanism for transforming them into outputs. Outputs are the decisions to implement government policies, and feedback consists of studying the impact of outputs on problem-solving and societal satisfaction with the results. David Easton focused his analysis on the internal environment of the political system, which has an internal environment representing the decision center and a simple external environment representing the field of implementation for those decisions (Easton, D., 2002).

Studies followed thereafter; in the 1960s, Gabriel Almond developed the political systems theory, adding variables to the internal environment such as organizational culture, as well as variables to the external environment like international relations and the effects of the global economy (Almond, G., 1965). Thus, this methodology continued to evolve,

adding various variables at the system's internal level, its external level, or both environments hosting the policy. In all cases, however, it overlaps in one way or another with many other methodologies, especially within the same approach, including the structural-functionalist and institutional approaches, etc. Despite the criticisms directed at it, the systems approach is based on regarding the state as an open system and relies on understanding the interactions between the parts of that system. An example of this is the general budget planning policy: inputs are state revenues from various sources, processes represent the expenditure of those inputs, outputs are services, and feedback consists of performance indicators and others. We note that strengths lie in comprehensiveness, but the weaknesses of this methodology include neglecting the role of individual actors, which necessitates measurement complexity, not to mention overlooking social variables for which no influence is available within the system's operational environment. It is of an abstract nature, assuming operation in a harmonious and open systemic environment, while the reality is quite the opposite, as it is difficult to define the system's boundaries. Furthermore, it is an excessively neutral approach that overlooks fine details and focuses only on the overall picture, thus failing to provide clear procedural steps.

2) Group Methodology:

Proponents of this methodology view the public policy analysis process as a balance between a set of different entities. This methodology is based on structural-functionalist theory, meaning that society consists of organizations and systems, each with functions that integrate with one another, leading to stability and the fulfillment of people's interests. This conception is the most common due to its idealistic nature (Al-Fahdawi, 2016) regarding the mechanism of policymaking and analysis alike. It can be considered an integrated approach that regards society as a group, thus approaching another model known as the participatory model in public policymaking. Accordingly, this methodology is based on power-sharing between competing and negotiating groups and relies on pluralism and positive conflict. However, it diminishes the role of the state, represented by its institutional legal codes, when making and subsequently analyzing patterns of decisions—especially when the methodology is not inclusive of the societal group as a whole. It operates only within certain frameworks, such as labor law, which is formulated as a result of interaction between unions and employers. Despite the criticisms directed at it, particularly as it

operates across two axes—a partial one focusing on specific frameworks and a macro-one encompassing all frameworks—this methodology clearly overlaps with many other approaches, most notably the participatory approach at the macro level and the elite approach at the partial level.

3) *Elite Methodology:*

According to this methodology, policymaking and analysis represent the perspective of the elite. The elite may be a political party that won by an overwhelming majority and formed the government; thus, policies emerge expressing the viewpoint of this elite, which possesses its own ideological and other orientations. Therefore, the criterion for judgment in analysis here is the consistency in the decision-making pattern. From this standpoint, the elite methodology is based on the concentration of power in the hands of a small elite and relies on the concept of power in imposing opinions, meaning it believes that power is not democratic. Characteristics of the elite include cohesion, reliance on wealth, and the transfer of power in some of its forms. As for the strengths of the elite methodology, they lie in linking power to wealth, which can be observed by tracking its data through positions, ownerships, and relationships (Al-Jasour, 2009). Conversely, its weaknesses lie in ignoring the role of the masses—and if a role is granted, it is merely symbolic—in addition to its failure to provide convincing justifications for its policies that serve its interests in survival and wealth acquisition, while sometimes generating internal conflicts, meaning a multiplicity of its models. Examples include some monarchical ruling systems in certain countries, or transcontinental corporations and financial organizations that may control some global decisions. Despite the criticisms directed at it due to its shortcomings in certain aspects, and its dissolution and continuous reproduction of modified models, it also overlaps with other methodologies such as the group methodology.

4) *Institutional Methodology:*

Numerous studies indicate that this approach is the general framework encompassing all aforementioned methodologies, in addition to others not yet discussed, such as the incremental, structural-functionalist, structural analysis, and cultural analysis approaches, among others. Within this overarching methodology, whose roots trace back to the philosophy of the Greek Aristotle—who introduced the idea of the separation of the three powers—this thought further evolved during the liberal era in France

following the French Revolution and in Britain as well. Some researchers derive other designations from it, such as the institutional approach or the organizational approach, the foundations of which were laid by the German philosopher Max Weber, followed by subsequent studies in France during the twentieth century. The core idea of this methodology in public policy analysis relies on emphasizing the role of institutions in shaping public policies according to their diverse orientations; it is the institutions that define the rules and regulations governing political behavior and interact with one another and with various pressure groups, such as civil society organizations and religious and cultural groups, etc. (Al-Jasour, 2009). Despite the influence these groups exert on public opinion, hegemony remains with the institution due to its vast resources, while the impact of these groups persists, albeit in a limited and observable manner, and their role remains marginal.

From this perspective, we recognize that policy analysis according to this methodology relies on institutional legislation, laws, and regulations characterized by legitimacy, compulsoriness, and universality; a policy is deemed invalid if it contravenes them, regardless of the marginal role of society. This methodology, with its various branches, is based on the formality of institutions—constitution, judiciary, and parliament—and relies on laws and procedures. Its weaknesses lie in overlooking the influence of informal aspects, which may weaken confidence in it. Conversely, its strengths lie in stability. It has various sub-branches, including the bureaucratic methodology and others, all of which overlap with one another. Furthermore, it focuses on form rather than substance in many decisions and drifts toward interpretative rigidity and a weakness in understanding shifting variables, as this methodology emphasizes the code of structures more than any other aspect.

5) *Incremental or Gradual Methodology:*

This methodology is associated with the theory presented by Charles Lindblom in the 1960s, among the proponents of the liberal trend influenced by symbolic interactionism theory. This theory posits that the interaction of society across all its currents manifests through symbols, actions, and words occurring between these currents, aiming for balance and the achievement of the public interest. Consequently, Lindblom attempted to present a vision known as incremental theory in policymaking based on those foundations that influenced him. He considered incrementalism to be the typical

decision-making process in pluralistic societies such as the United States; that is, the decision is a result of interaction between societal currents to reach a common political balance. Therefore, information in making that decision will not be characterized by rationality as long as its information source represents an interaction between currents trying to reach balance through mutual understanding of what is possible and reasonable (Al-Fahidi, 2016). This contradicts the rational-comprehensive conception of Herbert Simon, which assumes the opposite and considers that the policymaker makes decisions based on a trade-off between various values—social, economic, etc.—working to balance them, calculating the cost-benefit ratio, and identifying possible alternatives to achieve the greatest added value alongside the economic, political, and social values held by society.

On the other hand, this approach is considered more realistic as it focuses on possible means and capabilities while considering constraints and the extent of consensus between parties; thus, policies are crafted between what is possible and reasonable. The incremental approach is based on successive small changes rather than radical ones and relies on realism. Its weaknesses include missing opportunities for radical reform, while its strengths lie in reducing risks—examples include changing working hours or imposing taxes at varying rates over the years, etc. (Al-Jasour, 2009). Theories or models have emerged attempting to link Lindblom's incremental theory with Simon's absolute rationality theory to avoid the shortcomings of the incremental theory, which is deficient in dealing with crises. While it operates in an atmosphere of stability, in many cases—especially during crises—leaps occur in this approach resembling absolute rationality. These studies, mostly economic, appeared under various research titles, most notably the mixed scanning approach, and some carried the title of punctuated equilibrium, among others. In all its types, it is not devoid of overlap. To clarify the limitations of this approach in dealing with crises, I will provide an example: during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, some countries followed an incremental approach in many of their policies; however, upon the pandemic's declaration and the global assessment of its risk by the World Health Organization, they immediately resorted to a partial rationality approach, such as lockdowns and allocating financial support to the medical sector. After the pandemic, they began returning to the incremental adjustments they had previously adopted. Despite the criticisms directed at this approach regarding rigidity, the absence of a comprehensive vision, its lack of strategic planning, the slowness of problem-solving and

structural reforms, and the difficulty of evaluating the total impact and predicting outcomes resulting from decisions according to this approach, we find that in all these aspects, it also overlaps with many other methodologies from the same approach.

6) *Structural-Functionalist Methodology:*

The structural-functionalist methodology is considered in many studies to be a branch of the institutional approach, and researchers frequently refer to it as the political system approach. This is because both focus on how the political, economic, and social systems operate to achieve common goals—specifically, how public institutions (as primary actors) and groups (as marginal actors) interact to fulfill shared objectives. This is based on the premise that these institutions perform functions rooted in the society's structures that facilitate interaction and reveal strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, there are structures that constitute the political, economic, and social systems, such as political structures represented by the government, parliament, and the judiciary; economic structures encompassing economic institutions; and social structures including the family, society, civil society organizations, and religious groups, etc., as well as cultural structures involving values and beliefs. Thus, structures represent the framework in which the political system operates its functions, defining the rules, regulations, and laws that govern that political, economic, and social system and influence the nature of interaction to achieve macro-objectives within this methodology (Al-Fahidi, 2016).

In the structural-functionalist methodology, the relationship between functions and structures is one of integration and overlap; structures provide the framework for the operation of functions, which, in turn, represent the activities performed by those structures. This occurs between public institutions and is grounded in social taboos, including values and perceptions that do not deviate from the general social system. Consequently, this methodology is based on the integration of functions and structures, and relies on linking policies to social needs for the sake of stability and integration. Its strengths lie, first, in linking functions to institutional structures, and subsequently, to the overall structures of society, whose role is less intense in decision-making. As for its weaknesses, they lie in its disregard for conflicts. Examples include insurance and pension policies, social security policies, and other public policies.

Based on the above, the institutional approach, in its various branches, is based on the premise that institutions, through their laws, determine behavior. It relies on the idea that rules and procedures complement this framework in the process of public policymaking and analysis, and is widely applied in the fields of governance and administrative reforms. Likewise, many modern approaches, such as the participatory approach, are based on involving citizens and civil society organizations and rely on the idea of enhancing legitimacy and sustainability, being applied to local development projects. In addition, the modern managerial approach is based on applying private sector methods, etc., and relies on the idea of enhancing performance, effectiveness, and efficiency, etc., being applied to public service reforms and various other approaches that fall within its framework. Nevertheless, we observe a clear overlap between these various methodologies regarding public policymaking and, consequently, its analysis. It is also noted that the efficiency of this approach depends on the existence of a reciprocal relationship with other approaches, such as the behavioral approach and others.

Second: The second approach, analyzing policy outcomes:

1) Rationality Methodology:

The rationality methodology is one of the classic, traditional approaches based on the idea that individuals and groups of decision-makers act based on their self-desires to achieve the utility and economic efficiency envisioned from decision-making. Therefore, this methodology aims to maximize net political, social, and economic values. It relies on the concept of economic efficiency presented by Simon, the pioneer of this methodology, who maintained that the trade-off between these values requires balancing them and knowing the cost-benefit ratio for each value to select the one that achieves the greatest added value alongside the political, social, and economic values provided by society. Consequently, decision-making when selecting values must be based on rationality and logic, following ordered methodological steps for the policymaking process in terms of: identifying the problem, gathering all information about it to propose possible alternatives, evaluating alternatives based on clear criteria such as cost, benefit, and utilitarian priority, selecting the alternative with the highest benefit and lowest cost, and finally implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the outcomes of the policy (Al-Kubaisi, 2008).

Despite the efficiency this methodology provides at the level of performance and oversight—being an economic, statistical, and mathematical approach par excellence—it has faced criticism due to its assumptions of absolute rationality in treating all types of variables, some of which are not suitable for purely rational analysis, especially social ones. Therefore, it was later developed into other methodologies, such as the mixed scanning approach, which combines it with the incremental approach, and other methodologies like the satisficing model presented by Simon himself in his second theory, "Bounded Rationality". The latter is more suitable as it does not rely on absolute rationality but rather on satisficing or partial rationality used in economics. We must also note the existence of overlap between methodologies in terms of their association with decisions; the difference lies in the nature of the association with the basis and core idea of each methodology in public policymaking and analysis. The rationality methodology—sometimes called the rational choice approach—is based on maximizing utility and relies on the idea that decision-makers act according to utility; it remains in use today through improved models in economic policies concerned with this aspect, such as privatization and other macro-economic policies within the economic system.

There are many models under this approach, such as the experimental methodology, which is based on the idea of experimentation, as well as the public choice methodology, which relies on economic theories that attempt to explain voter behavior in the collective decision-making process, and other models for enriching knowledge.

2) Areas of Overlap Between Analysis Methodologies and Deficiencies in Evaluation:

Public policy analysis approaches in research studies are numerous, and limiting them to the two approaches identified in this article represents only the perspective of certain intellectual classifications that have sought to categorize them generally into two main approaches; multiple classifications remain present in many studies within this field. For further clarification, not all analysis methodologies were addressed; rather, only some were discussed within the two approaches to demonstrate the purpose of the overlap between them as required by the analysis process. It remains for the analyst to use any of them based on their knowledge of the policy pattern, its tools, objectives, field, and the role of the actor involved, those affected by it, those influencing through it, and their various orientations. Therefore, the analysis and

evaluation of public policies are ultimately the analyst's perspective, which may be shared or opposed by a group of natural persons such as stakeholders, professionals, practitioners, and officials, or by legal entities such as various judicial or executive institutions, etc. Public policy analysis remains dependent on the information obtained by the analyst, as well as on their use of evaluation tools varying in strength, the actor's responsiveness to accepting that evaluation, in addition to the circumstances of public policymaking itself, its environment, and the behavioral orientation of the political actor, etc. There are always strengths and weaknesses in every methodology used by the analyst and the policymaker, not to mention the overlap between methodologies.

On the other hand, multiple methodologies can be used in both the formulation and analysis of a single public policy or a single political decision within any political environment. It can also be analyzed according to this concept; meaning, more than one methodology can be employed in the analysis based on the analyst's vision and understanding of the policy's nature. No system in the world practices a single, unique methodology in policymaking across all its fields.

Regarding public policy analysis methods and tools, methods reinforce methodologies; the analysis methodology provides the general framework that defines the way of thinking, which requires a specific way of implementation called the "method". Here, it is also necessary to mention the tools in analysis, which fall into two general types: first, quantitative analysis tools, whether economic, financial, or mathematical models; and second, qualitative models, most of which rely on intuition. There are types of analysis methods that combine both, such as, but not limited to, scenario analysis and econometrics combined with interviews, etc. Here, we limit ourselves to the public policy analysis methodologies, the most prominent of which we have addressed, according to our requirements in this article. Analyzing public policy through multiple methodologies, diverse methods, and tools is difficult to encompass in a single scientific article, whether related to economic, financial, mathematical, statistical, or programming aspects, let alone many other aspects such as social, discourse-related, environmental, geographical, security, or legal dimensions. These require deep immersion in various sciences—economic, administrative, legal, mathematical, statistical, sociological, etc. Consequently, an overlap arises

between them, leading to fields such as socio-economics, geopolitics, political economy, eco-economics, and other such disciplines.

However, what must always be remembered is that public policy analysis, through its various methodologies, methods, and tools, depends directly on the analyst's cognitive grasp of the nature of the information gathered about these policies—which defines their character and scope. It also depends on studying the environment in which these policies are formulated, their interconnections, the nature of the political system and its orientations, and understanding the type of interaction among its parties in terms of impact and influence within the policy environment. This is the determinant for choosing the sound methodology, the optimal method, and the effective tools for analyzing and evaluating that policy, and for constructing sound conceptions or alternatives for what it should be in the future due to the deficiencies in its current formed alternatives. Therefore, the horizons of analysis shift as the analyst gathers more information about the nature of the policy, its environment, capabilities, variables, circumstances, and active parties, whether that information is quantitative or qualitative. Once the information is available, the researcher will employ tools, methods, and methodologies according to need and orientation. All these frameworks can constitute evaluative pitfalls at the end of the analysis process if the analyst fails to gather sufficient information about the policy and its environment, the behavior of the political actor, and the nature of the methodology and its overlap with other methodologies. This is in addition to information about political culture and its three levels: system-level, process-level, and policy-level orientations, as well as the dimensions fostering them—whether cognitive regarding the policy, affective toward the policy, or evaluative of the policy's performance. The analyst's perception of the type of political culture—whether participatory, subject, or parochial—will undoubtedly reflect on the level of evaluation, which will ultimately remain a point of view.

To illustrate how overlap occurs between public policy-making and analysis methodologies and how this reflects on the level of evaluation, we shall refer to this very simple example. We know that the federal law regarding wars in the United States was designed in the 1970s according to the structural-functionalist methodology. Any decision related to war is made by Congress in cooperation with the Department of Defense with its various authorities, starting from the President of the State as the

Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, as well as Department of Defense officials. The President, representing the Department of Defense, is not authorized to make the decision without referring to Congress, and the decision follows the institutional methodology except in cases of emergency when state security is at risk. Nevertheless, in this case, the defense establishment, represented by the President and commanders, must subsequently justify to Congress the reasons for taking this institutional measure so that the matter sequentially returns to the structural-functionalist methodology. When analyzing such policies, the analyst must interpret the variables and account for the overlap between methodologies to understand the operational mechanism, as a lack of understanding of the overlap represents one of the deficiencies in the subsequent evaluation process. From here, we conclude that the two hypotheses upon which this article was built have been realized: the existence of a clear overlap between policy-making methodologies across their various classifications and the reflection of that overlap on the analysis process, in addition to the evaluation process being negatively affected—as a stage of public policy analysis—by the overlap of methodologies used in the analysis process, causing total or partial deficiencies in the analysis process of any public policy in any field. Thus, these two hypotheses, upon which this article was based, constitute its general results at the same time, in light of its general objectives.

Conclusion:

It is known that the policy formulation methodology is merely the framework that outlines the procedural steps starting with identifying the problem that imposes itself on the political decision-maker and ending with the process of evaluating, amending, or accepting that decision—wholly or partially—according to the behavior and orientations of the political actor observed in the methodology. Thus, the methodology is what charts the general path for that decision. Perhaps the procedural steps included in the methodology may differ in identifying and organizing those steps, depending on what the political actor's methodology dictates in their perception of the nature of problems, their priority, and the method of sorting them, etc. Accordingly, the methodology—according to the assumed normative template for moving toward a state of law—dictates that it should begin by identifying the set of problems in the policy environment that are supposed to be resolved and sorting them into groups known as agendas. These are distributed between systemic agendas, which include the direct macro-issues

of society discussed naturally, as well as institutional agendas, which include issues raised by institutions, alongside public agendas, which include issues raised by the public as public opinion. This is followed by the second stage within the methodological framework, which involves the chronological arrangement for addressing those issues by placing them in schedules called agendas (work schedules), distributed similarly to the previous agenda distribution between systemic, institutional, and public work schedules. However, it must be recognized that the chronological arrangement according to the schedules must consider the priority of those issues according to a set of determinants that make some of them more in need of rapid intervention. These determinants include political significance, utility, external pressures, conflicts, media influence, emergency needs, political actor orientations, and others.

From this perspective, this mechanism of arrangement and prioritization remains subject to the methodology of the political actor, shaping their orientations and the political power tools they possess within the political decision-making environment—which is governed by the nature, form, and legal framework of the political system that constitutes the foundation for this entire structure. In accordance with the overlap in public policymaking methodologies, a single methodology cannot be adopted for all requirements, regardless of the political actor's orientations.

This step is fundamental in the analysis process and, within the methodological framework, paves the way for the policy implementation stage—the process of bringing it into reality. These are integrated structures encompassing institutions, as well as human, material, and information resources, in addition to organizational and administrative relationships that define their interaction. All of these are also governed by the policymaker's methodology, which acts as the primary guide and is itself governed by the nature, form, and legal framework of the political system, as previously mentioned.

The synergy of these elements also determines the implementation method. Generally, this process is not devoid of difficulties and obstacles imposed by variables in the policy environment—whether related to the foundational or administrative aspects of planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, and controlling, or related to resources, actors, and decision-makers among other elements as defined in the policy environment.

The analysis process concludes with its final stage, in synchronization with the policy formulation methodology: what is known as the evaluation and subsequent rectification process. This involves verifying the extent to which the political decision has achieved its objectives (the evaluation stage), in addition to verifying the policymaker's willingness to adapt the methodology according to social, economic, political, environmental, and security utility requirements for all individuals and forces within the internal and external political environment (what is known as rectification).

The evaluation methods for political decisions, with their various tools and the different entities performing them, must be fair, objective, conscious, and neutral. In all cases, they will not reach absolute perfection, and deficiencies will remain open—whether those methods are quantitative (mathematical, financial, economic, etc.) or qualitative (descriptive-historical favoring the methodology, or analytical-administrative and legal, etc.), or mixed methods combining both. Whether these methods target the overall policy structure or only one of its variables, such as efficiency or effectiveness, etc., they remain dependent on the political actor's extent of acceptance of that evaluation within the political system, and their responsiveness to amending the proposed imbalances, which may frequently conflict with the orientations dictated by the methodology—the most influential element in shaping and analyzing public policy.

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