



University of Algiers 3

**Faculty of Political Science and International Relations Department of
Political and Administrative Organization**

Course notes polycopé pédagogique:

Comparative Analysis of Public Policies

For first-year Master's students

Specialization: Comparative Political Studies

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Introduction

The course “Comparative Public Policy Analysis” is part of the core curriculum in political science programs. It is a six-week course primarily intended for first-year master’s students majoring in comparative politics. This course aims to equip students with the theoretical and methodological tools related to comparative public policy analysis.

In this publication, we seek to focus on the fundamental principles and basics of comparative public policy analysis, introduce the process of comparative public policy analysis, practice comparative work, and address the methods and techniques of comparative public policy analysis and the strategy of comparative writing on public policies across countries, which assist students and researchers in the field of political science in general, and first-year master’s students majoring in comparative politics in particular. This course requires students to have prior knowledge, primarily related to the concepts of analysis, comparison, comparative analysis, public policy, public policy analysis, and methods of comparison. The publication addresses several themes: the first theme introduces the concept of analysis; the second theme explores comparison; In the third section, we explore comparative analysis, followed by a discussion of public policy in the fourth section. We then address the analysis of public policy in the fifth section, highlighting the methodological challenges and current theoretical shortcomings of comparative analysis in public policy.

Through this publication, we aim to provide a useful reference that addresses the concerns of students and researchers in the field of political science, thereby helping students majoring in comparative politics to better understand the subject of measurement.

Comparative Analysis of Public Policies

Section One: Analysis

The term *analysis* is widely used in academic research, particularly within the field of political science. Accordingly, this section defines the concept and introduces its various forms.

1. Definition of Analysis

1.1 Analysis in the Linguistic Sense

In linguistic usage, *analysis* carries several meanings, the most significant of which include:

- Analysis refers to decomposition and disaggregation.
- It denotes opening and dismantling. Dismantling involves breaking down any composite or holistic entity into its constituent parts or elements, whereas opening implies untying or resolving a knot.
- It involves dividing an object into its constituent elements or characteristics and separating these components from one another.
- Analysis also signifies examining a subject and uncovering its underlying dimensions.¹
- Furthermore, in linguistic usage, analysis may denote diagnosis, clarification, investigation, examination, interpretation, fragmentation, decomposition, deconstruction, in-depth inquiry, comprehensive study, or reducing an object to its primary elements and original components.²

1.2 Analysis in the Terminological Sense

Conceptually, analysis is an intellectual and methodological process aimed at deconstructing a complex entity, whether a text, material, or phenomenon, into its fundamental elements and simpler components. This process facilitates the examination of each component individually to identify its function, understand the relationships among the elements, infer meanings, reveal characteristics, and derive comprehensive conclusions.

1- Ben Farhat Nour El Houda, *Media Treatment of the Western Sahara Issue in Algerian Television Programs: A Content Analysis of an Episode of the Program "Mutaba'at" on Echorouk News Channel and an Episode of a Documentary Program on the Algerian News Channel*, Master's Thesis, Department of Media and Communication Sciences, Kasdi Merbah University, 2022, p. 12.

2- Muhannad Al-Azzawi, *The Art and Skills of Political Analysis and Decision-Making*, Saqr Center for Strategic Studies, e-book.

Analysis may also be understood from both general and specific perspectives. In its broad sense, it refers to reducing a complex phenomenon to its simplest elements or constituent parts.

It is further defined as the process of breaking down a complex or composite subject into smaller and more manageable components. This is followed by establishing relationships among these parts based on the common links that connect them, in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the subject under study.³

Analysis is likewise regarded as an intellectual skill that depends on the analyst's competence, comprehension, and interpretive capacity in explaining phenomena and crises and deriving logical conclusions that lead to effective solutions.⁴

It also refers to the comprehensive examination of an event beginning with its precise identification, followed by its decomposition into fundamental components, exploration of its historical roots, identification of its direct and indirect causes, examination of its explicit and latent actors, assessment of its current outcomes, anticipation of its future trajectories, and formulation of potential alternatives for addressing or confronting it.⁵

Moreover, analysis implies the capacity to conduct a rigorous examination of scientific material, classify its constituent elements, determine the relationships among them, and understand their organizational structure.

Analysis may also be defined as the process of identifying, describing, and measuring variables associated with a given phenomenon through empirical methods and tools, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches, with the objective of testing hypotheses or conducting inferential comparisons in order to reach acceptable generalizations.

Analysis refers to the process of deconstructing an object, phenomenon, or subject into its fundamental components or constituent elements, examining each component independently, identifying the relationships among them, and determining the extent to which certain elements exert greater influence than others.

3- Ahmed Ali Mohammed Al-Khudhmi, "Political Analysis: Concept and Principles – A Theoretical Perspective," *Journal of Educational Sciences and Human Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 14, 2021, p. 475.

4- Muhannad Al-Azzawi, *op. cit.*

5- Ahmed Ali Mohammed Al-Khudhmi, "Political Analysis: Concept and Principles – A Theoretical Perspective," *op. cit.*, p. 475.

In other words, analysis involves the identification and evaluation of the constituent parts of the subject under investigation as a means of generating deeper and more comprehensive knowledge. It should be noted that analytical processes assume different forms and levels depending on the nature of the subject being examined, and that the multiplicity of analytical approaches constitutes a prerequisite for achieving broader and more comprehensive understanding.⁶

In its general sense, the term denotes the mechanism through which an integrated entity or complex phenomenon is segmented and divided into simpler and smaller components with the aim of deriving a greater amount of information about that entity, substance, or phenomenon and achieving a clearer understanding of its nature.

More specifically, the concept is employed across the social sciences, including political science, as well as the natural sciences, with varying interpretations. Nevertheless, all remain connected to this general meaning. One widely accepted definition views analysis as the process of identifying and evaluating the constituent elements that collectively form a whole.

The analysis of political phenomena constitutes a scientific and systematic process through which complex political events, decisions, and practices are decomposed into their primary elements to understand their causes, contextual determinants, and potential trajectories. It relies on multiple research approaches, including descriptive, dynamic, and quantitative methods, to examine the interactions among power structures, society, and competing interests. The objective is to explain how and why political life is formed and transformed.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that analysis fundamentally relies on both decomposition and synthesis. This entails breaking down the research problem into its simplest constituent elements, examining each component independently, and subsequently integrating the resulting information through a systematic scientific process to arrive at solutions to the research problem proposed by the researcher.

6- Mohammed Mahmoud Rabie, *Research Methods in Political Science*, Al-Falah Library, 2nd ed., Kuwait, 1987, p. 246.

The practice of analysis enables researchers to disaggregate phenomena and examine them in greater depth. Based on the foregoing discussion, analysis is grounded in the division and decomposition of phenomena or research problems into their primary elements to facilitate investigation, identify the underlying causes of their emergence, and support their interpretation in conjunction with other methodological procedures.

2. Significance of Analysis:

Analyzing complex phenomena by breaking them down into simpler elements, or decomposing an object into its constituent components and units, offers substantial benefits, including the following:⁷

- Revealing the essence of the phenomenon or the structural framework of the object.
- Identifying the relationships among elements or components and clarifying how they interact and integrate within the overall structure of the whole.
- Determining the function of each component, as well as its relative significance and contribution to the overall role performed by the system, thereby enabling researchers to distinguish between essential and non-essential elements.
- Uncovering the various stages through which a phenomenon evolves and develops, while identifying any potentially conflicting trends or directions.
- Enabling researchers to classify phenomena and objects through multiple approaches in order to serve diverse research purposes.
- Decomposing a problem into its fundamental elements.
- Facilitating explanation and critical evaluation. For example, researchers may express agreement or disagreement with specific viewpoints, provide critical interpretations, or derive particular conclusions, all of which emerge from the analytical process.
- Deriving findings and conclusions, which constitute the ultimate objective of scientific research.

3. Types of Analysis:

7- Yassin Khalil, *The Logic of Scientific Knowledge: A Logical Analysis of Ideas, Issues, and Systems of Empirical Demonstrative Knowledge, Part One of the Theory of Science*, Benghazi, 1971, pp. 80–82.

- **Descriptive Analysis:** A form of analysis aimed at describing or explaining a phenomenon, object, or situation as it exists.⁸
- **Comparative Analysis:** Used to identify differences and similarities between two or more variables.⁹
- **Correlation Analysis:** Correlation is often interpreted simply as a relationship; however, in analytical terms, correlation analysis is employed to determine the direction, strength, and statistical significance of relationships among two or more variables.¹⁰
- **Quantitative Analysis:**¹¹ *Quantitative Analysis* refers to the methodological approach used to evaluate conditions and understand behaviors occurring within a specific context through statistical or mathematical information. Researchers adopt this approach when the data required for investigating a particular topic are tangible, measurable, and substantive. Numerical data generated through quantitative analysis either support or refute the research question or hypothesis.

Quantitative analysis is particularly useful for determining the usability of a product or for comparing different designs and identifying the most effective alternative.

- **Qualitative Analysis:**¹² *Qualitative Analysis* involves evaluating phenomena based on quality rather than quantity in order to describe and interpret them. Through this approach, motivations and behaviors are understood by examining perceptions, emotions, ideas, and subjective experiences.

Data analysts employ qualitative analysis to interpret the ideas and subjective experiences of specific groups within particular contexts by examining their motivations, emotions, and behavioral patterns. Consequently, qualitative

8- Ali Baroroh, *Statistical Analysis Techniques Using SPSS 15*, Jakarta: PT Alex Media Komputindo, 2008, p. 1.

9- Syofian Siregar, *Applied Statistics for Higher Education*, Jakarta: PT Kharisma Putra Utama, 2017, p. 146.

10- Eddy Roflin and Ferani Eva Zulvia, *Comprehensive Guide to Correlation Analysis*, Pekalongan: PT Nasya Expanding Management, 2019, p. 2.

11- Laurence Bardin, *Content Analysis*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France (PUF), 2007, p. 146.

12- Ibid.

analysis relies primarily on descriptive narratives and written accounts rather than numerical information.

Section Two: Comparison

1. Definition of Comparison

1.1 Comparison in the linguistic sense:

The term *comparison* is derived from the notion of associating or linking one thing with another. In Arabic usage, *to compare two things* means to bring them together or establish a connection between them. Likewise, associating one object with another implies joining or relating them, while *being associated with something* denotes companionship or correspondence. Comparison also conveys the meaning of evaluating and examining two entities side by side in order to determine their relationship.¹³

The concept further refers to the process of examining two or more phenomena with the aim of establishing a basis for evaluation and balance between them through identifying their similarities and differences.¹⁴

1.2 Comparison in the terminological sense:

Several definitions of comparison have been proposed in the literature, among which the most prominent are the following:¹⁵

The philosopher John Stuart Mill defined comparison as the study of similar or analogous phenomena across different societies, or as the systematic analysis of differences concerning one or more subjects.¹⁶

Comparison is also regarded as a cognitive process that involves identifying points of similarity and divergence between two or more phenomena, thereby enabling the acquisition of more precise knowledge and facilitating a clearer distinction of the object or event under investigation within the comparative framework.

Similarly, the sociologist Émile Durkheim described comparison as “*the ideal instrument of the social method.*” According to this perspective, every

13- Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, Al-Maktaba Al-Shamela, Vol. 13, p. 331.

14- Lamia Majdoub, “The Specificity of the Comparative Method and the Mechanism of Its Application,” *Journal of Law and Political Sciences*, University of Khenchela, Vol. 10, No. 01, 2023, p. 290.

15- Mike O'Neill, “Introduction to Sociology,” in *Contemporary Readings in Sociological Theory*, translated by Mustafa Khalaf Abdel Jawad, Publications of the Center for Social Research and Studies, Cairo, p. 85.

16- Mohamed Chelbi, *Methodology in Political Analysis: Concepts, Methods, Approaches, and Tools*, Algeria: Dar Houma, 2001, p. 70.

phenomenon is bound by its temporal, spatial, and historical context and may take either a qualitative form, amenable to analytical interpretation, or a quantitative form that can be transformed into measurable data. Its significance lies in distinguishing the research subject from other related topics.

Comparison has also been defined as the set of methodological procedures followed by the researcher when examining and contrasting the phenomena under investigation in order to identify the factors governing the similarities and differences among them, with the objective of reaching a specific understanding regarding the status and characteristics of the phenomenon under study.

Furthermore, comparison has been conceptualized as an intellectual activity aimed at highlighting the elements of convergence and divergence among the phenomena being examined. In this sense, comparison presupposes the existence of shared characteristics among the phenomena under investigation, together with varying degrees of similarity and difference, while also requiring the identification of the conditions and circumstances underlying such patterns of agreement and divergence.¹⁷

2. The Emergence and Development of Comparative Analysis

The historical roots of comparison extend back to ancient times, as comparative inquiry is as old as human thought itself. Numerous civilizations employed comparative approaches, most notably ancient Greece. This period was characterized by individual intellectual creativity, a focus on rulers and governing authority, and the absence of an independent political sphere, as political phenomena remained closely intertwined with social realities and philosophical thought.¹⁸

In this context, Plato adopted a comparative approach to distinguish among the various forms of political organization in Greece. He identified several types of political systems, namely aristocracy, timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny, while seeking to determine the ideal system capable of ensuring the prosperity and well-being of both the city-state and society.

Aristotle likewise employed comparison in his examination of the constitutions and political systems of Greek city-states with the aim of identifying optimal

17- Misbah Amer, *Research Methodology in Political Science and Media Studies*, 2nd ed., Algeria: University Publications Office, 2010, p. 93.

18- Bertrand Badie and Guy Hermet, *Comparative Politics*, translated by Ezzeddine El Khattabi, 1st ed., Arab Organization for Translation, 2013, pp. 120–122.

forms of governance. He conducted a comparative study of 158 constitutions, particularly in his work *Politics*, through which he developed a systematic classification. His analysis was based on the principle of necessity, according to which each state possesses its own distinctive characteristics. Through comparative examination, Aristotle observed that certain societies exhibited similar phenomena, while other phenomena were shared by different groups of societies. He attributed this to the existence of fundamental differences among political organizations and regarded comparison as the only effective means of revealing such distinctions.

This comparative tradition was later followed by thinkers such as Machiavelli, Jean Bodin, and Montesquieu. The latter classified political systems into republican, monarchical, constitutional, and despotic forms, emphasizing that his classification was grounded in actual political practice. He argued that a republican government was one in which justice and the rule of law prevailed and where both public and private freedoms were safeguarded.

It is evident that philosophers during this period sought to analyze political phenomena by emphasizing the influence of various determinants on political life, including climate, geographical environment, population characteristics, modes of living, customs, and traditions.

Comparative analysis during this stage was predominantly normative in nature. Comparison was employed as an instrument for dialogue and debate aimed at accepting or rejecting ideas and propositions under discussion. It was also applied in studies addressing general issues in order to identify ideal models and the most effective forms of government. Consequently, numerous political classifications of governments and systems of rule emerged, primarily serving normative objectives through the evaluation and understanding of different governing structures.

Comparative studies gained prominence and flourished during the Middle Ages through the revival of Roman law and its comparison with Canon law. During the seventeenth century, renewed calls emerged advocating the revival of natural law as a foundational basis for most modern legislative systems of that period.

The field of comparative studies re-emerged in the eighteenth century in France after a period of stagnation, largely through the contributions of French jurists and philosophers. Subsequently, what became known as comparative law

developed during the nineteenth century, marked by the establishment of the Society of Comparative Legislation in Paris in 1869. This institution was devoted to the study of legal systems across different countries and the interpretation of various branches of law. Later, the first International Congress of Comparative Law was convened in Paris in 1900, where participants advocated the establishment of a common legal framework for civilized humanity.¹⁹

From another perspective, comparison was extensively employed by scholars of Islamic thought in the fields of jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, and related disciplines. Muslim scholars relied on comparative reasoning when examining legal rulings, opinions, evidence, and arguments in order to evaluate and prioritize them. Following the death of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions differed in matters of legal opinion and religious interpretation, leading to variations in the transmitted narrations and prophetic traditions. Likewise, Muslim scholars developed diverse intellectual approaches to interpreting the dimensions of Islam based on its primary sources, namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah, as well as in the practical application of certain legal rulings.

The succeeding generation preserved and transmitted these statements, practices, positions, and diverse viewpoints, maintaining and applying them within Islamic scholarship. With the emergence of the formative period of jurisprudential development and independent reasoning among the early Muslim imams of the legal and theological schools, accompanied by extensive classifications, scholarly writings, and juristic efforts, the discipline known as comparative jurisprudence gradually evolved.²⁰

It is important to note that the comparative method occupies a central position in the field of comparative religion, particularly in examining doctrinal ambiguities, diverse belief systems, and critically assessing their validity. Furthermore, the comparative approach has been widely employed in studies examining Islamic law alongside various positive legal systems with the aim of demonstrating the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, its sacred and divine

19- Ahmed Kharroua, *Scientific Methods and the Philosophy of Law*, 8th ed., University Publications Office, Algeria, 2010, p. 35.

20- Belkhir Sedid, *Scientific Research Methodology and Its Originality among Muslims*, Dar Al-Khaldounia for Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, 2012, p. 133.

foundations, and its enduring applicability across different contexts and historical periods.

3. Conditions of Comparison:²¹

The process of comparison or benchmarking between phenomena requires the fulfillment of several methodological conditions to ensure that comparative studies achieve their intended objectives. The most important of these conditions include the following:

- Comparison should not be based on the examination of a single isolated event detached from the variables and surrounding conditions influencing it. Rather, it should be grounded in the investigation of both similarities and differences across multiple dimensions.
- Researchers must collect sufficient and accurate information regarding the event or phenomenon under comparison from all relevant aspects, depending on the subject, type, and form of the comparison.
- The existence of both similarities and differences is essential as a condition of comparability. Accordingly, entities or phenomena that lack a reasonable basis for comparison should not be compared.
- Superficial comparisons should be avoided. Instead, researchers should engage in deeper analytical inquiry to examine and uncover the underlying nature of the studied reality and conduct rigorous and meaningful comparisons according to clearly defined comparative levels or units. In other words, the methods and foundations of comparison must be explicitly established.
- Comparisons involving the studied phenomena should be constrained by temporal and spatial dimensions in order to distinguish between previous conditions and the current state of affairs.
- The degree of similarity and representativeness among the phenomena under comparison should arise naturally rather than being artificially constructed.
- In identifying similarities and differences among the studied phenomena, researchers should consider the principle of variation in form when the content is similar, or variation in content when there is similarity in form.

21- Allal Qashi, "The Comparative Method in Scientific Research in the Field of Legal Studies," *Al-Istiab Journal*, No. 07, 2021, pp. 157–158.

- Comparative research should ultimately clarify the nature of the relationships between the phenomena under examination, determining whether these relationships are complementary, interactive, differential, associative, contradictory, overlapping, communicative, functional, or adaptive in nature.
- In addition to observing the methodological requirements related to the nature and objectivity of the study or research, researchers must establish consistent criteria for comparison or balancing among phenomena while maintaining objectivity, which requires adherence to observable and empirical realities throughout the comparative process.

4. Forms of Comparison

Several criteria and foundations are employed in the comparative method when examining phenomena, events, or patterns of behavior. The most significant include classifications based on comparative dimensions, forms of comparison, comparative types, and methodological approaches. These are outlined as follows:

4.1 Classification of Comparison According to Its Dimensions

Based on its dimensions, comparison can be categorized into three main types:²²

- **Temporal (Historical) Comparison:** This form involves examining the same event or phenomenon across two different time periods. The phenomenon is analyzed independently within each period, after which one of the periods is adopted as a reference benchmark against which the other is assessed for comparative purposes.
- **Spatial (Regional) Comparison:** In this type, the comparison focuses on the same phenomenon or event as it occurs within two distinct geographical areas or regions during the same time period. The objective is to identify similarities and variations attributable to spatial context.
- **Spatiotemporal Comparison:** This type combines the previous two dimensions by examining a phenomenon across different geographical regions and at different points in time. It therefore integrates both temporal and spatial perspectives within a single comparative framework.

4.2 Classification of Comparison According to Its Forms

22- Ahmed Khider, *The Comparative Method*, Research Seminar under the Supervision of Tarek Al-Khair, University of Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, 2008, p. 09.

Comparison may also be classified according to its form into two principal categories:²³

- **Qualitative Comparison:** This form of comparison focuses primarily on the causes, determinants, and underlying motivations associated with the occurrence of a phenomenon or event. It seeks to answer questions such as: *How did the phenomenon emerge? What factors contributed to its occurrence?* This approach relies on theoretical analysis and interpretative investigation of the factors influencing the phenomenon. It further involves collecting extensive information and scientific evidence concerning the phenomena under comparison through detailed examination, classification, and analysis of their characteristics, while identifying and discussing points of similarity and difference in order to explain the mechanisms underlying their occurrence.
- **Quantitative Comparison:** Quantitative comparison is based on the measurement, enumeration, and statistical assessment of phenomena or events according to specific units of measurement, numerical values, or predetermined quantities. Statistical methods constitute a fundamental research instrument within this type of comparison, particularly in studies involving electoral analysis at various levels, as well as other forms of statistical investigation.

5. Steps of Comparative Analysis²⁴

5.1 Defining the Research Problem Subject to Comparison

The researcher must formulate the research problem clearly and precisely if the study is to achieve meaningful outcomes. The research problem is closely associated with the unit of analysis, which may take the form of a state, a political party, or a pattern of political behavior. An example would be examining the causes of revolutions in Arab countries.

Formulating the research problem constitutes one of the most critical and challenging stages of the comparative process. Among the major difficulties associated with defining research problems and units of analysis is the potential

23- Ahmed Khider, *Ibid.*, p. 102.

24- Abdelhalim Ben Mechri, *The Use of the Comparative Method in Legal Studies*, Publications of the Laboratory on the Impact of Judicial Jurisprudence on Legislative Development, Mohamed Khider University, Biskra, 2014, p. 71.

for bias that may influence the researcher's perspective, particularly in cross-national comparative studies. Such bias may arise from the researcher's cultural background, ideological orientation, or political motivations.

Defining Concepts and Operational Definitions

Concepts serve as the guiding framework that directs the researcher throughout the comparative process, preventing the analysis from becoming merely a collection of similar or divergent facts lacking conceptual linkage or analytical coherence. Consequently, concepts represent indispensable tools of knowledge and constitute the foundation upon which comparative inquiry is built.

Concepts are essential as starting points through which phenomena are identified and interpreted. Conceptual abstraction is considered one of the most important stages in comparative analysis because it allows for a broader understanding of the multiple meanings and implications associated with concepts that do not necessarily represent a single reality. Examples include democracy, elections, and institutions.

5.2 Data Collection

Data constitute a fundamental requirement in comparative studies and in testing the hypotheses formulated by the researcher. They provide the means through which the characteristics of the units under comparison can be identified and examined.

Methods of data collection may include observation, questionnaires, or interviews, as understanding social and political phenomena requires empirical evidence and reliable information. Regardless of the method employed, the researcher must possess a thorough understanding of the society from which comparative data are collected.

Knowledge of a society's language, culture, customs, and historical background is essential for constructing theoretical frameworks capable of approaching and studying that society effectively. Likewise, methodological approaches must be adapted to the specific characteristics of the phenomena under investigation, since each society possesses distinct attributes and contextual particularities.

5.3 Explanation and Interpretation

Interpretation refers to the intellectual processes employed by the researcher when conducting comparative studies of similar phenomena across different

societies. Its primary objective is to identify the causes of differences and understand their implications.

However, interpretation in political phenomena is shaped by varying social, cultural, and economic contexts. These variations may lead to researcher bias and distortions through reductionist or projection-based interpretations. Therefore, researchers must develop a profound understanding of the societies whose phenomena they seek to explain in order to accurately identify and interpret the underlying factors that shape their patterns and behavioral dynamics.

The principal objective of the comparative method is to establish empirical generalizations derived from observable regularities within social and political phenomena. It seeks to identify the independent variables that generate dependent variables, thereby contributing to the development of theories capable of explaining phenomena under investigation, such as elections, political participation, and decision-making processes.

Given its significance, Douglas and Belasi argued that *“there are no political studies that are not comparative in nature.”*

6. Challenges Associated with the Comparative Method

The comparative method encounters several methodological challenges that may be summarized as follows:

- In many cases, it is difficult to distinguish cause from effect or determine the relationship between cause and outcome, particularly when the observed association is merely coincidental rather than genuinely causal.
- In numerous scientific fields, outcomes are rarely attributable to a single factor; instead, they are typically the product of multiple interrelated and interacting variables.
- A particular phenomenon may arise as a consequence of a specific cause under certain conditions, while the same phenomenon may emerge from an entirely different cause under another set of circumstances.
- Unlike the experimental method, the comparative method does not allow for the precise control and manipulation of variables because of their interdependence and complex interactions. Consequently, isolating and controlling these variables becomes difficult, which limits the degree of

precision that can be achieved in comparison with experimental research designs.

Section Three: Comparative Analysis

1. Concept of Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis represents an analytical approach through which phenomena are examined and subsequently brought together in order to identify points of similarity and differentiation. This form of analysis reveals potential weaknesses in research design and assists researchers in improving the overall quality and rigor of their investigations.

Comparative research primarily focuses on identifying similarities and differences across phenomena and cases. Comparative analysis may therefore be understood as a methodological technique based on juxtaposition and evaluation of events and diverse phenomena, with the objective of identifying existing relationships as well as patterns of resemblance, divergence, and variation among them.

More specifically, comparative analysis involves describing and explaining similarities and differences in positions, outcomes, or consequences across a broad range of social units, including regions, nations, societies, and cultures. Comparative research and analysis constitute a broad methodological framework encompassing both quantitative and qualitative comparative approaches.

2. Objectives of Comparative Analysis:²⁵

Comparative analysis seeks to achieve several important objectives, the most significant of which include the following:

- Enriching both theoretical and empirical knowledge concerning systems of governance and political structures within the contemporary world.
- Evaluating experiences, institutions, interactions, and patterns of political behavior.
- Predicting events, trends, and potential outcomes.
- Identifying the most effective systems of governance and proposing improved solutions to various political issues. Contemporary studies of political systems in developing countries, in particular, are partly driven by

25- Saadi Hajar, "Comparative Political Analysis: Between Objective Problems and the Problem of Bias," *Abhath Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 2, December 2018, p. 11.

the need to determine the forms of governance that are most appropriate and capable of promoting their development and advancement.

Comparative analysis is therefore regarded as an essential approach for researchers and analysts seeking to derive meaningful conclusions from phenomena through the comparison of different elements. By employing comparative analysis, researchers can identify trends, patterns, and anomalies that may remain undetected when data are examined in isolation.

This technique is widely applied across numerous disciplines, including social sciences, political science, business studies, healthcare, and environmental research, where it supports evidence-based analysis and informed decision-making processes.

3. Characteristics of Comparative Analysis:

Comparative analysis possesses a range of distinctive characteristics, among which the most prominent are the following:

- It aims to clarify similarities and differences among entities, concepts, ideas, or other units of analysis.
- The comparative research approach integrates fundamental theoretical concepts as well as empirically derived concepts.
- Comparative analysis encompasses both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.
- Quantitative comparative analysis is variable-oriented in nature.
- Qualitative comparative analysis adopts a case-oriented approach.
- It facilitates the examination of relationships among phenomena and enables the analysis of interactions involving multiple independent variables in order to generate meaningful findings.
- It also enables researchers to conduct comprehensive and detailed investigations of their research samples by supporting the examination of all dimensions of the study.

4. Methods of Applying Comparison:²⁶

According to John Stuart Mill, identifying similarities and differences among phenomena and uncovering the relationships and connections between them requires the application of the following methods:

26- Allal Qashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 163–164.

4.1 Method of Concomitant Presence (Agreement):

This method assumes that cause and effect coexist simultaneously, such that whenever phenomenon (A) is consistently followed by phenomenon (B), the existence of the cause necessarily implies the existence of the effect.

Within this comparative approach, cases in which the phenomenon occurs are examined, and the common factor shared among them is considered the principal cause of its occurrence. In other words, if two or more instances of a given phenomenon share a single condition, that condition is regarded as the causal factor underlying the phenomenon. The occurrence of the phenomenon can therefore be verified through the repeated presence of a specific cause or common factor across multiple cases, or through the continued existence of certain elements in all observed instances.

Consequently, the repeated recurrence of this factor may indicate that it constitutes the underlying cause of the phenomenon, particularly when the latter does not normally occur in its absence. For example, heat causes the expansion of iron; here, heat represents the cause, while expansion constitutes the effect. Similarly, increased advertising may lead to higher profits, where advertising functions as the causal factor and profit growth as the resulting outcome.

Accordingly, although the presence of the cause generally entails the presence of the effect, concomitant occurrence alone does not provide definitive evidence that one phenomenon directly causes the other. Both phenomena may instead result from a third, still unidentified factor. For this reason, Mill proposed the method of concomitant absence.

4.2 Method of Concomitant Absence (Difference):

This method represents the inverse form of concomitant presence, based on the assumption that whenever the cause is absent, the effect is necessarily absent as well. Thus, if one case exhibits the phenomenon while another does not, and both cases are identical in all circumstances except one, then that differing condition is regarded as the cause of the phenomenon.

Comparison in this method is conducted by observing the repeated absence of a phenomenon across multiple cases or locations. If this absence consistently coincides with a particular factor, while other elements appear intermittently,

such consistency is considered evidence that the identified factor constitutes the cause of the phenomenon.²⁷

4.3 Method of Concomitant Variation:

This method assumes that any change in the cause necessarily produces a corresponding change in the effect. Therefore, variations occurring in the causal factor are expected to generate proportional changes in the resulting phenomenon.

If a phenomenon changes in a particular manner and another phenomenon undergoes a similar transformation simultaneously, the first phenomenon is considered the cause of the second. This relationship confirms the existence of a causal connection between them. The method is often referred to as the *principle of concomitant variation in cause and effect*,²⁸ whereby the outcome increases as the causal factor intensifies and decreases when the causal factor diminishes. For example, rates of delayed marriage may increase as unemployment among young people rises.

4.4 Method of Residues:

This principle holds that every phenomenon has a cause and that a single cause cannot account for two distinct and unrelated phenomena.

The method is applied when the researcher already knows the factors responsible for certain components of a phenomenon. The remaining unexplained components are then assumed to result from the residual factor or factors that have not yet been identified.

Accordingly, comparative analysis within this framework proceeds by eliminating the known causes associated with the phenomenon and examining the remaining unexplained elements. These residual elements are subsequently treated as the principal explanatory factors responsible for the occurrence of the phenomenon.

Adapted from the lecture notes of Professor Majdoub.

5 The Crisis of Classical Comparative Analysis:²⁹

27- Rabhi Mustafa Olayan and Othman Mohammed Ghoneim, *Methods and Approaches of Scientific Research: Theory and Application*, 1st ed., Dar Safaa for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, Jordan, 2000, p. 47.

28- Ibid.

29- Kenza Meghich, "Strategies of Comparative Analysis of the Political Phenomenon," *Al-Bahith Journal for Academic Studies*, Vol. 07, No. 02, 2020, p. 1675.

Comparative analysis encountered significant difficulties during the 1960s in adapting to the transformations that characterized that period. This crisis emerged as a consequence of several major developments:

- The end of the colonial era following the collapse of traditional colonial empires represented by European powers such as Britain, France, and Germany, regardless of whether these countries had emerged from the war as victors or defeated states.
- The emergence of newly independent states as a direct consequence of decolonization. Naturally, the increase in the number of countries included in comparative studies contributed to greater theoretical precision, since expanding the number of units under investigation enhanced the explanatory capacity of theories and their ability to reflect empirical reality.

With the growing number of international units included in comparative studies, particularly through the inclusion of newly independent states resulting from national liberation movements such as India, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Algeria, political systems emerged that differed substantially from those of the Western world. This development highlighted the problem of contextual variation among political phenomena. For instance, comparing the long-established British Parliament with the emerging Egyptian Parliament, or comparing the French Radical Party with the Syrian Ba'ath Party, appeared methodologically inappropriate.

In response to this challenge, two major positions emerged:

- The first argued that comparative analysis could not be applied to fundamentally different societies, leading to the exclusion of non-Western societies from comparative inquiry.
- The second advocated reconstructing the foundations of comparative analysis on new theoretical premises.

The first position, which emphasized the impossibility of comparing profoundly different societies, redirected the study of non-Western communities toward the field of area studies. These studies were conducted by specialists through field-based monographic analyses rather than through systematic comparison with other societies.

Although this approach generated valuable empirical research and stimulated anthropological methodologies, avoiding comparison in the name of respecting

cultural specificity ultimately reinforced ethnocentric tendencies in analysis. Many of these monographic studies were constructed upon preconceived assumptions without critically assessing the suitability of the concepts employed.

The second position led to the emergence of developmentalism during the early 1960s as an alternative capable of revitalizing comparative inquiry. This perspective was founded on the assumption that the challenges faced by newly independent states resembled those previously experienced by Western societies. For example, monarchical authoritarianism in European history was considered comparable, to some extent, to contemporary forms of political authoritarianism in developing states. Similarly, the instability of national borders in nineteenth-century Europe was viewed as analogous to the state-building challenges confronting newly independent countries.

Despite attempts to reproduce the Western model, numerous political experiences emerged that could not be reduced to this framework. Through various hybrid mechanisms, these experiences demonstrated that political change does not conform to a universal developmental matrix. Consequently, the 1970s witnessed the rise of cultural analysis, particularly through the contributions of Clifford Geertz, alongside historical sociology as advanced by Barrington Moore.

The crisis of the comparative approach ultimately assumed three principal dimensions, which became evident through the critiques directed at classical comparative analysis, namely:

5.1 Crisis of Universality

Classical comparative analysis was founded upon a dual assumption centered on the universality of both concepts and practices. This reflected an epistemological conviction that political science could not exist without a conceptual framework applicable to all political situations. Such an assumption implicitly suggested that culture played no significant role in shaping analytical categories or in the formation of political systems. However, this perspective became the subject of a twofold critique:

- Political practices have continuously demonstrated and even widened the distance separating them from the presumed universal model rather than moving closer to it.

- The failure of the Western state model in Africa and Asia, together with the impossibility of considering it universally applicable, had a profound impact on the social sciences themselves. This influence was reflected in two major developments:
 - Renewed interest in culture and cultural analysis.
 - The acceleration of inquiries into the historical conditions underlying the production of Western modernity.

5.2 Crisis of Explanation

The crisis of universality that affected classical comparative approaches subsequently evolved into a crisis concerning their explanatory capacity, thereby necessitating a reconsideration of the prevailing interpretive paradigms. Explanatory models cannot be regarded as culturally neutral, since reference to culture implies that the same factor does not carry identical significance across different temporal and spatial contexts, nor is it perceived universally by social actors in the same manner.

Accordingly, if the objective of comparative research is the analysis and comparison of social realities, the researcher must avoid reliance on monocausal explanatory models.

The interaction between culture and the diversity of cultural patterns contributed significantly to reassessing the causal claims traditionally advanced within comparative analysis. Contemporary scholarship redirected interpretation toward alternative approaches, among which is the cross-sectional model exemplified in the work of Barrington Moore Jr. in *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. In this work, Moore sought to explain the social foundations that led to the emergence of different political systems, namely democracy, fascism, and communism, during the transition from agrarian societies to modern industrial societies.

Through examining the divergent trajectories separating European political systems, Moore distinguished between the democratic path and authoritarian paths encompassing both fascism and communism. His analysis aimed to explain why European societies followed distinct historical routes despite sharing broader structural transformations, emphasizing that each trajectory emerged from a different revolutionary context.

On the other hand, the Weberian approach, represented by Max Weber in his renowned work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), focused on identifying elements of similarity, which he termed “elective affinities”, between Protestant ethics, particularly Calvinism, and the requirements of the spirit of modern capitalism.³⁰

Through this study, Weber sought to identify the convergent elements that facilitated the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism. He demonstrated how Protestantism departed from the medieval conception promoted by the Catholic Church, particularly concerning the practice of indulgences, namely documents believed at the time to grant complete or partial remission of sins to their holders or purchasers.³¹

Instead, Protestant doctrine encouraged individuals to demonstrate that they belonged among the elect on earth through disciplined labor, professional excellence, and the rationalization of human conduct. These orientations were consequently interpreted as closely aligned with the ethos and values underpinning modern capitalist development.

5.3 The Crisis of the Relationship with History:

The crisis of interpretation raised an important issue concerning the relationship between comparative analysis and history. Neglecting the historical dimension renders any comparison artificial and illusory, since focusing exclusively on contemporary and immediate manifestations risks marginalizing the exceptional and distinctive factors revealed through historical depth. Resorting to historical analysis enables the identification of discontinuities, innovations, and crises, thereby allowing political systems to be compared not merely in terms of their institutional organization but also through the processes of their formation and development.

The disregard for history within classical comparative traditions emerged through two principal approaches:

5.3.1 The Behavioral Epistemological Approach:

30- Karl Thompson, “Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*,” published on 17 August 2018, available at: https://revisesociology.com/2018/08/17/max-weber-religion-society-change/#google_vignette

31- Blidar Ben Toufik Hadji, “The Effects of the Lutheran Church on the Christian World,” *African Journal of Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2023, p. 524.

This perspective considered political science and history as two independent disciplines and defined the role of political science as observing the functioning of political systems, identifying their regularities, and measuring their operational patterns.

Behavioralism contributed significantly to the emergence of systems analysis; however, its underlying assumptions generated three major risks:

- Presuming a priori definitions of what constitutes the political sphere, particularly the concept of the authoritative allocation of values, as universally applicable across all temporal and spatial contexts, thereby assuming that culture exerts no influence on political processes.
- Treating political practices as transhistorical phenomena while disregarding the transformations affecting these practices over time.
- Concealing historical discontinuities and reducing the distinctive characteristics associated with the crises specific to each political system.

5.3.2 Comparative Traditions Rooted in Sociological Theory:

These traditions attributed an a priori meaning to history, as reflected in Marxist analysis through the linear succession of modes of production and in evolutionary sociology through the universal conception of modernity as the ultimate destination of societies.

For instance, Marxist analysis is founded upon two reductionist assumptions:

- The prior assumption that all historical trajectories unfold under the influence of economic causality and pass through identical stages that are ultimately reduced to universal modes of production.
- The neglect of variations introduced by culture, politics, or other social institutions within modes of production and across different historical paths.

6. New Directions in Comparative Approaches:

The crisis of classical comparative traditions prompted comparative scholars to reconsider and renew their methodological frameworks in an effort to establish a new comparative orientation grounded in emerging paradigms within political science.

6.1 The Revival of Cultural Analysis:

Cultural analysis was initially formulated during the second half of the nineteenth century. However, significant difficulties emerged in transforming the

concept of culture into an operational analytical category, requiring the transcendence of three dominant perspectives:

- The normative definition of culture, which conceptualizes culture as a collection of values collectively shared by members of a particular society.
- The historical definition, which views culture as inherited knowledge transmitted from one generation to another through rigid mechanisms of social reproduction.
- The behavioral construction of culture, which considers culture as a dominant pattern of behavior among members of a given society.

Contemporary developments within the semiotic perspective of cultural analysis have facilitated its use for comparative purposes. The American anthropologist Clifford Geertz fundamentally redefined culture by shifting its understanding from merely “patterns of behavior” to a “system of symbols and meanings” shared by members of a social group and employed during their interactions. He argued that social interaction does not necessarily require actors to share identical values; rather, it depends upon the existence of mutual understanding among them. Culture therefore contributes to shaping individuals’ ways of life, organizing their affairs, and fostering social orientations.³²

The revival of cultural analysis also restored particular importance to religion as a mechanism organizing rituals and beliefs associated with the collective sacred domain. Nevertheless, this renewed perspective generated several debates and methodological challenges:

- Methodological difficulties related to understanding the culture of the “other”: namely, whether it is possible to reveal and interpret the systems of meaning underlying a foreign culture through reference to the researcher’s own interpretive framework.
- Problems concerning the construction of culture itself, as the concept is often used ambiguously and inconsistently to refer to broad social groups and large collectivities.
- The difficulty of accounting for cultural change, since researchers may be compelled to assume continuity and stability within cultural patterns,

32- Najwa Qarwaz, “On the Nature of Culture and Its Characteristics Between the Universality of Tylor and the Relativism of Boas,” *Al-Nass Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1, September 2024, p. 122.

despite the fact that culture is fundamentally a product of social practice and ongoing interaction.

6.2 Reconstructing the Sociology of Action: Resorting to Strategic Analysis and Actors' Strategies:

Reorienting analysis toward the actor makes it possible to recover the diversity of mechanisms through which the political sphere is constructed. Within this context, a new approach emerged and established itself as a major orientation of this interactionist perspective, namely methodological individualism. In this regard, Pierre Birnbaum distinguished between two models of this approach:

- The first refers to an ambitious theory of social interaction and social play, which seeks to establish the rational individual as a comprehensive explanatory principle based on a single form of rationality.
- The second concerns the rediscovery of individual strategies operating behind social processes, without claiming that these strategies provide an all-encompassing explanatory framework.

For comparative researchers, adopting the action paradigm raises the issue of political innovation, a dimension largely overlooked by classical comparative analysis. The study of political innovation associated with the strategies of political actors points to several mechanisms through which innovation occurs, including tradition, imitation, importation, and renewal.

6.2.1 Revitalization of Traditions:

Traditions are often employed, at least partially, by newly established rulers as a means of consolidating their dominance through familiar practices. Examples include the rediscovery of Roman law by Western princes at the end of the Middle Ages, or the mobilization of peasants in the construction of modern China as a revival of imperial practices.

6.2.2 Imitation:

Imitation may occur within social spaces belonging to the same community, as illustrated by the formation of the state through the transfer of clerical models. It may also involve adopting foreign models, such as the Byzantine influence on the Umayyad and Abbasid empires or the impact of the Western state model. However, comparative researchers must remain attentive to the diversity of imitation strategies, including:

- Imitation arising from direct coercion.

- Imitation intended to reinforce fragile or declining authority.
- Imitation or importation initiated by certain actors seeking to occupy new and more advantageous positions within the political landscape.
- Imitation or importation undertaken by ethnic or sectarian minorities aiming to secure protection.

6.2.3 Renewal:

Innovation is inherently accompanied by processes of renewal. The reactivation of traditions, imitation, and institutional borrowing invariably leads to appropriation, namely the implicit incorporation of borrowed practices into a new and specific context. Such renewals are reflected in institutional productions, emerging practices, and unprecedented meanings that progressively detach imported models from their original sources.

The discussion may be concluded with the findings of Theda Skocpol, whose contribution to the renewal of comparative analysis identified three major orientations within contemporary comparative research:

- **Application of a General Model of History:** This orientation represents an updated version of the grand theories underpinning developmental approaches that sought to analyze diverse historical trajectories. An important example is the work of Immanuel Wallerstein on the emergence and evolution of the capitalist world system.
- **Search for Causal Regularities:** This approach seeks to establish causal explanations within historical processes without imposing prior assumptions regarding their universality. It aims to develop explanations suited to sets of empirical data constituting major historical problems that concern multiple societies.
- **Comparison of Historical Trajectories and Recognition of Their Specificity:** This perspective emphasizes the uniqueness of historical paths while highlighting meaningful differences within them. It is particularly reflected in contributions from cultural analysis and the sociology of action.

The resurgence of cultural analysis has further contributed to granting renewed importance to religion as an organizing framework governing rituals and associated systems of belief.

7. Problems of Comparative Analysis

Several methodological challenges arise at each stage of comparative analysis, which may be summarized as follows:

First: The stage of selecting and defining the research problem constitutes the initial step in preparing scientific research and is generally considered the most difficult and time-consuming phase. This issue relates to determining who identifies the primary research problem and selects the countries subject to comparison. Is this responsibility assigned to the funding institution, the leadership of the research team, or the researchers themselves? Furthermore, on what basis is the problem defined? Is it intended to advance scientific knowledge and test hypotheses and theories, or does it stem from internal issues affecting a major state that seeks to resolve them or evaluate their solutions through application in other societies?

Most scholars involved in comparative research agree that one of the most critical challenges of comparative studies lies in selecting the research problem itself. A specific issue may represent a significant concern in one country while lacking the same level of urgency, importance, or even relevance in other countries.³³ This gives rise to an additional difficulty concerning the selection of countries in which the research problem occupies a comparable level of significance within the broader societal structure.³⁴

Second: Another challenge concerns defining the units of comparison. The question arises as to whether the object of comparison should be the political system as a whole or only one of its components or phenomena. The difficulty lies in separating the elements or variables within any political system from one another and from their surrounding environment, as well as assessing their comparability in a manner that enables each unit to accurately reflect the society or state it represents.³⁵

The issue of proportionality among units presents further complications, and the same challenge applies to sampling within these units. Political phenomena do

33- Abdelrashid Ben Abdelaziz Hafez, *Fundamentals of Scientific Research*, 1st ed., King Abdulaziz University Press, Jeddah, 2012, p. 04.

34- Nasr Mohammed Aref, *Epistemology of Comparative Politics: The Cognitive Model, Theory, and Methodology*, 1st ed., Majd University Foundation for Studies, Publishing and Distribution, Beirut, 2002, p. 132.

35- Boumediene Tachma, *Introduction to Political Science: An Introduction to the Study of the Foundations of Government*, 1st ed., Jisr Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, 2013, p. 125.

not exist in isolation; political dimensions interact continuously with social, economic, and cultural factors. Consequently, researchers must account for the complex and multidimensional nature of political systems and their interaction with the surrounding environment.³⁶

Third: Comparative researchers often face difficulties because they interpret cultures and societies different from their own. As a result, they may fail to recognize that the meanings associated with concepts, language, and environmental contexts differ substantially from those of their native cultural setting. Researchers may either assume these meanings to be identical to those within their own societies or perceive them as less developed.

Accordingly, comparing political behaviors without considering differences in historical trajectories and cultural contexts constitutes a form of analytical misinterpretation, since identical concepts may carry distinct meanings and implications across societies.

Fourth: One of the major challenges in comparative research and analysis concerns the collection of information and data. Language issues frequently arise regarding the formulation of interview questions and the extent of their precision. Likewise, translating questions into the respondents' language and subsequently retranslating responses into the language used for research reporting may result in the loss of important meanings and contextual implications.

This challenge is further compounded by issues related to access to information and potential bias in data availability. In certain countries, access to specific information may be restricted due to confidentiality requirements or national security considerations. Under such circumstances, many researchers rely on media sources, which often reflect political or ideological orientations and may themselves be subject to bias.

Section Four: Public Policy

Public policy represents one of the relatively recent concepts introduced into political science studies, particularly within the field of political systems, as well as public administration. Today, it constitutes one of the most dynamic and complex areas of inquiry, attracting considerable attention and extensive

36- Nasr Mohammed Aref, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

discussion among researchers, specialists in public administration, and political scientists alike.

1. Public Policy at the Conceptual Level

1.1 The Concept of Public Policy

Before examining the concept of public policy, it is necessary to clarify several concepts that contribute to its structure and formulation. In analyzing public policy, the first concept that warrants attention is the notion of *policy* itself.

1.1.1 Definition of Policy

Numerous and diverse definitions have been proposed for the term *policy*. John Presthus defines policy as “*a method or mode of conduct selected by governments, organizations, or individuals from among several alternatives under specific circumstances in order to guide and determine present and future decisions.*”³⁷

From another perspective, policy has been defined as a process governing decision-making. According to this view, policy is described as “*a guide for thinking in the process of decision-making, as it governs and directs decision procedures within a specific framework composed of rules that regulate and orient the decision-making process.*”³⁸

Accordingly, policy in its fundamental sense may be viewed as a process of individual or collective choice that explains, justifies, guides, or determines a particular course of action, whether already implemented or potentially anticipated. Policy generally establishes the framework within which decisions are made and, in some instances, may itself represent the cumulative outcome of several decisions or the aggregated results of actions and choices.

Definitions also indicate that policy embodies human interactions often associated with power, coercion, or influence, elements that some scholars regard as the essence of politics. In this sense, politics refers to a situation in which a group or minority exercises authority and organized coercion over a broader majority that accepts such authority, either voluntarily or under institutional command.

37- Robert Vance Presthus, *Public Administration*, Theronalc Press Company, 1975, p. 15.

38- Ahmed Rashid, *Theory of Public Administration*, Cairo: Dar Al-Maaref, 1987, p. 13.

Having briefly addressed the concept of policy, attention may now be directed toward the concept of *public policy* as one of the relatively modern notions within political science and public administration.

1.2 Concept of Public Policy

Numerous political scientists have contributed to defining and conceptualizing public policy according to their intellectual orientations and methodological approaches to studying this concept. A review of the most prominent definitions reveals that these contributions may be categorized into several perspectives.

2. Public Policy from the Perspective of Power and Authority

At the outset, it is essential to clarify the meaning of *power*, which generally refers to *the ability of an individual, group, or government to undertake actions that influence persons, groups, or events and alter expected behavior regarding a specific future action*. Power derives from the possession of one or more recognized sources of influence, including coercion, wealth, expertise, official position, and personal attributes.

Power has also been conceptualized in terms of influence over others. Max Weber defines power as *“the probability that an individual within a social relationship will be able to carry out his or her will despite resistance from others, regardless of the basis upon which this probability rests.”*

Definitions following this line of reasoning include that advanced by Robert A. Dahl, who described power as *the ability to make another person perform an action that they otherwise would not undertake*.

Similarly, Milton J. Esman and Benjamin Crosby approached public policy from a pragmatic perspective characterized by negotiation, exchange, and bargaining processes. They viewed it as a systematic process distinguished by dynamic and evolving characteristics involving negotiation and exchange while addressing questions such as: *Who obtains what, when, and how?* Likewise, it addresses issues such as: *What do I seek? Who possesses it? And how may it be acquired?* Public policy has also been interpreted as the authoritative or coercive allocation of state resources, with the government serving as the principal actor responsible for this allocation.³⁹

39- Bassiouni Ibrahim Hamada, *The Role of Communication Media in Decision-Making in the Arab World*, Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1993, p. 107.

Consequently, proponents of this perspective argue that the outcomes observed within any political community merely reflect the environmental context in which that society exists through the cumulative patterns of influence prevailing within it. Their emphasis is therefore placed primarily on the exercise of political power, the mechanisms through which influence is exerted to realize public policies, and the means employed to achieve such objectives.

Within this framework, Fahmi Khalifa Al-Fahdawi defines public policy from the perspective of power as *the ability to influence decision-makers within society*. Thus, the power perspective reflects the capacity of elites to obtain public values through their influence over others in society. Public policy, according to this interpretation, may therefore represent the reflection of the viewpoints or intentions of influential actors who control the core structures of political organization and the activities of its various institutions, while power itself remains dependent on the possession of recognized sources of influence.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, this perspective has been subject to substantial criticism by numerous scholars who reject the assumption that power alone can adequately explain all relationships, interactions, and activities surrounding public policy within society. Moreover, public policy encompasses broader dimensions extending beyond hidden structures of power. Otherwise, how might one explain procedures, activities, principles, regulations, intended objectives, and desired outcomes embedded within public policy itself? Such criticisms significantly contributed to the emergence of alternative approaches that conceptualize public policy from fundamentally different perspectives.

2.1 The Concept of Public Policy from the Perspective of System Performance:

Many political scientists have generally described the system as a set of interconnected components forming a network of reciprocal relationships within an integrated whole. From this perspective, David Easton devoted particular attention to public policy through the lens of systems analysis, considering it an outcome and product of societal dynamics arising from its interaction with the broader environment in which institutions, structures, behaviors, and relationships constitute the foundations of the political phenomenon addressed

40- Fahmi Khalifa Al-Fahdawi, *Public Policy: A Holistic Perspective on Structure and Analysis*, Jordan: Dar Al-Masira for Publishing, Distribution and Printing, 2001, p. 16.

by the political system. Accordingly, he defines public policy as: *“the authoritative allocation of values within society through binding decisions and activities that distribute these values within an interactive process involving inputs, outputs, and feedback.”*⁴¹

Similarly, Gabriel Almond viewed public policy from an operational perspective as: *“expressions of intentions enacted or approved by the executive and legislative authorities, which are also responsible for allocating resources and determining the agencies entrusted with implementing and achieving these objectives.”*⁴²

The views of Barbara McLennan and her colleagues do not differ substantially from the preceding definitions. They define public policy as: *“the activities and orientations resulting from governmental processes in response to demands directed by the social system toward the political system.”*⁴³

Likewise, B. Guy Peters defines public policy as: *“a specific pattern of actions collectively undertaken by society, either directly or through its representatives, to address a particular issue in pursuit of the public interest for society as a whole or for a specific segment of it.”*⁴⁴

Based on the foregoing definitions, public policy, from the perspective of systems analysis, may be understood as one of the outputs of the political system, influenced by numerous factors embedded within society. Societies increasingly require expanded healthcare services, education and training, social security, income support, safety, and public security. These variables originate from the social environment, thereby requiring public policy to align with such societal needs.

Both internal and external environments contribute to shaping political issues and challenges within the state and may generate pressures and threats to public policy, such as unemployment and inflation. Consequently, public policy cannot achieve efficiency and effectiveness unless it adequately accounts for the environmental conditions surrounding it. The political system operates within an

41- David Easton, *Political System Analysis*, Paris: translated by P. R., Armand Colin, 1974, p. 125.

42- Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Theoretical Framework*, translated by Mohammed Bashir Al-Maghazi, Benghazi: Qan Younis Publications, 1996, p. 272.

43- Fahmi Khalifa Al-Fahdawi, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

44- Mohammed Qassem Al-Qaryouti, *Designing, Implementing and Evaluating Public Policy*, 1st ed., Kuwait: Kuwait University, Department of Public Administration, 2006, p. 3.

environment that both influences it and is influenced by its responses to incoming demands and inputs. Therefore, for public policy to function effectively, it must remain responsive to and compatible with its surrounding environment.

2.2 The Concept of Public Policy from the Institutional Perspective (Government)

Several definitions have been proposed to explain public policy from an institutional perspective, viewing it as an organizational process necessitated by the institutional nature of government and its interaction with the external environment in all its dimensions and components.

From this standpoint, *Monroe Tuny* defined public policy as: *“the means adopted by government to bring about specific changes within the social system of the state.”*

Similarly, *D. Kousoulas* defined it as: *“the decisions and plans formulated by governmental bodies for the purpose of addressing public issues within society.”*

This definition emphasizes governmental behavior toward public concerns and societal problems through the adoption of decisions and plans designed to confront such issues. It therefore encompasses governmental instruments and institutions, functional dimensions such as policy decisions and implementation mechanisms, as well as the intended objectives represented in addressing public concerns.

From another, broader perspective, *Thomas R. Dye* defined public policy as: *“whatever governments choose to do or not to do.”* This definition highlights the relationship between governmental units and their surrounding environment. In this sense, public policy reflects every action, behavior, decision, or deliberate choice made by government, whether through intervention or non-intervention. Accordingly, it represents governmental selection regarding actions and omissions within a particular domain, thereby illustrating governmental priorities, mechanisms for managing societal conflicts, organizational behavior, bureaucratic processes, and the distribution of benefits and resources.

A more detailed and action-oriented definition was proposed by *James E. Anderson*, who approached the concept from a goal-oriented perspective and defined public policy as: *“a proposed course of action for an individual, group, or government within a specific environment, intended to clarify targeted*

objectives and overcome constraints in pursuit of desired goals or intended purposes.” He further viewed it as a purposeful program of action followed by individual or collective efforts aimed at addressing a particular issue or problem.⁴⁵

Based on the foregoing definitions, public policy may be understood as a set of governmental decisions and programs that constitute the outputs of the political system within a specific policy domain.

3. Characteristics of Public Policy

Our understanding of the concept of public policy becomes more comprehensive through examining the characteristics that distinguish it and define its fundamental dimensions. Accordingly, the main characteristics of public policy may be outlined as follows⁴⁶:

- Public policy is the outcome of a collective process in which different perspectives and interpretations are presented. It is influenced by prevailing orientations and ideological frameworks, while also being shaped by knowledge, theoretical foundations, and rational and technical approaches.
- Public policy is discussed, approved, and issued by officially authorized bodies. Nevertheless, this does not preclude its study, analysis, or the contribution of non-official actors in developing its ideas and alternatives.
- Public policy encompasses actions directed toward intended objectives and excludes random or spontaneous actions undertaken by individual officials, as well as incidental events that occur without deliberate planning.
- Public policy consists of coordinated programs and actions issued by governmental leaders rather than isolated or disconnected decisions.
- Public policy includes all actual regulatory and governing decisions related to trade regulation, inflation control, housing issues, healthcare, and educational policy. It does not merely encompass what governments intend or plan to undertake. Public policy may be formulated positively or

45- James Anderson, *Public Policy-Making*, translated by Amer Al-Kubaisi, 1st ed., Jordan: Dar Al-Masira, 1999, pp. 14–15.

46- Amer Khudair Al-Kubaisi, *Public Policies: An Introduction to Improving Government Performance*, Cairo: Arab Administrative Development Organization, 2000, p. 10.

negatively; it may mandate specific actions, prohibit undesirable behaviors, or even reflect a policy orientation through governmental silence or non-intervention regarding particular phenomena. Ultimately, such positions influence both the population and the stakeholders concerned.

- Public policy reflects a balance among interest groups, with this balance determined by their relative influence. Changes in such influence lead to corresponding changes in public policy, making it more representative of groups whose influence increases and less reflective of those whose influence declines.⁴⁷
- Public policy is grounded in legal authority and supported by enforcement mechanisms. Members of society pay taxes as a legitimate obligation, comply with trade restrictions imposed on imports, and ensure that corporations adhere to foundational and financial regulations. In cases of non-compliance, the state imposes sanctions such as fines and imprisonment. Such enforcement mechanisms are generally absent in private organizations.⁴⁸
- Public policy addresses issues, concerns, and problems related to the public interest and possesses a comprehensive character. However, this does not exclude policies aimed at specific groups or segments that enjoy broad public support, nor policies with strategic and future-oriented objectives that may not necessarily attract widespread public attention.
- Public policy does not always emerge exclusively at the formal level of the political system. Informal actors and forces often contribute significantly and effectively to policy formulation. In some instances, the formal system may be limited to providing legal legitimacy and official recognition to policies that have already evolved within informal organizational settings.
- Public policy may take the form of implicit approval of an existing situation, such as when states remain inactive or refrain from intervention regarding problems they are unable to resolve.

47- Amr Kamel Al-Khazraji, *Modern Political Systems and Public Policies*, Dar Majdalawi for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, 2004, p. 31.

48- Mohammed Hadid Muwaffaq, *Public Administration: Structuring Institutions, Policy-Making and the Implementation of Government Programs*, Dar Al-Shorouk, Amman, p. 117.

- Governments rely on multiple administrative structures to implement public policies. Ministries and governmental agencies constitute the primary implementing bodies; however, governments may also enlist other institutions and organizations to enhance performance and accommodate important considerations such as increased efficiency, accurate implementation, rapid execution, and improved prospects for success. These entities are typically characterized by financial independence and extensive expertise, including autonomous public institutions and joint-stock companies. Most modern states increasingly favor such pioneering and specialized institutions operating within partnership and investment frameworks.⁴⁹
- Public policy reflects the institutional approach underlying activities undertaken by governmental institutions. No policy can become a public policy unless it is adopted and implemented by the government. Through governmental institutions, public policy acquires essential characteristics, foremost among them legitimacy and public acceptance.
- Public policy may be viewed as an elite preference. From this perspective, public policy represents the translation of the preferences and values of the ruling elite rather than public demands. The administrative apparatus assumes responsibility for implementing these preferences. Changes in public policy depend largely on shifts in the elite's perception of its interests. If the elite has a strong interest in maintaining the status quo, substantial policy change is unlikely, and only incremental modifications are expected.⁵⁰
- Public policy may also be understood as an output of the political system. According to systems theory, public policy represents the outputs and responses of the political system to inputs, pressures, and influences originating from the surrounding environment. These policies may, in turn, alter both the environment and the political system itself. Consequently, systems theory highlights the impact of environmental conditions and

49- Ammar Maamar, *The Problematic of Public Policy-Making in Algeria*, Master's Thesis, University of Algiers, Faculty of Political Science and Media, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Specialization in Political and Administrative Organization, p. 21.

50- Amr Kamel Al-Khazraji, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

political system characteristics on the content of public policies, as well as the reciprocal effects of these policies on both the environment and the political system.

- Public policy constitutes the efficient achievement of objectives and may therefore exhibit rationality when formulated on the basis of maximizing net societal values. In other words, the ratio between the values achieved and the sacrifices required should be greater than that associated with any alternative policy. These values are not limited to quantitative indicators but also encompass social, political, and economic values.
- Public policy often represents a modified extension of the past, meaning that policymakers rarely design entirely new programs. Instead, they tend to introduce incremental adjustments to existing policies and programs. This tendency may result from constraints related to time and financial resources, limitations in forecasting capabilities, uncertainty regarding the outcomes of entirely new policies, and the difficulty of definitively determining society's ultimate goals.

4. Components of Public Policy:

The structure of public policy is shaped through an integrated system of components and elements. The principal components, widely acknowledged by most scholars, can be summarized as follows:

- **Inputs:** These encompass the various pressures and influences exerted upon the political system that stimulate its activity and drive its responses.
- **Transformation Process:** This refers to the assimilation of demands within legislative and executive structures. The process involves four main functions: interest articulation, interest aggregation, public policy formulation, and policy implementation.
- **Outputs:** These represent the political system's response to actual and anticipated demands. Such responses constitute the outputs of the political system and generally take the form of public policies designed to reconcile competing perspectives and interests.
- **Implementation:** This involves all actions and procedures undertaken to achieve policy objectives. In other words, it is the translation of public policies, including their goals, principles, and rules, into actionable plans and programs.

- **Feedback:** This refers to the flow of information from the environment to the political system regarding the outcomes of its decisions and policies. It establishes a continuous linkage between inputs and outputs within the policy process.

5. Types of Public Policy:

Public policy has been classified in various ways, as scholars have approached it from different analytical perspectives. Among the most significant classifications are the following:⁵¹

5.1 According to Governmental Activities:

- **Economic Policies:** These include all governmental actions, plans, programs, laws, and decisions related to the economic sector, such as agricultural policy, trade policy, and industrial policy.
- **Social Policies:** These encompass the various decisions adopted within the social sector, including housing policy, employment policy, and health policy.
- **Cultural Policies:** These refer to governmental decisions and actions undertaken within the cultural sphere, including areas such as cinema and theatre.

5.2 According to Governmental Actions:

This classification identifies four major categories, including:

Extractive Public Policies: These refer to governmental actions aimed at extracting resources from both the internal and external environment in order to finance public expenditures.⁵² Such resources include financial assets, human resources, goods, and services. All states, regardless of the nature of their political systems or the degree of their institutional complexity and interdependence, adopt such policies. One of the simplest forms of extractive policy is compulsory military service and other mandatory public services.

In addition, taxation constitutes one of the most significant and widespread mechanisms for resource extraction. It involves collecting financial contributions from members of society for governmental purposes without

51- Hassan Abshir Al-Tayeb, *The Modern State: A State of Institutions*, Cultural Publishing House, Cairo, 2000, p. 145.

52- Fahmi Khalifa Al-Fahdawi, *Public Policies: A Holistic Perspective on Structure and Analysis*, Dar Al-Masira for Publishing, Distribution and Printing, Egypt, 2001, p. 75.

providing immediate or direct benefits in return. The primary objective of this policy is to ensure continuous revenue generation to cover various expenditures, including military obligations and other compulsory public services.

Taxes are considered among the most prevalent forms of resource extraction in contemporary states. They involve obtaining financial resources and goods from individuals for governmental purposes without offering immediate or direct compensation. Taxes are generally classified into direct taxes, imposed on personal income, capital assets, inheritances, and real estate, and indirect taxes, levied on goods and services such as customs duties, industrial product charges, and taxes on sales and purchases.

It can therefore be observed that the fundamental purpose of extractive public policy is to place financial resources at the disposal of the state, thereby supporting exchange and credit systems, while simultaneously providing the government with a budget that integrates public revenues and expenditures.

- **Distributive and Redistributive Public Policy:** This category of policy seeks to ensure the broad allocation of benefits and societal values across the community as a whole by dividing and distributing them into accessible portions from which all members of society may benefit.⁵³ Examples include the provision of loans for establishing small-scale enterprises, grants and privileges offered to university students, as well as budget allocations directed toward healthcare, education, and defense sectors. The efficiency and effectiveness of distributive performance within a governing system are generally assessed according to two principal considerations: first, the quantity of values and benefits distributed; and second, the scope of beneficiaries covered by such distribution. Distributive policies primarily focus on essential public services, including education, healthcare, security, defense, housing, and related services. Consequently, the effectiveness of distributive public policies is evaluated according to the benefits generated, the extent to which societal demands are satisfied, and the diversity of social domains affected by these policies. More importantly, successful public policies should uphold the principle of equity and fairness among individuals and social groups.

53- Fahmi Khalifa Al-Fahdawi, *Ibid.*, p. 74.

- **Regulatory Public Policies:** These policies are primarily concerned with regulation and organization, encompassing all governmental directives aimed at controlling and monitoring activities and behaviors to safeguard public interests and ensure legal compliance. They determine permissible and impermissible conduct within society and impose appropriate sanctions in cases of violations and misconduct. Regulatory policies extend across the various activities and sectors administered by public institutions, employing a range of legally binding instruments and coercive mechanisms alongside behavioral guidance, advisory measures, and material incentives designed to encourage compliance and adherence. Key areas addressed by regulatory policies include maintaining public security, protecting social property from theft and aggression, reducing crime rates, and regulating economic and financial affairs such as wages, prices, labor rights, and employee compensation. These policies also involve the enforcement of sanctions in response to violations, as illustrated by traffic regulations and related legal frameworks.⁵⁴
- **Symbolic Public Policy:** Symbolic policies are employed by political systems to mobilize the public and enhance national enthusiasm through political discourse emphasizing national history, collective values, and ideological principles such as equality, democracy, promises of achievement, and prospective rewards. Such narratives aim to foster positive public attitudes, encouraging citizens to comply voluntarily with taxation, support political leadership, and place confidence in governmental programs rather than opposing the political system, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of governmental institutions and their policies.⁵⁵

This form of symbolic public policy, founded on the principle of social cohesion and interconnectedness among community members, receives considerable attention from decision makers, who often reinforce it through legal frameworks. The media also plays a central role in highlighting and disseminating its various dimensions, shaping public perceptions and intellectual orientations that subsequently influence social behavior, daily practices, and identity formation,

54- Ibid.

55- Hisham Abdullah (trans.), *Comparative Politics in Our Time*, Amman: Al-Ahlia Publishing House, 1997, p. 192.

thereby enabling individuals to engage more effectively with societal life. These policies aim to achieve the following objectives:

- Promoting socially desirable values among the public.
- Enhancing levels of national consciousness and civic awareness.
- Strengthening pride and appreciation for collective social identity.
- Reinforcing loyalty and commitment to the nation.

6. Stages of Public Policy Formulation

The formulation of public policy proceeds through a sequence of systematic and interrelated stages designed to ensure the effective management of emerging issues and challenges. These core stages include problem identification, agenda setting, formulation of alternatives, decision making, implementation, and evaluation.

First Stage: Analysis and Intelligence Gathering (Problem Formulation)

A problem may be defined as an issue or situation that generates unmet needs and dissatisfaction among individuals. It represents a specific phenomenon with defined objectives and both direct and indirect consequences for those concerned with, affected by, represented in, or sympathetic to the issue. Such problems are considered solvable within the framework of existing environmental capacities and contextual determinants.⁵⁶

These are the types of issues that attract governmental attention and prompt policy intervention, including poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, environmental pollution, declining income levels, reduced purchasing power, underdevelopment and dependency, administrative reform and change, and development-related concerns. Consequently, public policy, through the analytical efforts undertaken by public policy analysts, seeks to examine and interpret the nature and content of these broader societal issues.

According to Peter Drucker, this process requires several key procedures:

- Classification of the problem
- Identification and recognition of the problem
- Determination of appropriate responses to the problem

Accordingly, the primary objective underlying these procedures, as undertaken by public policy analysts in addressing and studying public issues, is to provide an accurate diagnosis of the problems under consideration. This reflects the well-

56- Hassan Abshir Al-Tayeb, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

established principle that accurately diagnosing a problem constitutes half of its solution.

The Problem within the Government Agenda:

Problems are prioritized according to their degree of severity, societal impact, and level of public demand, and are subsequently incorporated into a structured framework of governmental tasks and policy priorities, commonly referred to as the *government policy agenda*.

Accordingly, the government agenda represents a systematic ordering of unresolved issues and pressing concerns that emerge from broader public demands. Responsibility for selecting and prioritizing these issues rests with a specific group of governmental actors known as *political entrepreneurs*, who invest their expertise, time, and effort in identifying, assessing, and analyzing the scale and nature of public problems.

Stage Two: Data and Information Collection Concerning Public Policy Problems

The provision of accurate and relevant information constitutes the backbone of all stages of public policy analysis and serves as the fundamental basis for identifying policy problems and diagnosing structural deficiencies within any political system. Information derived from problem analysis and investigation also provides policymakers and decision-makers with potential options and conceptual alternatives that may guide subsequent stages of policy formulation. To maximize the value of information, the following requirements should be met:

- **Objectivity and accuracy:** This refers to the informational capacity to establish a clear connection with the nature of the problem and the factors influencing it and affected by it.
- **Relevance:** This denotes the informational ability to provide indications and implications that contribute to understanding the dimensions of the problem and determining the relative effectiveness of possible alternatives and solutions.
- **Identification of alternatives:** This represents a crucial step in subjecting the problem to objective assessment in order to determine which alternative is most capable of resolving it from the perspective of the public policy analyst. At this stage, the cost associated with each alternative and

the expected returns from its implementation are determined. More importantly, the public policy analyst employs a range of analytical methods and techniques to ensure a rigorous evaluation of available alternatives.

Based on these three considerations, it becomes possible to obtain the largest possible amount of information regarding the issue under examination. The more accurate and comprehensive the information, the clearer the processes of inference, analysis, presentation, and selection among alternatives become.

Stage Three: Public Policy Formulation (Development of Alternatives)

This stage represents an active move toward addressing the issue under consideration by proposing various solutions and preliminary alternatives based on the information generated during the previous stage. Consideration is also given to implementation costs, time requirements, expected benefits, the extent of change and impact associated with adopting a particular solution, and the capacity of these alternatives to mitigate the effects of the problem.

Stage Four: Selection of the Optimal Alternative

At this stage, alternatives are comparatively evaluated. The public policy analyst selects the most appropriate option according to the logical framework of comparison while taking into account its ability to achieve the highest possible level of objectives and generate positive impacts within the surrounding environment.

Stage Five: Public Policy Implementation⁵⁷

This stage involves the actual implementation of the policy or alternative that has been adopted. It represents a critical phase through which the substantive content of the public policy pursued to address and resolve the public issue becomes evident.

Stage Six: Evaluation and Assessment of Public Policies⁵⁸

This stage involves obtaining practical, factual, and objective knowledge regarding both the positive and negative consequences associated with public policy, its implementation, and the outcomes generated by its outputs, as well as

57- Ahmed Tayeb, *The Role of Information in Public Policy Formulation in Algeria: A Case Study of the National Economic and Social Council*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Algiers, 2007, p. 40.

58- *Ibid.*, p. 35.

evaluating its effectiveness and efficiency in achieving the objectives for which it was originally designed.

In addition, evaluation should be integrated throughout all stages of the public policy process. Therefore, the evaluation stage is considered highly significant. Nevertheless, this process faces several challenges, including ambiguity of objectives, instability and weakness of policy impacts, and difficulties in generalizing evaluation outcomes.

7. Formal and Informal Actors in Public Policy-Making

Formal actors play a central role in the process of formulating and implementing public policy. The concept of the actor reflects the existence of a division of roles and functions in policy-making processes. Although the state remains the principal and central institution in public policy formulation, actors serve as mechanisms for sharing responsibilities with the state in producing public policies.

Scholars of public policy generally distinguish between two primary categories of actors involved in policy formulation: formal actors and informal actors, each contributing according to its role and relative influence in the formulation and development of public policy.

7.1 Official Actors:

The state is regarded as the primary official actor, as it constitutes the main producer of public policy by virtue of possessing the most fundamental pillar of policymaking, namely resources. From an institutional perspective, official actors involved in policymaking are the formal state institutions entrusted with this responsibility.

Official actors, also referred to as formal public policymakers, are those who participate and intervene in the public policy process based on the constitutional powers and authorities vested in them. These powers enable them to act and exercise decision-making independently, without requiring delegation from another authority. Official actors primarily include the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, in addition to the administrative apparatus.

7.2 Legislative Authority:

The legislative authority is one of the principal institutions of the state and consists of members forming legislative bodies, which may take various names such as chambers, senates, or diets, depending on the constitutional structure of

each country and its population size. Members contribute to consultation, deliberation, and debate regarding public policies associated with the issues under consideration, subsequently translating them into laws and legal frameworks through either explicit or implicit approval processes.

The legislative authority performs several fundamental functions within the political system, most notably legislative enactment, constitutional drafting and amendment, electoral functions, financial functions, executive oversight, judicial responsibilities, investigative functions, supervision, and the dissemination and disclosure of information. The performance of certain executive and judicial functions by legislative institutions in advanced political systems should not be interpreted as an overlap or conflict of competencies among state institutions. Rather, such functions fall within the broader framework of monitoring and supervising executive and judicial activities in order to ensure balance and institutional interdependence within the public policymaking process.

For any political system, whether democratic or authoritarian, the legislative authority represents a crucial source of political legitimacy. This stems from the fact that parliament is composed of representatives elected directly by citizens, thereby embodying the free will of the people. Consequently, it occupies a central position among actors responsible for determining public policies, particularly through its interaction with and representation of diverse social groups that have entrusted it with political representation.

For the legislative authority to perform an effective role in the public policy process, parliament must undertake the following functions:

- **Engagement with civil society and the private sector:** This ensures broader participation, particularly since, under most constitutional frameworks, legislative institutions are considered among the most representative components of national governance.
- **Achievement of policy objectives:** Public policies are designed to ensure the attainment of predefined goals formulated through collaboration with citizens and social stakeholders.
- **Comprehensiveness:** Owing to geographical reach, political coverage, and the sectoral organization of parliamentary committees, legislative

structures are expected to facilitate the discussion of a comprehensive national perspective concerning policy implementation.

- **Balancing political interests:** Decisions related to public policies inevitably affect public support for political parties and executive officials. Parliament, as an institution comprising multiple political actors endowed with constitutional oversight powers over executive decisions, is therefore capable of balancing the political interests of the ruling party during the formulation of public policies.
- **Ensuring continuity in policy implementation over the short and long term:** This becomes particularly significant after securing the approval of political actors and parliamentary members, thereby guaranteeing broad support for strategic policies and minimizing the impact of fluctuations in the domestic political environment on implementation processes.⁵⁹

The role of the legislative authority in public policy varies according to differences among political systems. For example, the British House of Commons plays a relatively limited role in public policymaking due to the predominance of the governing majority party. Nevertheless, parliamentary debates serve as important mechanisms for elite formation and political recruitment. In contrast, the United States Congress and its committees perform a central role in interest aggregation and public policymaking.

Variations in legislative performance are not confined solely to comparisons between different political systems; they also occur within the same political system depending on the nature of the issues under consideration, particularly those requiring legislative measures and binding regulations for executive implementation. In the United States, for instance, the role of the legislature differs according to the subject matter debated and legislated. Many members of the legislative branch, due to limited tenure continuity or insufficient technical support, may lack the capacity to act independently in highly technical and specialized matters. Consequently, they often endorse regulations previously adopted in other states.

At the same time, permanent congressional committees possess significant authority to approve or reject legislative proposals. Even when disagreements

59- Abdelnour Naji and Mabrouk Sahli, *Introduction to the Study of Public Policy*, Annaba: Dar Al-Olum for Publishing and Distribution, 2014, pp. 39–40.

arise between a committee and the dominant majority within Congress, policies related to taxation, civil rights, social welfare, and labor relations are frequently formulated at the committee level. In contrast, with regard to foreign policy, Congress generally seeks coordination and consensus with the President.

Although legislative institutions within democratic systems differ in their roles throughout the formulation and implementation of public policies, their role in non-democratic developing states remains limited, if not entirely absent, due to the evident dominance of the executive branch over other state authorities. Under such conditions, the executive becomes the effective actor responsible for policymaking, leaving little room for oversight and accountability. Simultaneously, overlapping functions and blurred institutional competencies contribute to political and administrative instability and inefficiency.

The legislative body may intervene in the formulation and implementation of public policy through the exercise of the following competencies:

Legislative Competence: If the legislative body is viewed as the institutional embodiment and representative of the popular will, it follows that it should possess the exclusive authority to enact legislation and public laws aimed at governing and regulating society while advancing the public interest. When public policy itself is understood as the aggregate of laws and legislative measures, the central role of the legislative institution in the policy-making process becomes evident. Although certain political systems grant the executive branch legislative authority alongside the legislature, this does not diminish the significant role played by the legislative body in this domain.

Financial Competence: Any political system seeking to manage societal affairs effectively must allocate expenditures across numerous sectors. To finance public spending, it is necessary to generate revenues from various sources. The regulation of state revenues and expenditures takes place within the framework of the public budget, which constitutes the practical financial and quantitative expression of public policy content. Consequently, there can be little doubt regarding the importance of the legislative body in both the formulation and implementation of public policy. Approval of the budget proposal represents an indispensable requirement, and since political systems generally grant legislatures the authority to approve, amend, or reject budget proposals, this

enables them to exercise substantial influence over public policy formulation and execution.

Oversight Competence: This refers to the supervisory authority exercised by the legislative body over the executive branch through mechanisms such as public policy statements, permanent and specialized committees, parliamentary questioning, and particularly the governmental policy declaration process. Governments are generally required to present statements outlining their public policy agenda to the legislature, followed by deliberation on governmental programs. This process enables legislators to introduce amendments and adjustments to governmental orientations based on the observations and criticisms raised during deliberations. In some instances, the legislature may refuse to approve the governmental program, thereby preventing its implementation. In certain political systems, such rejection may even result in the immediate resignation of the government.

Furthermore, subsidiary institutions, particularly permanent and specialized committees, assist the legislature in effectively carrying out its supervisory role over governmental activities. Such oversight may be exercised either *ex ante*, through the examination and evaluation of governmental programs before approval and during the review of policy content, or *ex post*, through monitoring policy implementation and contributing to policy evaluation. Parliamentary inquiries concerning current issues, together with written and oral questions submitted by legislators to government officials regarding implementation mechanisms and policy assessment procedures, play a crucial role in identifying deficiencies and weaknesses within public policies and highlighting the need for amendments or policy revisions.

Executive Authority: The concept of the executive apparatus encompasses all political and administrative organizations within the state, including political leaders responsible for governmental performance and the management of public affairs. This includes heads of state and prime ministers who possess authority in lawmaking, proposing and discussing public policies, implementing decisions, and managing both domestic and external crises through centralized and strategic decision-making processes.

The role of the executive branch differs considerably between developing and developed states. Its powers generally remain subject to legislative oversight,

although in some countries public policy formulation occurs through cooperation between the legislative and executive branches, as observed in countries such as Jordan, Sudan, and Egypt.

The executive branch assumes a particularly prominent role in public policy formulation, especially within foreign and military policy domains. Across most political systems, if not all, executive influence in these areas is highly significant. For instance, the President of the United States enjoys broad constitutional powers in foreign and military affairs that substantially exceed those exercised in domestic matters. Indeed, American foreign policy has largely reflected presidential initiatives and practices from the Vietnam War period to the present day, with the president serving as the principal architect of international relations and the primary director of state foreign policy.

However, the role of the executive authority in public policy formulation is not confined to external affairs. It also occupies a leading position within the broader political process by advocating for specific interests and societal groups. For example, a president may support the demands of minority groups or particular sectors, while a prime minister may advocate for the interests of retirees or economically depressed regions. Similarly, cabinet members often defend particular interests and perform a vital function as aggregators of competing interests while seeking coalitions favorable to their legislative agendas.

In a related context, the executive branch also influences public policy formulation through its legislative competence. Numerous states have adopted what may be described as a dual legislative function. Whereas legislative authority was previously monopolized by parliament, executive institutions now increasingly possess legislative powers enabling them to issue laws, regulations, directives, and executive orders, while simultaneously ensuring their enforcement and preventing violations. Executive powers may further extend to convening legislative sessions, postponing them, and in some cases dissolving legislative assemblies altogether.

Through these powers, the executive authority acquires considerable capacity to influence and shape legislative institutions, thereby expanding its impact on public policy. Supported by professional expertise and technical capabilities, the executive branch is better positioned to evaluate completed policies, review and

assess their effectiveness, and, where necessary, reformulate existing policies or withdraw certain measures altogether.

The executive authority constitutes the most significant institutional actor in the public policy-making process. In most cases, it initiates and adopts new policies within the scope of the powers legally entrusted to it. The executive branch is also responsible for supervising policy implementation and holding subordinate officials accountable for their execution. Although its role is particularly prominent in developed countries, this does not imply the absence or marginalization of the legislative authority. Rather, a balance between the two branches generally persists. The legislative branch retains an essential oversight function through monitoring executive actions and evaluating the implementation of public policies during and after the implementation phase, a role that remains of considerable importance and is taken into account by the executive authority.

In contrast, political systems in developing countries, particularly in many African states, are characterized by the dominance of the executive branch in both the formulation and implementation of public policies. This situation results primarily from the concentration of power in the hands of the political ruler and the personalized exercise of authority, which has generated a significant overlap among the three branches of government in favor of the executive. The individualized exercise of power and the manner in which public policy is conducted often undermine governmental legitimacy, weaken institutional stability, and contribute to the failure of public policies, as such policies become subject to continual change and lack relative consistency. One of the defining characteristics of successful public policies is their capacity for continuity and relative stability.

Moreover, the nature of interbranch relations under such conditions, characterized by institutional overlap, ambiguity in the exercise of functions and responsibilities, and the absence of genuine institutional independence, constitutes a fundamental cause of policy failure. This condition represents a dominant feature of many political systems in developing countries and reflects their inability to establish balanced, stable, and relatively consistent public policies. Such shortcomings are evident in the distributive, regulatory, symbolic, and extractive performance of the political system. Furthermore, authoritarian

tendencies, the monopolization of the political process, and the marginalization of representative and parliamentary institutions in policy formulation reveal the ruling elite's limited awareness of, and engagement with, the surrounding social environment. This often leads to tension and conflict between the ruling elite and society, thereby constituting another indicator of public policy failure in such states.

7.3 The Administrative Apparatus

The administrative apparatus consists of administrative organizations, public institutions, and governmental bureaucratic bodies that employ large numbers of civil servants possessing the expertise and professional skills necessary to perform public service functions and promote the public interest within society. The primary function of these executive bodies is to implement public policy, laws, regulations, and legal provisions. Most newly enacted public legislation cannot be effectively applied without the issuance of detailed and explanatory executive regulations clarifying the content and mechanisms of public policy implementation. Consequently, administrative bodies actively participate in the development of public policy.

The contribution of administrative institutions, or governmental bureaucracies, to the formulation of public policies constitutes a genuinely controversial issue that has generated extensive scholarly debate.

7.4 Mechanisms of Administrative Intervention in Public Policy

The administrative apparatus contributes to public policy making through two principal mechanisms: direct intervention and indirect intervention.

7.4.1 Direct Intervention

The administrative apparatus participates directly in public policy making through the following activities:

- Proposing specific policies or draft legislation to the legislative authority, thereby playing a clear role in the proposal and formulation of state public policy.
- Requesting the amendment or modification of public policies based on the information it receives and analyzes concerning citizens' reactions to policy orientations and the extent of their success or failure in achieving intended objectives. Collectively, this process constitutes what is commonly referred to as *feedback*.

7.4.2 Indirect Intervention

The administrative apparatus also contributes indirectly to public policy making through the following means:

- Influencing public policy during the formulation stage due to its possession and effective monopoly over information related to public issues. This position makes the administrative apparatus the primary and most important source of information, which it often presents selectively in ways that align with its preferred policy options.
- Influencing public policy during the implementation stage. It is universally acknowledged that the administrative apparatus is the sole body entrusted with implementing public policies. During this process, it effectively shapes policy outcomes, as implementation procedures and administrative practices become the practical determinants of the meaning, substance, and applied interpretation of the adopted policy.

7.5 Reasons for Administrative Intervention in Public Policy

Several factors explain and determine the role of the administrative apparatus in public policy formation, including the following:

7.5.1 Initiative

Because the administrative apparatus serves as a connecting link between the public and the legislative council, it occupies a more advantageous position in assessing the appropriateness and effectiveness of adopted public policies. In many cases, proposals for modifying or even replacing existing policies originate from the administrative apparatus itself.

7.5.2 Advisory Services

Certain public policies, due to their confidential nature, require restricted consideration within limited circles of the legislative and executive branches. This situation grants members of the administrative apparatus greater opportunities to intervene in policy formulation through the provision of specialized technical consultations. Legislative councils also frequently establish advisory committees, often composed of technical experts and specialists working within the administrative apparatus, to propose ideas and recommendations concerning such policies, making these committees a primary source of policy-related expertise and conceptual development.

7.5.3 Expansion of Public Expenditures and Public Employment

The increasing scale of public expenditures accompanied by the expansion of employment within public service sectors reflects the growing role of the state and government intervention across multiple domains in pursuit of the public interest. As a consequence, public sector administrators have evolved into influential political actors capable of exerting significant influence on political decision makers and public policy formulation.

7.5.4 Increasing Complexity of Societal Problems

The growing complexity of societal issues has made cooperation with administrative institutions indispensable for obtaining the technical and administrative expertise necessary to formulate policies that are more effective and more closely aligned with social realities. In many cases, administrative bodies are even delegated specific powers to propose solutions and procedures aimed at addressing complex societal problems.

7.5.5 Discretionary Authority

Administrative bodies are sometimes granted discretionary authority enabling them to prepare executive regulations related to adopted public policies and necessary for their implementation. Such regulations frequently exert substantial influence on both the substance of public policy and the methods through which it is implemented.

7.5.6 Informal Actors

Although the state was once considered the sole and principal actor in the public policy-making process, particularly under dictatorial and socialist systems characterized by centralized administration, numerous informal actors have gradually emerged alongside formal institutions. This transformation accompanied the global evolution toward modern political systems founded on democratic principles, which introduced contemporary concepts, most notably participation as a core pillar of democracy. Such developments opened avenues for non-official participants to contribute to public policy-making.

Consequently, informal actors have become increasingly diverse, including political parties, pressure groups, citizens, public opinion, and others. Each actor differs in its mode of participation and the mechanisms employed in influencing, shaping, or directing public policy. The principal informal actors include political parties, interest groups, public opinion, military institutions, and international conditions and circumstances.

7.5.7 Political Parties

Political parties are popular organizations that mobilize public opinion and seek to attain political power within the state through legitimate means and procedures. Democracy, therefore, is fundamentally based on political pluralism and on the existence of effective guarantees for the exercise of public freedoms, particularly the protection of opposition rights. It also relies on a culture of tolerance reflected in mutual respect for differing viewpoints.

7.6 Advantages of Political Party Pluralism

- Providing a channel through which public opinion can express its diverse orientations and perspectives.
- Contributing to the dynamism and vitality of political life within the state.
- Limiting governmental authoritarianism and preventing abuse of power.
- Producing capable political leaders and representatives.

In general, political parties possess several characteristics and functions that may be summarized as follows:

- A political party constitutes a relatively stable, if not permanent, organization that mobilizes individuals interested in participating in and exercising political authority at both central and local levels.
- Political parties continuously seek to attain or participate in political power. Once a party assumes government authority, it occupies the position of political decision-maker and contributes directly to the formulation of public policies, either through the executive branch by forming the government or through participation in the legislative authority. If it fails to gain power, its participation generally takes the form of organized political opposition.
- Political parties function as mechanisms for leadership development and facilitate governmental outreach across different regions and populations. In this regard, they serve as an important interface between government institutions and society.
- Political parties maintain a permanent local presence, even when symbolic, and continuously seek public support through various mechanisms.
- The roles of political parties and their degree of influence on public policy vary according to the type of political system and the structural characteristics of the prevailing party system within society.

Similarly, the influence of political parties differs depending on the nature of political systems, which generally reflect the institutional structure of party organization. Three common party systems may be identified:

- **Multiparty system:** Allows the existence of several political parties operating simultaneously.
- **Two-party system:** Characterized by the dominance of two major parties under which other parties are incorporated or marginalized.
- **Single-party system:** Permits only one ruling party while excluding the formation of competing parties.

In general, political parties perform two fundamental functions within society:

- Expressing public concerns and societal demands while seeking their realization through governmental action by exerting influence and pressure on formal public policy-makers.
- Communicating governmental policies, decisions, and preferences to citizens while mobilizing support or opposition toward them, either through endorsement and advocacy or through resistance and rejection.

Discussion of the role of political parties in public policy also necessitates distinguishing them from interest groups and pressure groups, particularly regarding their respective functions and influence in policy processes. This distinction can be summarized as follows:⁶⁰

- Political parties articulate broad societal interests and demands related to economic welfare and public concerns. However, their ultimate objective is to attain positions of political authority and exercise governmental power in the future. In contrast, interest groups do not seek political office; rather, they aim to influence policies so that these become responsive to their specific interests and demands.
- During the process of aggregating and expressing social demands, political parties may find it necessary to filter, prioritize, or exclude certain claims while emphasizing broader and more inclusive issues in order to develop carefully designed alternatives that facilitate access to power and governance. By contrast, interest groups articulate and aggregate demands within highly specialized and narrowly defined frameworks characterized by precision and specificity. Their objective is not to gain governmental

60- Amani Kandil, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

authority but rather to influence public policy decision-makers and establish proximity to them in ways that serve their relatively limited interests and secure institutional support.

Membership within parliament plays a significant role in the legislative process and in public policymaking according to partisan positions, whereby the political party that controls parliamentary chambers or holds executive leadership largely determines the nature and direction of public policy.⁶¹

Political parties in modern societies perform the function of transforming societal demands into public policies. The ability of these parties to fulfill this role is influenced by the number and strength of political parties operating within the political arena, as well as by the extent of their influence over legislative activities related to public policymaking, as observed in countries such as France and Germany, which are characterized by multiparty systems. Such configurations may generate instability in governmental activity, which, in turn, is reflected in public policy outcomes.

In political systems dominated by two major parties, the pursuit of broad electoral support compels both parties to adopt policies with extensive popular backing and to avoid alienating influential groups whose support affects policy orientation. Conversely, multiparty systems often exhibit a tendency toward narrow representation of specific interest configurations, as seen in France. In some single-party systems, however, the ruling party constitutes the primary and dominant force in the public policymaking process. Under these circumstances, the party effectively functions as a governmental institution that adopts and promotes the government's ideology and policy orientation, while often prohibiting the existence of rival parties, as was historically the case in Iraq and Syria.

This perspective was reinforced by Arend Lijphart, who classified party systems according to their characteristics and their degree of influence on public policy into the following categories:⁶²

- **Consensual Party System:** This system reflects the existence of multiple parties that secure the majority of seats in the legislative body while maintaining relatively convergent positions regarding public policies. Such

61- James Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 65–66.

62- Gabriel Almond *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 213–215.

a configuration generates a reasonable level of mutual trust toward the political system itself. Examples include United States, United Kingdom, and Austria.

- **Conflictual Party System:** This type refers to legislative bodies dominated by multiple parties that hold divergent positions regarding both public policy and the political system, as observed in Italy, Germany, and France.
- **Conciliatory Party System:** This model combines characteristics of both consensual and conflictual systems simultaneously, as illustrated by cases such as Netherlands and Belgium.

7.7 Interest Groups:

The concept of interest groups is closely associated with governmental processes and with influencing decision-makers and public policymakers. It implies the existence of a group of individuals sharing common characteristics and interests, whose collective organization leads them to adopt unified positions or orientations regarding particular issues based on their perceived stake in those matters. This shared interest distinguishes them from other societal groups and shapes their collective behavior.

Burdeau defined interest groups as any group that intervenes with public authorities, regardless of the form or level of such intervention, for the purpose of achieving its interests or protecting them from potential encroachments by state authority.

Similarly, Hassan Abshir Al-Tayeb defined interest groups as groups or categories sharing common interests or orientations, often united by a common profession or activity, which seek to influence public policies in order to protect their interests or reinforce their preferences, without assuming direct responsibilities in governance.

Given the multiplicity and diversity of groups within a single society, political decision-makers and public policymakers are compelled to engage in balancing, reconciling, and even bargaining among competing interests in order to reach solutions that satisfy various stakeholders while promoting the public interest. Moreover, the influence exerted by these groups on public policymaking depends largely on their relative power and the mechanisms through which they operate.

Pressure groups influence the public policymaking process through several mechanisms, including:

- Possessing specialized expertise concerning particular issues and transforming societal demands into significant policy matters that warrant the attention of public policymakers.
- Pressure groups frequently provide public policy makers with technical and professional information while presenting their positions in support of or opposition to specific policy issues.
- Pressure groups possess the financial resources and essential means necessary to influence policy processes. Their financial contributions may, in some cases, contribute to the re-election of parliamentary members who receive their support, while these groups simultaneously seek to protect the interests and activities of their members.⁶³
- Certain pressure groups employ strategies of persuasion, incentives, and influence to gain the support of politicians and influential actors through organizing receptions, social events, and offering various benefits, in addition to financing electoral campaigns in support of candidates who are sympathetic to their demands and aligned with their positions. Nevertheless, the influence exerted by pressure groups over policies and decisions depends on several factors, including the number of individuals affiliated with these groups, the diversity of their financial resources, the cohesion among members, the competence of their leadership, their social standing, the presence or absence of opposing groups, the attitudes of public officials toward their demands, and the broader pattern of decision-making within the political system.

7.7.1 Methods Employed by Interest Groups

When seeking to influence public policies, interest groups rely on a variety of mechanisms and strategies, which may be summarized as follows:

- Negotiation and bargaining with political authorities in order to achieve favorable outcomes.

63- Fahmi Khalifa Al-Fahdawi, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

- Applying pressure through intensified advocacy campaigns, directing criticism toward political authorities, and mobilizing public opinion to influence decision makers.
- Influencing the executive authority and the administrative apparatus of the state through:
 - Providing accurate and detailed information, thereby positioning themselves as influential actors in the formulation of public policies.
 - Securing representation within administrative councils and technical committees, which enables them to contribute to the development of practical alternatives for addressing public problems.
- Mobilizing strikes and demonstrations as instruments of influence, with the use of such methods generally depending on prevailing political conditions as well as the strength, resources, and capabilities of the group itself.

7.7.2 Public Opinion

Dr. Jamal Mujahid defines public opinion as the prevailing viewpoint shared among a group of individuals regarding an issue or problem affecting their interests or values, reached through discussion and the exchange of differing opinions and ideas, with the objective of influencing decision makers either to support or oppose a particular decision. Similarly, McDougall defines public opinion as the expression of a controversial issue that attracts the interest of a specific group.⁶⁴

The psychologist Floyd Allport defines public opinion as *“the collective expression of a large number of individuals regarding a particular situation, where these individuals may be mobilized to express their positions, whether in support of or opposition to a specific issue, person, or proposal of broad significance. Their number and continuity are sufficiently substantial to exert a direct influence on public consciousness concerning the matter under consideration.”*⁶⁵

Claridge King defines public opinion as *“the judgment reached by the community concerning an important issue following public and comprehensive discussion.”* Likewise, James Bryce, in his work *Modern Democracies*,

64- Macdougall Curtis, *Understanding Public Opinion*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952, p. 29.

65- Hosni Abdelkader, “Public Opinion,” *Journal of the Faculty of Arts*, Cairo University, May Issue, 1955, p. 51.

describes public opinion as “*a term used to express the aggregate of views held by people regarding issues affecting both their public and private interests.*”⁶⁶

Public opinion and public policy maintain a continuous and dynamic relationship based on mutual influence. This relationship becomes particularly evident when public policy is viewed as a governmental program of action aimed at achieving the public interest as an embodiment of popular will. In this context, public opinion becomes simultaneously both a means for public policy and an objective it seeks to achieve.

Since public policy fundamentally relies on individuals and their capacity to express their aspirations, orientations, and preferences, whether in policy formulation, implementation, or evaluation, public opinion acquires a substantial and effective influence over policy processes.

7.7.3 The Influence of Public Opinion on Public Policy and Its Forms

The political significance of public opinion emerges through its influence on public policy. This influence may occur through the generation of public pressure on governments to adopt specific positions regarding particular issues, support certain political leaders, or direct policymakers’ attention toward issues receiving broad public interest. The influence of public opinion on public policy takes various forms, and its importance becomes more pronounced under specific circumstances.

A. Forms of Public Opinion Influence on Public Policy

The influence of public opinion on public policy can be classified into three principal dimensions: influence on the political agenda, influence on the general policy framework, and influence on political choices.

- **Influence on the Political Agenda:** Public opinion may encourage policymakers to prioritize particular issues by shaping their perception of the importance of those issues. Through this mechanism, public opinion contributes to setting the policy agenda by influencing the prioritization of issues within the policymaking process.
- **Influence on the General Policy Framework:** Public opinion plays a role in establishing constraints on the ability of policymakers to select certain alternatives. In other words, it delineates the range of acceptable policy

66- Abdel Latif Hamza, *Introduction to Journalistic Editing*, 2nd ed., Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1958, p. 19.

options available to decision makers. Should policymakers exceed these socially accepted boundaries, they may encounter significant public opposition and resistance.

- **Influence on Political Choices:** Public opinion can affect the nature of the political options adopted by policymakers by influencing the selection and orientation of policies. In practice, public opinion often plays a stronger role in preventing the adoption of specific policies than in promoting alternative policy choices.

B. Conditions Under Which Public Opinion Influences Public Policy

Public opinion exerts greater influence on public policy and governmental decisions under particular circumstances. Its impact becomes especially significant when there is a clear majority supporting a given position, referred to as the *comprehensive public opinion* situation. Similarly, influence intensifies when the concerned group or constituency is strong, well organized, and institutionally interconnected with other groups and social actors within the state, a condition referred to as *partial public opinion*.

The influence of public opinion becomes more pronounced in situations where governments perceive that disregarding it may generate public dissatisfaction and potentially lead to hostile attitudes toward the regime, thereby undermining both governmental legitimacy and the legitimacy of the public policies it seeks to formulate. This perspective is consistent with Key's definition of public opinion as "*the expression of attitudes to which governments consider it prudent to respond.*"

Despite its significance, several factors limit the influence of public opinion on public policy. The most important of these factors can be outlined as follows:

- **Nature of the Political System:** The degree to which public opinion influences public policy is largely determined by the nature of the political system. In democratic systems, public opinion is freely expressed through mass communication channels, allowing it to exert greater pressure on political actors responsible for policy formulation. Conversely, in non-democratic systems, opportunities for expressing public opinion are considerably restricted due to the monopolization of mass media by dominant political actors, who employ these channels as instruments of mobilization and control.

- **Difficulty of Translating Public Opinion into Public Policy:** This challenge stems from the difficulty of accurately identifying public opinion regarding specific issues. In many cases, it may also prove difficult to determine public attitudes at the appropriate time and in a suitable manner, thereby diminishing their relevance for political decision-makers and policy actors responsible for designing public policies.
- **Limited Access to Accurate Information Regarding Public Opinion Trends:** Several factors contribute to this limitation, including:
 - Bias within the press and media institutions toward specific actors or authorities, resulting in the concealment or distortion of factual realities.
 - Continuous efforts by political actors such as political parties and interest groups to present themselves as representatives of the people or the majority.
 - Information concerning public opinion trends often does not reach political actors responsible for policy formulation and decision-making directly; instead, it is transmitted indirectly through communication channels governed by specific procedures and institutional rules. When applied rigidly, these mechanisms may obstruct the flow of independent and influential public opinion.

D. Nature of the Issues Under Discussion

The nature of the issues raised for public debate plays a decisive role in determining the extent of public opinion influence in the policy-making process. Certain issues possess high levels of importance and sensitivity because they relate to fundamental societal concerns. Such issues can rapidly and directly reshape public opinion orientations.

By contrast, issues considered less significant, such as theft or embezzlement cases, may not generate immediate or substantial effects. Nevertheless, the growing aspirations and expectations of citizens, which public opinion seeks to express and reflect, collectively constitute an important source of pressure on governments to formulate new public policies capable of responding to these demands, aspirations, and societal expectations.

E. Absence or Weakness of Preliminary Studies on Major Public Issues

The lack of prior studies concerning major public issues, crisis anticipation, and discussion of potential solutions significantly limits the effectiveness of public

opinion in shaping policy. Such studies facilitate a deeper understanding of public reactions and prevailing opinion trends regarding these issues. These responses and collective orientations constitute a fundamental support mechanism upon which political actors rely in the formulation and development of public policy.

7.8 Mass Media:

Mass media influence policymakers and decision-makers through several mechanisms, including the following:

- Media institutions exert considerable influence during the problem-emergence stage through news coverage and investigative reporting. By highlighting ongoing issues, they draw the attention of both the public and policymakers to emerging policy concerns.
- They provide policymakers and decision-makers with information essential for understanding issues and supporting the policymaking process.
- Following policy formulation and decision adoption, media attention may shift from the information itself to the manner in which it has been utilized. In this context, the media can hold policymakers and decision-makers accountable for the consequences and outcomes of their actions, thereby contributing to greater transparency in political and administrative practices.
- Mass media create opportunities for participation in public policymaking and decision-making processes by presenting information, alternative solutions, divergent viewpoints, and by articulating the interests of multiple stakeholders.
- Through the examination and critical assessment of public policies and decisions, media institutions contribute to improving policy quality by promoting participation on the one hand and providing governments and other institutions with necessary information on the other. This role enables them to participate in identifying problems, diagnosing their causes, evaluating strategic alternatives, and, where necessary, encouraging the reassessment, modification, or abandonment of existing policies and decisions.

- In many instances, policy implementation encounters obstacles due to resistance from bureaucratic actors or influential interest holders. Under such circumstances, the media may play an important role in exposing these forms of resistance.
- Mass media also contribute to evaluating policy outcomes and assessing the potential consequences of decisions. They help clarify policy objectives, assess efficiency and effectiveness, convey public reactions and stakeholder satisfaction levels, and consequently influence whether existing policies and decisions are maintained, revised, or abandoned.⁶⁷
- Continuous oversight exercised by widely disseminated media outlets places policymakers under constant scrutiny. Public officials recognize that nearly everything they say or do, even within limited institutional settings, may become publicly accessible through media channels. Consequently, they tend to avoid actions or decisions that could generate undesirable public exposure.
- Media institutions disseminate information and conduct independent analyses concerning public policy issues, thereby enhancing public awareness and civic understanding.
- They provide platforms for expressing opinions and proposals, contributing to the formation and orientation of public opinion regarding specific societal issues.⁶⁸

7.9 External Forces:

The actors influencing public policymaking are not confined solely to the internal actors discussed above, whether formal or informal. Their scope may extend to include external actors such as international organizations, including United Nations, United Nations Security Council, and World Bank, as well as regional and international unions such as European Union and League of Arab States.

With the emergence of globalization, increasing attention has been directed toward new issues reflecting global transformations, resulting in the growing

67- Said Boumaiza, "Problems of the Role of Media in Policy Formulation and Decision-Making," *Algerian Journal of Communication*, No. 1, 2010, pp. 16–17.

68- Amer Hassan Fayyad and Ali Abbas Murad, *Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Political Thought*, Benghazi, Libya: National Book House, 2004, p. 118.

predominance of external factors over domestic considerations. Consequently, several policy areas have acquired a global character, including environmental issues and human rights. This development has led to the emergence of what may be termed *global public policies*, compelling states to adopt policy orientations toward such issues in response to external determinants, including international and regional organizations as well as multinational corporations. The international frameworks established by global organizations have increasingly become sources of normative and moral pressure on states. Furthermore, these frameworks are often linked to the provision of technical assistance and financial support, thereby enhancing their influence over national public policymaking processes.⁶⁹

Section Five: Public Policy Analysis

1. Definition of Public Policy Analysis

Bentil defines public policy analysis as an approach that assists decision makers in selecting the most appropriate alternative for addressing a public issue of significance through the application of sound scientific methods and rational procedures.

From another perspective, Dr. Ahmed Rashid defines public policy analysis as one of the characteristics of the modern administrative organization of the state apparatus, responsible for providing advisory support through a series of activities designed to assist leadership and implementation decisions, thereby enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in decision-making processes.

According to Neil Gilbert, public policy analysis represents a comprehensive and integrated concept referring to purposeful inquiry aimed at analyzing public policy alternatives capable of achieving the highest possible level of desired objectives within the constraints and challenges imposed by the surrounding environment.

Poister H. T. defines public policy analysis as the examination of the characteristics and determinants of public policy and its related programs, with particular emphasis on the relationship between policy content and program structures, together with the implications, effects, and outcomes arising from such relationships.

69- Sami Al-Khazandar and Tarek Al-Asaad, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–20.

William Dunn conceptualizes public policy analysis as an applied social science that employs scientific methods of investigation and discussion to generate or transform policy-relevant information that can be utilized within political settings to address public policy problems.

Mohamed Mahmoud Rabie and Ismail Sabri Muqallid define public policy analysis as a field concerned with focusing on solvable problems, emphasizing implementation and knowledge utilization, addressing issues related to the termination strategies of programs and public policies, and relying on technical methods such as operations research.

Similarly, El-Sayed Yassin argues that public policy analysis, in its precise sense, refers to “the clarification of the effects that may result from selecting one solution or multiple alternatives, whether this occurs through ex ante or ex post analysis.”

This implies that public policy analysis, in its prospective dimension, predicts the expected consequences of policies through ex ante analysis, whereas ex post analysis seeks to identify and evaluate the actual effects resulting from policy implementation.

Accordingly, public policy analysis may be understood as a systematic and technical process based on the application of scientific methods, analytical tools, and rigorous approaches to study and examine relevant information with the objective of identifying the most effective solutions to the problems and issues confronting societies, governments, and states in a rational manner, while minimizing costs and achieving results within the shortest possible time frame.

2. Importance of Public Policy Analysis⁷⁰

- The applied nature of public policy analysis as a practical scientific discipline, combined with the diversity of methodological approaches and analytical concepts adopted by analysts as intellectual frameworks for understanding and examining public issues, has increased the significance attributed to the quantity and quality of information available regarding public problems. Such information serves as the basis for formulating rational recommendations that ultimately contribute to resolving public issues.

70- Maha Yahia Mohammed Ahmed Hussein, “Public Policy Analysis: Development and Methodology,” *Journal of the Faculty of Commerce for Scientific Research*, Vol. 55, No. 1, January 2018, pp. 24–25.

- Public policy analysis establishes a connection between empirical facts and social values when formulating recommendations for policy makers, thereby helping overcome obstacles that may hinder the effectiveness of public policies in addressing societal problems.
- It facilitates the prediction of future developments and the formulation of scientific recommendations that can be practically implemented to address real-world problems.
- Public policy analysis maintains a close relationship with prevailing social values and normative considerations.

3. Objectives of Public Policy Analysis

- Public policy analysis seeks to achieve several key objectives, which may be summarized as follows:
- Establishing theoretical models based on a scientific approach associated with the behavioral perspective while incorporating value judgments in a manner that contributes to the development of analytical concepts as intellectual tools for examining existing or anticipated societal problems and generating the most appropriate solutions.
- Enhancing the public policy-making process through the development of conceptual and practical frameworks aimed at improving the design and effectiveness of policy formulation processes.
- Improving professional capacities related to the implementation and execution of public policy processes, while strengthening available capabilities for evaluating policy outcomes and measuring their impacts.
- Seeking to describe and understand governmental actions, as well as areas of governmental inaction, in addressing public issues and societal problems.
- Explaining observed developments by identifying the determinants and causes underlying governmental choices, in addition to clarifying the influence of cultural, social, political, and economic factors, as well as the role of bureaucratic institutions, within the policy-making process.
- Predicting the outcomes and impacts of public policies by identifying the changes and transformations generated by policies in relation to existing public problems, while also forecasting their expected effects on the social,

economic, political, and cultural institutions and conditions for which such policies were originally formulated.

4. Characteristics of Public Policy Analysis⁷¹

- Public policy analysis possesses several defining characteristics, including the following:
- It constitutes a scientific field concerned with societal issues and public problems at the macro level, aiming to formulate appropriate solutions that correspond with the cultural and environmental determinants shaping the uniqueness of a given society.
- It adopts a future-oriented perspective regarding the identification of strategic options and relies on scientific methods in processing information, thereby integrating scientific reasoning with creative foresight to develop future policy scenarios and strategic alternatives.
- It addresses existing problems and current policies with the objective of evaluating their effectiveness and efficiency, verifying implementation performance, and correcting deviations arising during execution.
- It employs research methods and analytical techniques in examining problems and evaluating policy alternatives, while also utilizing quantitative, statistical, and mathematical applications for data collection, analysis, and indicator extraction.
- It possesses a value-oriented dimension that forms the fundamental basis upon which policies are constructed, particularly through the incorporation of societal values.
- It incorporates political capacities and requirements by analyzing political variables, their value dimensions, meanings, and effects, as well as assessing their implications when selecting among available alternatives.
- It has a normative orientation that establishes criteria and principles for comparison and evaluation among alternative choices through determining priorities, considerations, significance, and relative weight.
- It is characterized by creativity, innovation, and experimentation based on assessments of available data and the effective use of retrieved information.

71- Maha Yahia Mohammed Ahmed Hussein, *Ibid.*, p. 29.

- It seeks to identify the most appropriate alternatives by relying on scientific research methods and analytical procedures. In this regard, it benefits from descriptive approaches to understand the facts related to a problem, explain and interpret its dimensions, and produce recommendations that contribute to problem solving through the application of scientific approaches aimed at achieving political satisfaction and policy effectiveness.
- Public policy analysis depends on scientific research methods and procedures to formulate recommendations necessary for policy making, implementation, and evaluation.
- It serves as a mechanism for transforming information into knowledge that supports policymakers and enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of public policies. This is achieved through the utilization of information related to policy content and all stages of the policy cycle, followed by systematic analysis to generate proposals and recommendations that improve policy performance.
- From these characteristics, it can be concluded that public policy analysis represents a scientific instrument aimed at improving the policy-making process and its implementing institutions through rigorous academic study and specialized analysis in addressing societal problems.

5. Stages of the Public Policy Analysis Process⁷²

Stage One: Problem Identification

This stage aims to achieve a clear and accurate understanding of the problem by identifying its root and secondary causes, the factors influencing it, and the constraints and obstacles contributing to its emergence, such as resource limitations, budgetary restrictions, and related factors. In addition, it requires identifying the actors involved in public policy-making and determining the principal factors influencing decision-making processes.

At this stage, a number of key questions should be raised to define and conceptualize the problem:

- What is the nature of the problem?
- What driving forces contributed to the emergence of the problem?

⁷² Walker, Warren E, "Policy Analysis: A Systematic Approach to Supporting Policymaking in the Public Sector". Journal of Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis, 9,2000,p 11–27.

- What boundaries distinguish the core problem from its resulting symptoms and manifestations?

It is essential at this stage to define the problem precisely and rationally, focusing on its substantive essence without prematurely moving toward potential solutions.

Stage Two: Information Integration

Information constitutes the backbone of every stage of public policy analysis. It contributes to enhancing understanding of the nature of the problem and serves as the primary foundation for inference, analysis, evaluation, and the selection of the most appropriate policy alternative.

For information to be effective, it should possess the following characteristics:

- **Objectivity and accuracy:** Information should remain free from personal biases and subjective considerations.
- **Comprehensiveness:** This does not necessarily imply the accumulation of excessive or unjustified amounts of information; rather, it requires the availability of all information directly related to the nature of the problem, including factors affecting and affected by it.
- **Relevance:** Information should be meaningful and influential in identifying the dimensions of the problem and determining the most suitable alternatives for addressing it.

Stage Three: Exploration of Possible Alternatives

This stage requires a high level of understanding, conceptualization, analytical imagination, and flexibility in interpreting information and identifying all feasible alternatives capable of addressing the problem. It involves examining all implementable options while assessing them according to several criteria, including:

- Determining the value and implementation cost of the preferred alternative under actual conditions.
- Evaluating the extent to which the selected alternative corresponds with available resources in achieving the intended objectives.
- Defining the time frame required to accomplish the expected outcomes associated with implementing the chosen alternative.

Stage Four: Evaluation of Alternatives

At this stage, criteria are established to compare available options and prioritize them in order to facilitate the selection of the most suitable alternative.

The principal criteria that may guide this evaluation include:

- Implementation costs.
- Time requirements.
- Ease of implementation.
- Expected benefits.
- The extent to which the alternative provides a comprehensive or partial solution to the problem.

Stage Five: Selection of the Optimal Alternative

At this stage, the alternative that maximizes the desired values is selected, namely the option most capable of resolving the problem while fulfilling the required conditions. The chosen alternative should also be feasible in light of available material and human resources, environmental conditions, and temporal requirements.

Stage Six: Implementation of the Selected Alternative

It is preferable to implement the selected alternative initially on a pilot or partial basis in order to verify the expected outcomes and introduce any necessary adjustments before proceeding to full-scale implementation.

Stage Seven: Monitoring and Follow-up of Implementation

A comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluating all implementation stages must be established through the effective use of feedback mechanisms. This enables the introduction of necessary modifications in response to various environmental changes surrounding the implementation process, thereby improving the design of public policy analysis. At this stage, implementation may be suspended and an alternative option reconsidered if the selected policy proves ineffective or fails during execution.

6. Levels of Public Policy Analysis⁷³

Level One: Monitoring and Analysis of Constitutional and Legal Frameworks

This level focuses on analyzing the constitutional and legal frameworks governing public policymaking, as these frameworks constitute the institutional,

⁷³ Birkland, Thomas, *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2019, p 89.

legal, and procedural rules regulating public policy from the formulation stage to evaluation. By assessing the performance of these frameworks and comparing them with actual practice, it becomes possible to identify areas of convergence or divergence between the legal context and the practical reality governing policy implementation.

Accordingly, this level clarifies the set of legal, institutional, and procedural mechanisms controlling public policymaking while examining the legal and institutional environment through a comparative approach between actual conditions and desired outcomes. It also seeks to identify instances of deviation, inconsistency, and incompatibility and to propose corrective measures within the scope allowed by existing legal and institutional frameworks.

Level Two: Monitoring, Analysis, and Evaluation of the Actual Roles of Key Actors

At this level, the roles of policy actors are analyzed, including government institutions, parliament, and other stakeholders participating in public policymaking. For example, the role of government is examined according to the legal frameworks authorizing its participation in policy formulation. Subsequently, the institutional structures upon which such participation is based are analyzed, followed by an assessment of government effectiveness as a principal actor in public policymaking.

Thereafter, the outcomes generated by legal and institutional frameworks are compared with actual practice in order to determine the extent to which requirements, motivations, and causal factors correspond with the formulation and implementation of public policies as originally planned.

Level Three: Analysis of Public Policy Content

This level focuses on examining the objectives and priorities of the public policy under analysis prior to its implementation. It aims to assess the substantive dimensions of the policy and determine the extent to which its content aligns with intended goals and strategic priorities.

Level Four: Analysis of Public Policy Implementation

This level examines the nature of the institutions responsible for policy implementation, including implementation mechanisms, operational procedures, and the characteristics of the implementing bodies.

Level Five: Evaluation of Public Policy Outcomes

At this level, public policy outcomes are analyzed in light of previously defined objectives. The policy analyst identifies the factors contributing to policy success and assesses the extent of alignment between stated objectives and actual outcomes. This analysis further highlights areas of consistency and coherence, as well as instances of contradiction and divergence between policy intentions and achieved results.

7. Areas of Application of Public Policy Analysis⁷⁴

7.1 Identification of Strategic Options

Public policy analysis contributes significantly to the exploration and evaluation of strategic alternatives. Strategic options refer to attempts to formulate a future-oriented vision that aligns with existing realities, including the identity of the state and its policies, which reflect its governing philosophy and ideological orientation. This process also involves efforts to identify multiple possible future scenarios. Various analytical methods are employed for this purpose, which will be discussed in subsequent sections.

This effort aimed at identifying strategic options seeks to provide convincing answers to several critical questions, including:

- What future objectives does the state seek to achieve?
- What systems and mechanisms can be employed to attain these objectives?
- What are the feasible priorities?
- What are the expected costs and anticipated benefits associated with the selected option or set of options?
- What environmental constraints or capability limitations may impede the implementation of certain strategic alternatives?

7.2 Planning, Programming, and Budget Preparation

Planning refers to the process of formulating a future vision based on societal needs, environmental conditions, and values regarded by society as essential elements requiring consolidation and development.

Accordingly, effective planning should possess four fundamental characteristics:

- **Realism:** Planning should be grounded in the social structure and based on actual needs and available resources that can be mobilized to satisfy these requirements.

⁷⁴ A. Lijphart, Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method, American Political Science Review 65 ,1971,p 93.

- **Comprehensiveness:** Planning should encompass all direct and indirect elements relevant to the issue under consideration.
- **Flexibility:** Planning must accommodate changes and emerging developments within the environment and provide alternative responses where necessary.
- **Integration and Coordination:** The efficiency and effectiveness of plan implementation depend upon continuous interaction among all organizational units within a framework characterized by integration, cooperation, and coordination.

It is important to note that these characteristics constitute the essential attributes of efficient and effective planning and simultaneously represent key areas for research, investigation, analysis, and the identification of feasible alternatives within the field of public policy analysis.

In this context, public policy analysis performs several important functions, including:

- Conducting analytical assessments to compare the costs and benefits of proposed programs.
- Determining the estimated costs required for implementing agreed programs through integrated relationships linking planning, programming, and budget preparation, as reflected in systems based on planning, programming, and budgeting approaches.
- Serving as a methodological instrument for reallocating financial appropriations according to implementation stages, available capabilities, and changes in environmental conditions.

7.3 Enhancing Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness

Improving the operational efficiency and effectiveness of any productive or service-oriented institution involves reducing expenditures and operational costs to the greatest possible extent while ensuring that production or service delivery processes continue to maintain the highest standards of quality and performance. Achieving this positive balance between efficiency and effectiveness in the operation of service and production institutions constitutes an area in which public policy analysis plays a significant role through its use of quantitative and analytical methods such as linear programming, operations research, and related analytical techniques.

These quantitative methods function as research and analytical tools designed to identify the most suitable alternatives capable of simultaneously achieving both efficiency and effectiveness.

7.4 Monitoring, Review, and Program Evaluation

Programs under implementation are subject to continuous monitoring and review with the objective of identifying strengths, detecting weaknesses and deviations, and introducing necessary modifications, whether through elimination, adjustment, replacement, or the redistribution of resources among programs.

Among the methodological approaches employed in public policy analysis within this context are cost-benefit analysis, operations research, systems analysis, and program monitoring and review techniques.

8. Approaches to Public Policy Analysis

8.1 Political Analysis Approaches

8.1.1 Approaches to the Analysis of Policy Determinants (*Traditional Approaches*)

The fundamental determinants of public policy can be examined through several analytical approaches, each representing an important perspective within this field. Every approach contributes to understanding public policy determinants while possessing distinctive analytical features, as outlined below.

8.1.2 The Group Approach⁷⁵

Smith defines a group as a unit composed of a relatively small number of individuals who share similar or common social awareness and adopt a unified position toward their surrounding environment. Floyd, on the other hand, emphasized the unity of values and norms that guide the behavior of group members in their interactions with others and with their environment.

According to this approach, public policy represents the outcome of group struggles or the equilibrium achieved among groups through conflict and interaction within a particular context in order to protect interests or express collective preferences. This perspective assumes that interaction and competition among groups constitute the foundation of political life. Consequently, whenever groups change in composition, orientation, or position, public policy changes accordingly.

⁷⁵ Rocky Mountain J. Math, APPROACH GROUPS, JOURNAL OF MATHEMATICS, Volume 30, Number 3, Fall 2000, p 1089.

From this perspective, public policy is viewed as a state of equilibrium within groups that are organized in networked structures involving individuals, political parties, associations, and labor unions. These actors interact and compete in order to influence public policy. The role of the political system, therefore, is to manage group conflict by establishing the rules governing political competition, mediating compromises and balancing interests, and translating these settlements into public policies that are subsequently implemented.

As a result, adopted public policies tend to reflect the perspective of the dominant or influential group, whose capacity for pressure and influence increases through several factors, including strong leadership, economic resources, and organizational power, all of which compel policymakers to take such groups into consideration.

Contemporary political scientists argue that the formulation of public policy through this approach encourages political participation across all sectors of society while simultaneously providing the necessary safeguards for maintaining social stability. However, this does not imply restricting the analysis of political processes exclusively to groups or disregarding the role and influence of other elements embedded within the broader political and social environment.

8.1.3 The Elite Approach:

The American political theorist Robert Dahl defines the elite as “a group of individuals constituting a minority whose preferences prevail whenever conflicts arise over fundamental issues within society.”⁷⁶

The *Dictionary of Sociology* defines the elite as “a group of individuals recognized for the magnitude of their influence and control over societal affairs, thereby forming a ruling minority.” This group can be distinguished from the governed class according to the criteria of power and authority, as it possesses greater influence, dominance, and societal impact than the broader population. Such superiority stems from the advantages this minority holds in terms of power, expertise in governance, and organizational capacity within society, all of which qualify it for leadership.⁷⁷ Political elites, more specifically, are

76- Mouloud Saada, “Elite and Society: Renewed Stakes,” *The Social Researcher*, No. 10, 2010, p. 95.

77- Duncan Mitchell, *Dictionary of Sociology*, translated by Ihsan Mohammed Al-Hassan, Dar Al-Rashid Publishing House, Baghdad, 1980, p117–118.

understood as the individuals who dominate the processes of political decision making and the formulation of public policies at the societal level.

The political elite constitutes a social phenomenon and represents one of the fundamental requirements for organizing modern political systems. It necessitates the division of political functions among members of society, whereby a limited group assumes responsibility for policy formulation and authoritative decision making as the ruling elite, while the majority of citizens comply with these decisions.

From the perspective of elite theory, public policy reflects the values and preferences of the ruling elite. This approach argues that public policy is not determined by the demands and actions of the masses; rather, it is shaped by the governing minority through the state bureaucracy operating under its authority. Public policies are formulated and directed through policy initiatives, agenda setting, legislative enactments, and executive directives issued by influential state officials.

The application of the elite approach to public policy analysis can be summarized as follows:

- Public policy does not reflect popular demands; instead, it represents the will, values, and interests of the elite. Consequently, changes in public policy emerge primarily from the elite's redefinition of its own values.
- Elitism does not necessarily imply that public policy operates against the interests or welfare of the masses. Rather, safeguarding public welfare is viewed as a responsibility entrusted to the political elite rather than to the masses themselves.
- The elite perceives the masses as generally passive, indifferent, and politically inert. Public opinion is often considered susceptible to manipulation and influence by elites, while the masses exert little or no reciprocal influence on elite values.
- Communication between elites and the masses follows a predominantly top-down, vertical structure. Accordingly, general elections and party competition do not genuinely ensure popular participation in governance. Their function is largely symbolic, linking citizens to the political system by granting them a role during elections and party affiliation.

Consequently, public policies are only rarely determined directly by the masses.

- Elite theory emphasizes consensus regarding the fundamental rules of conduct upon which the social order is established, as well as agreement on the basic “rules of the game.” Such consensus ensures the stability and continuity of the political system. This does not imply the absence of disagreement or competition among elites; rather, it suggests that competition occurs within narrow boundaries, as elites tend to agree on key issues more often than they disagree.

Accordingly, public policy, within this framework, becomes largely detached from the masses and is instead oriented toward the interests of the minority while expressing and preserving elite values.

8.1.4 The Institutional Approach:

The institutional approach is grounded in Montesquieu theory of the separation of powers, which is regarded as an essential mechanism for organizing societal affairs. It also draws upon the traditional premise underpinning political science, namely that the discipline is primarily concerned with the study of governmental institutions, specifically the three core branches of government: the legislative, executive, and judicial institutions. Within this framework, public policy is formulated through these institutions, which are responsible for its formal adoption and implementation.

Political life in any society remains closely associated with the behavior of governmental authorities represented by these three branches, as well as political parties. Institutional analysis was initially approached through the traditional perspective, which emphasized formal structures, legal rules, competencies, and administrative systems. However, political scientists gradually shifted their attention toward examining the behavioral dimensions of governmental institutions, marking a transition from studying what ought to be to analyzing what actually exists. Consequently, the study of institutions such as legislatures became more dynamic and empirically grounded after having previously been characterized by static and procedural orientations. Nevertheless, institutional structures, procedures, and rules continue to play a critical role in policy formulation and should not be overlooked in policy analysis.

According to this model, public policy is viewed as an activity that takes place within governmental structures and institutions. This perspective is based on the premise that political life in any society is intrinsically linked to the conduct of governmental bodies and authorities embodied in executive, legislative, and judicial institutions, in addition to political parties. Moreover, public policy can only originate from officially authorized bodies, which are likewise responsible for ensuring its implementation.⁷⁸

Accordingly, the institutional approach conceptualizes public policy as an activity conducted within governmental structures and institutions, thereby attributing three distinctive characteristics to public policy: legitimacy, universality, and binding authority.

- **Legitimacy** refers to the capacity of government to confer legitimacy upon public policy, transforming it into an official governmental policy supported by legal obligations that require citizens to demonstrate commitment, loyalty, and compliance.
- **Universality** denotes the comprehensive and general nature of public policy, extending its scope to encompass society as a whole.
- **Binding authority** implies that governments possess the power to sanction violations of public policies and regulate citizens' adherence to them.

Through its structural patterns governing both individual and collective behavior, the institutional approach exerts a direct influence on the substance of public policy. The establishment of certain institutions may serve the purpose of enhancing specific policy outputs while constraining others. This indicates that institutional change is inherently associated with changes in public policy. Consequently, a strong interrelationship exists between governmental institutions and public policy, both of which are closely connected to broader social and economic forces.

8.1.5 Systems Approach:

The systems approach is founded on the concept of the system or framework and seeks to establish an objective analytical structure for examining the processes of public policy analysis and formulation. In this respect, it resembles the traditional economic approach through its attempt to construct market-based

78- Wisal Najib Al-Azzawi, *Principles of Public Policy: A Theoretical Study in a New Field of Knowledge*, Dar Osama for Publishing and Distribution, 1st ed., Amman, 2003, p. 19.

mechanical models. Within this perspective, public policy is viewed as a system in itself.

In this context, Easton argues that the analytical framework of the political system constitutes an integrated and dynamic cycle of political interactions primarily directed toward the authoritative allocation of values within society. This dynamic cycle begins with inputs and culminates in outputs, while the feedback process serves as the connecting mechanism between the starting and ending points, namely inputs and outputs.

This approach is also referred to as the holistic theory or integrated systems perspective, which emphasizes the influence of bureaucracy on the public policymaking process, as well as the impact of external inputs on bureaucratic institutions. Through this interaction, bureaucracy transforms societal demands and needs into public policies, directives, and implementable programs.

David Easton, the pioneer of this approach, maintains that political interactions within society collectively constitute a general system of behavior. Consequently, the political system cannot be isolated from or separated from the broader social system. This perspective enables the distinction between the fundamental dimensions and variables operating within the political system, particularly regarding its processes, actions, the distribution of values, and the continuity of compliance and legitimacy, as well as the environmental dimensions and variables that influence the political system and shape its outputs in the form of public policies.

8.1.6 Incrementalism Approach:

The incremental approach is closely associated with liberal political philosophy. It assumes that public policy decision-making emerges from negotiation and bargaining processes among groups that hold vested interests in a particular decision. This process is commonly described as political equilibrium through collective interaction.

This theory was developed to address the criticisms directed at the rational-comprehensive model and to overcome the practical difficulties associated with its application. Moreover, it provides a more descriptive and explanatory framework for political decision-makers. Charles Lindblom, the leading scholar of this perspective, argues that incrementalism, or gradualism, represents the

typical model of decision-making in pluralistic societies such as the United States.

According to Lindblom, the principal elements of this approach can be summarized as follows:

- Public policymakers concentrate on policies that differ only marginally from existing policies representing the status quo.
- Policymakers consider a limited set of alternatives and do not undertake comprehensive analytical evaluations to assess the outcomes of different policy options.
- Policy issues rarely have radical or definitive solutions. Consequently, policymakers seek primarily to avoid immediate adverse consequences through continuous and repeated examination of the issue. As a result, no single, fixed definition exists for a particular problem; rather, the process of defining it remains ongoing, and therefore no uniquely optimal solution can be identified.
- This approach emphasizes a remedial orientation aimed at alleviating existing problems rather than pursuing future-oriented objectives.
- It promotes negotiation and bargaining among groups with vested interests in the public policy issue under consideration.
- This approach is often described as the “muddling through” method because it emphasizes gradual progress through incremental steps rather than long-term strategic planning.

Accordingly, within this framework, public policy is viewed as the outcome of continuous interaction, negotiation, and consensus-building among multiple political actors involved in the decision-making process. Incrementalism is therefore regarded as politically acceptable because it facilitates agreement on contested issues among different groups. In this context, a modified and adaptive program may prove more appropriate than adherence to the rigid principle of “all or nothing.”

Moreover, since decision-makers operate under conditions of uncertainty while dealing with future expectations associated with their actions, incremental decisions help reduce errors arising from uncertainty and minimize the risks and costs linked to alternative policy choices. This approach is also consistent with practical realities characterized by limited decision-making time, incomplete

information, and restricted analytical capacities in evaluating alternatives. Furthermore, individuals are inherently pragmatic and realistic; they do not typically pursue idealized solutions that are difficult to implement, but rather favor feasible and practical alternatives. In summary, incremental theory contributes to the formulation of practical, acceptable, and bounded policy decisions.

8.2 Contemporary Political Approaches or Approaches to the Analysis of Public Policy Consequences⁷⁹

8.2.1 The Rational Approach:

The roots of rationality stem from the belief that human beings are inherently rational actors who seek to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. This concept first emerged in economics through the notion of the “economic man,” which constitutes the intellectual foundation of economic theory, before subsequently extending into administrative and political thought.

Within this perspective, public policy is viewed as a rational policy designed to maximize efficiency by optimizing the net satisfaction of social, political, and economic values. The approach assumes that social values can be compared and weighted, requiring a comprehensive understanding of societal values, detailed knowledge of alternative policy options, the analytical capacity to calculate cost-benefit ratios, and a decision-making system capable of facilitating rational policy formulation. In essence, this approach focuses on the following principles:

- Rational policies are those that generate the highest added value relative to the economic, political, and social resources invested by society.
- Rationality, within this framework, is synonymous with the concept of economic efficiency as embodied in the “economic man” model.
- Achieving complete rationality requires consideration of all values and facts related to the public policy issue and the quantitative measurement of these variables in order to determine the added value generated by public policy.

Accordingly, the methodological application of this approach involves the following steps:

⁷⁹ B. Guy Peters and Philippe Zittoun, *Contemporary Approaches to Public Policy, THEORIES, CONTROVERSIES AND PERSPECTIVES*, International Series on Public Policy, 2026, p15-23.

- Identifying all economic, social, and political values, measuring them quantitatively, and determining their relative significance, while clearly and precisely defining the problem and policy objectives.
- Identifying all possible policy alternatives.
- Determining the consequences associated with the implementation of each alternative.
- Calculating the added value generated by every alternative.
- Selecting the maximizing alternative that yields the highest added value.

The distinctive feature of this approach lies in its attempt to provide comprehensive solutions to social problems, particularly administrative issues, by dividing the public policy process into sequential stages and seeking rational solutions that minimize costs while maximizing outcomes through the use of various technical methods.

8.2.2 The Empirical Approach:

The empirical approach is grounded in behavioral principles and is considered one of the approaches with limited practical applicability. It can be operationalized through social experimentation and analogy-based experimentation. The approach relies extensively on probability theory and statistical inference, drawing upon research methodologies employed in the behavioral sciences.

The empirical model has been capable of producing clear and unambiguous findings concerning cause-and-effect relationships when applied under ideal conditions. However, this represents one of its principal limitations, as such ideal conditions are rarely attainable in contemporary societies characterized by complex and highly interconnected social interactions.

The empirical model requires studies and research efforts characterized by a high degree of expertise, creativity, and sustained commitment in order to minimize adverse outcomes resulting from environmental influences and external pressures. The major challenge lies in the effective application of laboratory-based findings and their adaptation to societal contexts shaped by numerous social variables. Nevertheless, these limitations have not prevented social and behavioral studies from making significant contributions by providing essential data required for public policy analysis, policy formulation, and the assessment of policy outcomes.

8.2.3 Public Choice Approach

Public Choice Theory emerged in the United States during the 1960s as an analytical framework concerned with examining political phenomena through economic methodologies. Its primary objective is to understand the mechanisms underlying political decision-making and to explain instances of government failure. The theory focuses particularly on voting behavior, state functions, bureaucratic structures, and pressure groups.

The concept of public choice encompasses a set of economic theories and models aimed at explaining the motivations and behaviors of voters and public officials within collective decision-making processes, as well as the impact of these motivations on the policies they adopt. Voting constitutes the foundation of public choice theory, as individuals elect officials responsible for policymaking at both national and local levels, thereby delegating authority to act on behalf of the collective. In this sense, voting functions as a mechanism that transforms individual preferences into collective choices. Consequently, the core premise of this theory is that public policies represent collective decisions produced by individuals pursuing their own interests.

Public Choice Theory combines two distinct perspectives: *Homo Economicus*, which reflects the individualistic conception in economics and assumes that individuals seek to maximize their self-interest, and *Homo Politicus*, which reflects the conventional perspective in political science and public administration and emphasizes the pursuit of the public good. These perspectives imply two different conceptions of human motivation. However, Public Choice Theory argues that individuals do not behave differently in political markets than they do in economic markets. In both contexts, they pursue their personal interests, a proposition strongly advocated by James Buchanan, one of the leading figures in this intellectual tradition.

The theory further explains how states operating within democratic systems may adopt decisions that are detrimental to majority interests. It highlights how political bargaining, together with the emergence of organized interest groups and lobbying networks, may facilitate access to privileges and rent-seeking positions, ultimately leading to the enactment of laws, regulations, and policies that undermine collective welfare. Moreover, lobbying groups may exert pressure on governments to secure private gains, enabling the privatization of

profits while socializing losses across society. Consequently, the theory calls for reconsidering concepts such as the public interest, political consensus, and related notions, while encouraging the analysis of state action from the perspective of individual interests.

The principal foundations of Public Choice Theory may be summarized as follows:

- All political actors, including legislators, executives, candidates, and other participants in the political process, seek to maximize their personal benefits in politics in much the same way as economic actors pursue self-interest within markets.
- Agreements and exchanges occurring in the political marketplace primarily serve politicians' individual interests and resemble transactions taking place within economic markets.
- Self-interested motivations generate collective benefits through systems of collective decision-making. This reflects the classical origins of the theory and its intellectual connection with the ideas of Adam Smith, particularly his emphasis on individual rationality.
- Within the political system, individuals are viewed as consumers of government goods and services. They are assumed to be rational actors who respond to information according to their private interests and their position within the public policy decision-making system.
- Political actors, particularly political parties, operate according to the Median Voter Theory, which argues that parties and candidates are not primarily concerned with advancing ideological principles. Rather, their central objective is electoral victory through policy platforms designed to attract the largest possible number of votes. Given the normal distribution of policy preferences within political communities, parties tend to move toward centrist positions to maximize electoral support. This constitutes the basis of the median voter model, from which several implications emerge:
 - Public policies selected through political competition do not necessarily reflect the preferences of all individuals.

- Candidates often conceal their ideological affiliations, whether right- or left-oriented, as political entrepreneurs seeking to secure the median position during elections.
- Candidates continuously monitor public opinion polls and subtly adjust their positions toward those of their competitors on issues receiving broad public support.
- The movement of political parties toward the median position does not imply identical electoral stances, as political actors cannot accurately identify the exact median position due to the dynamic nature of public opinion and voter preferences.
- Political parties and candidates frequently converge regarding ultimate objectives, despite differing in the means proposed to achieve them.
- This theory conceptualizes public policymaking as occurring within a political market parallel to the economic market while distinguishing the political dimension from the economic dimension in policy decisions. It is grounded in an individualistic philosophy that considers the individual as the primary unit of analysis and assumes individuals possess the capacity to identify their own interests. This perspective has significant implications for the role of the state and public policy, including the following:
 - Economic markets are considered more efficient than political markets in resource allocation. Therefore, reducing the scope and activities of the political market in favor of the economic market is viewed as desirable.
 - Government intervention in economic and social activities should be minimized whenever possible, as failures in economic markets are considered less harmful than failures occurring within political markets.

9. Public Policy Analysis Methods⁸⁰

9.1 Non-Quantitative Intuitive Methods: Forecasting and Estimating

Forecasting is fundamentally grounded in intuition and relies on collecting and extrapolating all available information related to the societal issue under

⁸⁰Birkland, Thomas, op cit , p79.

investigation. These data are subsequently classified and organized systematically after carefully examining their implications and significance. The situation is then assessed to identify the most appropriate alternative that can be selected. Since forecasting is primarily intuition-based, it is not possible to produce entirely precise or deterministic predictions. Nevertheless, the estimates generated can provide substantial value in identifying optimal alternatives within the field of public policy. For instance, forecasting the expected number of children in Algeria who will reach the age of six in future years constitutes a crucial input for designing educational policies, particularly in the context of compulsory education, as implemented in Algeria.

The pioneering efforts in forecasting and situation assessment emerged during the late 1920s, initially within the technological sector. Interest in these methods increased significantly after the Second World War, finding practical applications in space exploration and military domains. The growing attention devoted to forecasting techniques subsequently led to the development of several sub-methodologies, among which the following are particularly significant:

9.2 Scenario Building Technique

The concept of scenario building, or scenario design, is based on projecting past and present experiences in order to envision alternative future states toward which developments may evolve. It represents a hypothetical tracing of events and provides extensive scope for imagination and conceptual exploration with the objective of identifying all potential future possibilities. However, such imaginative projections must remain within the broader framework of the societal system. As Helmer argues, scenario construction involves the structured use of imagination aimed at describing a particular aspect of the future without reaching the level of narrative storytelling or fictional representation. Analytical and practical scenarios begin with the current state of the surrounding environment and subsequently illustrate how future conditions may emerge and evolve in realistic terms based on existing circumstances⁸¹.

Scenario construction therefore constitutes an exploratory instrument for identifying alternative policy options. To illustrate, Algeria relies heavily on the petroleum sector. This raises several critical questions: What impact could

⁸¹ K. Van Der Heijden, "Scenarios and Forecasting: Two Perspectives," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, vol. 65, no. 1, 2000, p31-36

changes in global oil prices over the next two years, particularly in light of ongoing political transformations and democratic transitions in certain Arab countries, have on the performance of various sectors of the national economy? What consequences might arise for domestic investment growth rates, public expenditure, and the balance of payments?

Addressing these questions may result in the formulation of three possible scenarios concerning the future trajectory of the national economy during the coming two years: the baseline scenario, the optimistic scenario, and the pessimistic scenario. The baseline scenario assumes the continuation of external and domestic borrowing during the projected period. The optimistic scenario presumes the emergence of more favorable future developments, whereas the pessimistic scenario assumes adverse changes, including the possibility of economic crises.

Accordingly, the scenario method presupposes the existence of multiple scenarios, each incorporating distinct assumptions regarding future events. The availability of one or several scenarios broadens policymakers' perspectives and guides them toward diverse opportunities for making constructive and informed decisions.

9.3 The Delphi Technique⁸²

The Delphi technique is designed to address complex societal issues through the exchange of views among groups of specialized experts. It represents one of the most significant methodological contributions to futures research and reflects a contemporary adaptation of the role historically performed by the priests of the Temple of Delphi in ancient Greek civilization with regard to future prediction. This technique has become closely associated with futures studies, particularly due to the positive outcomes generated through its application in future forecasting. Its significance lies in its integration of multiple approaches employed in futures research, combining exploratory intuition with normative analysis. The method can be implemented in successive stages, each representing a methodological advancement in data collection and the extraction of future-oriented indicators. The Delphi technique is founded upon four principal elements:

⁸² Simone Di Zio, J. D. Castillo Rosas & Luana Lamelza, "Real Time Spatial Delphi: Fast Convergence of Experts' Opinions on the Territory," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, vol. 115, 2017, p143-154.

- **Anonymity of participants**, intended to minimize the influence of authority and dominance among contributors.
- **Iteration**, enabling participants to reconsider and revise their positions in light of newly available information.
- **Controlled feedback**, whereby participants are placed in a more informed position to assess situations according to the quantity and quality of available information.
- **Expert consensus**, representing the final outcome achieved through agreement regarding the most appropriate alternative or set of alternatives for the issue under consideration.⁸³

However, one of the principal criticisms directed at this technique, particularly during group discussions, concerns the possibility that certain participants may dominate the discussion process, thereby reducing the effective contributions of other group members.

An illustration of the forecasting and estimation method may be provided by using scenario building as an example, as represented in the following framework: Stages of Scenario Construction.

9.4 Quantitative Methods

9.4.1 Operations Research Approach

Operations Research (OR) has historically been associated with the military domain, with its origins tracing back to the wars of 1872, when the British introduced the use of war game theory. However, its first systematic scientific foundations emerged during the Second World War through the work of *Sir Henry Tizard*, initiated in 1935. The British Research Institute defined Operations Research as the application of scientific methods to complex problems related to directing and managing large-scale systems involving human resources, machinery, and materials across industrial and business organizations, as well as governmental and military institutions.

At its core, Operations Research employs the scientific method to understand and investigate phenomena within operational systems. The resulting information is then utilized to identify approaches for improving the efficiency

⁸³ N. P. Uhl, "Using the Delphi Technique in Institutional Planning," *New Directions for Institutional Research*, vol. 37, 1983, p 81-94.

of ongoing operations or achieving intended future objectives. Accordingly, Operations Research is characterized by the following features:

- Applying scientific methods to complex problems.
- Ensuring comprehensive consideration of information related to available capabilities, variables, and present and future alternatives.
- Focusing on supporting the decision-making process.
- Utilizing models to develop approximate representations of reality in order to reduce unnecessary complexity and facilitate clearer information analysis.
- Employing computational technologies to process large volumes of information, thereby reducing both costs and time requirements.

The rapid development of Operations Research has led to the emergence of several branches and analytical approaches, including linear programming, queuing theory, time-series analysis, and critical path analysis, among others. Advances in these techniques have significantly increased the application of Operations Research in public services such as education, healthcare, social welfare, housing, and transportation.

9.4.2 Linear Programming Approach⁸⁴

Linear Programming is employed to identify the optimal alternative among multiple competing options, where selecting one option may occur at the expense of another. This approach is based on the following assumptions:

- Proportional relationships exist among variables, meaning that doubling the inputs results in a corresponding doubling of outputs.
- Inputs and outputs can be divided into smaller components and subunits.
- Operational activities can be combined and integrated.

Political, legal, and social constraints constitute limitations on the activities that may be undertaken. Examples include restrictions related to the state budget, whereby allocations for a given program cannot be reduced below those assigned in the previous fiscal year, cannot be increased by more than 10% compared with the preceding year, or must remain unchanged from earlier allocations. Furthermore, the applicability of this method is generally confined to linear

⁸⁴ Z. Chen et al., "Sustainable Supplier Selection for Smart Supply Chain Considering Internal and External Uncertainty: An Integrated Rough-fuzzy Approach," *Applied Soft Computing*, vol. 87, 2020, p 69.

phenomena in which relationships among variables are characterized by proportionality and linear dependence.

9.4.3 Cost-Benefit Analysis:

This approach aims to compare the costs associated with an adopted public policy or project against the benefits or value generated from its implementation. Since such comparisons are grounded in comprehensive feasibility studies, they extend beyond economic viability to encompass political feasibility as well. Accordingly, this method is not confined to the quantitative assessment of costs and returns; rather, it also involves identifying the scale and nature of political groups whose support is required, as well as determining the relevant political actors and their capacities to ensure the successful implementation of specific policies.

The general framework of cost-benefit analysis consists of the following stages:

- Identifying and defining the public policy alternatives proposed for implementation.
- Determining all desirable and undesirable effects, both immediate and long-term, associated with each alternative and their impact on society.
- Assigning monetary values to these effects, whereby desirable impacts are calculated as benefits and undesirable impacts as costs.
- Calculating the net return for each alternative by subtracting total costs from total benefits.
- Selecting the optimal alternative, namely the one that produces the highest net benefit. However, this may not always be the case, as certain political considerations may necessitate the selection of an alternative option.

Within the broader framework of cost-benefit analysis, four major categories are generally distinguished: real and financial impacts, direct and indirect impacts, tangible and intangible impacts, and internal and external effects.

9.4.4 Challenges Facing the Public Policy Analysis Process:

The major challenges associated with public policy analysis can be summarized as follows⁸⁵:

- Public policy analysts adopting scientific methodologies encounter several practical obstacles, including the lack of sufficient data and information,

⁸⁵ Seopetsa T, Challenges facing the implementation of public policies in South Africa since the dawn of democracy, Educator Multidisciplinary Journal, 4(1), 2020, p141-175.

inconsistencies within available datasets, restrictions arising from confidentiality imposed by responsible authorities on certain files and issues, and the limited availability of comparable and analogous studies.

- Significant difficulties arise in measuring the indirect and intangible costs of public policy programs, as well as in assessing the contribution of public policies to social welfare. The challenge becomes even greater when attempting to calculate the net or final impact of a policy, which requires deducting all direct, future, material, and intangible costs from the aggregate benefits generated.
- Scientific methodologies require political analysts to employ optimal choice frameworks and analytical approaches in a manner that recognizes that such approaches do not impose decisions; rather, they clarify the feasibility of alternative options. The selection or rejection of a particular option remains contingent upon political will and its dynamics. Consequently, the decision to adopt a policy does not necessarily reflect the calculations and estimates reached by analysts through these frameworks and approaches. Political feasibility remains largely beyond quantitative calculations because it depends on value judgments, ideological perceptions, and interpretive assessments rooted in social and political contexts.
- Quantitative techniques and mathematical models employed by policy analysts may generate ambiguous or inconclusive results regarding the issue under investigation. Although these methods have achieved considerable success in addressing administrative problems within the public sector, such as urbanization challenges, environmental pollution, and development issues, their effectiveness in dealing with complex societal problems has remained limited. This limitation stems from their inability to adequately account for variables that cannot be quantitatively measured, including values, beliefs, and ideas.
- With regard to analytical approaches, regardless of the framework adopted, no political analyst can provide entirely accurate or definitive predictions concerning the effects of a given policy in resolving a specific problem. Public policies are formulated as responses to explicit or implicit societal needs while taking into account prevailing environmental conditions and

current as well as anticipated political pressures. Even if an analytical approach were capable of incorporating all these factors simultaneously, such variables are inherently dynamic rather than static and therefore remain subject to continuous change.

9.5 Public Policy Analysis Methods

9.5.1 Forecasting, Situation Assessment, and Future Projections

This approach is based on informed judgment, estimation, and the formulation of future expectations and projections through the collection and interpretation of available information. Within this framework, two major sub-methods can be identified:

9.5.2 The Delphi Method

The Delphi Method facilitates the exchange and revision of opinions among a group of experts or stakeholders concerned with the issue under investigation while preserving participants' anonymity through a structured procedure and predefined principles to ensure neutrality in the deliberative process.

This method is founded upon four principal principles:

- **Anonymity of participants**, aimed at reducing the influence of dominant or highly influential personalities.
- **Iteration**, which allows participants to reconsider their positions in light of newly generated information.
- **Controlled feedback**, whereby participants are placed in a more informed position to evaluate situations according to the quantity and quality of available information.
- **Expert consensus**, representing the final outcome achieved through agreement regarding the most appropriate alternative or alternatives for the issue under consideration.

9.5.3 The main stages of the Delphi Method include:

- Selecting experts and clarifying the objectives and rationale of the study.
- Requesting judgments, predictions, and expert opinions concerning the issue under examination.
- Compiling responses, preparing the first-round questionnaire, and requesting that experts, through the coordinator, rank items according to priority and significance.

- Receiving and statistically analyzing first-round responses, reorganizing items, preparing the second-round questionnaire, and providing experts with a statistical summary of the findings.
- Redistributing the questionnaire to the same experts to reconsider their responses in light of the statistical analysis.
- Repeating the process in subsequent rounds, typically a third round, followed by identifying areas of agreement and clarifying shifts or variations in opinions across rounds.

A. Scenario-Building Method

The scenario-building approach involves constructing hypothetical representations of expected future events based on previous information, accumulated experiences, assumptions, and contextual constraints that may range from optimism and proactive orientation to caution and conservatism. In some instances, intuition and reflective thinking are incorporated into scenario development.

Brainstorming and scenario-building methods essentially facilitate the examination and extrapolation of alternative policy possibilities and forecasting in fields where information is limited or where scientific research tools based on quantitative methodologies cannot be easily applied.

This approach is characterized by its ease of application and relatively low cost when compared with quantitative methods that require sophisticated models and complex computer-based analyses.

B. Cost-Benefit Analysis Method

Cost-Benefit Analysis is based on comparing the costs associated with a public policy or specific program against the benefits or value generated through its implementation.

The general framework of cost-benefit analysis consists of the following stages:

- Identifying and defining the public policy alternatives intended for implementation.
- Determining all desirable and undesirable current and future effects of each alternative on society.
- Assigning monetary values to these effects, whereby desirable impacts are calculated as benefits while undesirable impacts are treated as costs.

- Calculating the net benefit for each alternative by subtracting total costs from total returns.
- Selecting the most appropriate alternative, generally the one generating the highest net return, although this may not always apply, as certain considerations may justify selecting another option.

This process requires consideration of all actual dimensions of costs and benefits, including:

- **Real benefits**, referring to gains obtained by final beneficiaries of public projects, reflecting changes in actual consumption and production patterns and balanced against real resource costs.
- **Financial benefits**, resulting from price changes related to provided services and products that emerge during economic adjustment processes following the introduction of new public services.
- **Direct and indirect effects**:
 - *Direct effects* refer to increases in the real value of outputs associated with the public project within the targeted sector.
 - *Indirect effects* denote impacts extending to other sectors of the economy.
- **Tangible effects**, which can be evaluated through market mechanisms and translated into measurable indicators.
- **Intangible effects**, which cannot be assessed through market valuation and therefore cannot be expressed in measurable standards.
- **Internal effects**, representing intended outcomes and consequences that arise deliberately and involve corresponding costs willingly incurred.
- **External effects**, referring to impacts imposed upon others unintentionally and without compensation or voluntary acceptance.

C. Operations Research

Operations research is founded on the application of the scientific method to understand and investigate changes occurring within operational systems, with the aim of identifying approaches that enhance the efficiency of ongoing processes or facilitate the achievement of future objectives. Prominent examples within this field include:

- Linear programming.
- Queueing or waiting theory.

- Time series analysis.
- Critical path analysis.

D. Mathematical Models

Mathematical models are employed to represent an abstract depiction of a specific problem or phenomenon in order to explain the operational mechanisms of certain systems through the use of mathematical relationships, functions, and equations. These models are constructed by representing the relationship between two categories of quantitative variables: dependent variables and independent variables.

Such equations are particularly valuable for hypothesis testing, evaluating alternative public policy options, and generating future projections. Major categories of mathematical models include:

- Models for forecasting environmental variables.
- Models for predicting system operations and performance rates.
- Optimization models designed to identify the most effective solutions.

Section six :Comparative Analysis of Public Policies

1. Stages of the Development of Comparative Public Policy Analysis

Comparative analysis of public policies, like other approaches within comparative politics, offers researchers broad opportunities to interpret similarities and differences among countries and their political systems through the use of comparative political methodologies. Over time, this field has passed through important historical stages that contributed to its consolidation and development as a distinct area of study. Comparative public policy draws upon several disciplines, particularly political science and public administration.

It is important to note that comparative public policy analysis has evolved through three major stages. Comparative studies played a central role in shaping the questions, issues, and methodological transformations associated with the development of the field.

1.1 The First Stage: Emergence and Consolidation⁸⁶

This stage was characterized by the dominance of the behavioral perspective, particularly development and modernization theories. During the 1950s,

⁸⁶ Michael Howlett, Giliberto Capano, The State of Policy Instrument Analysis: Knowns, Unknowns and the Current Research Agenda, 17 July 2019, p 2.

comparative public policy analysis was strongly influenced by economic approaches, especially rational choice theory, which formed the foundation of the behavioral perspective. These approaches dominated political science throughout the 1950s and 1960s, a period marked by the prominence of social and economic theories.

Early comparative politics studies during the modern era argued that states respond to economic growth and social modernization through similar policy patterns. According to the development and modernization perspective, high levels of economic development and industrialization generate economic, social, and environmental challenges while simultaneously providing governments with greater financial resources to address these problems.

For example, social security systems and welfare-state policies were expected to emerge and expand as countries reached higher levels of economic development. This pattern suggested a convergence of national policies and a gradual decline in ideological conflict as societies moved from traditional agrarian structures toward advanced industrial economies.

Based on this perspective, comparative public policy studies focused on comparing policy performance across countries with different characteristics and from different regions of the world through the analysis of policy outputs, namely the actions and measures undertaken by governments to achieve their objectives.

Consequently, most comparative studies conducted during the late 1950s focused on advanced industrial societies and examined the growing convergence among developed countries operating under market economies. The primary objective of these studies was to analyze similarities in public spending levels driven by economic growth and technological development.

In this context, Harold Wilensky's work became especially influential. He focused on the increasing convergence of welfare-state development by measuring social protection expenditures in relation to gross national product. His research relied primarily on statistical analysis and concentrated on economic variables associated with convergence theory in industrial societies.

Much of the research that dominated the academic field during this period, particularly American research, assumed that all political systems—whether communist, capitalist, democratic, or authoritarian—would eventually move

toward the same model: the welfare state. This assumption largely ignored the possibility that public policy outcomes could differ according to the nature and characteristics of political systems.

As a result, political scientists became increasingly interested in the outputs of political systems and sought to understand differences in public policies among countries. This led to a reconsideration of earlier findings that had neglected the role of political system characteristics in explaining policy differences.

Researchers began asking whether structural differences among countries—such as governmental institutions, citizens' rights, political parties, and interest groups—could explain variations in allocation policies, distribution policies, and other public policies. To answer these questions, comparative public policy studies increasingly focused on examining the relationship between political systems and public policy outcomes.

By the early 1960s, criticism of the socio-economic model had become widespread within comparative politics. Scholars questioned why some countries adopted social welfare programs earlier than others despite having similar levels of economic growth. They also asked why public spending patterns and policy approaches varied significantly among developed countries. More broadly, critics challenged the assumption that a unified socio-economic trajectory could explain the major policy differences observed among advanced democratic countries. Several studies highlighted that democratic political systems could produce distinct policy outcomes. Moreover, no convincing evidence supported the argument that all political systems, regardless of their type, would converge toward similar welfare policies. Likewise, evidence regarding the impact of democratic systems on economic growth, inflation, and other economic indicators remained inconclusive.

It is also important to note that most definitions of public policy during this period focused primarily on economic aspects. Public policy was often understood as the process of allocating financial resources through the state budget, together with the distribution of related sources of power such as priorities, influence, information, and institutional advantages. Institutions considered important by governments generally received larger financial allocations, while less important sectors received fewer resources.

Furthermore, most behavioral approaches within comparative public policy during the 1950s and 1970s concentrated on the developmental perspective and relied heavily on large-scale comparative studies involving numerous cases. Despite the contributions of this stage, it faced major criticism for relying excessively on economic determinism. Critics argued that the assumption that development and modernization represented universal and continuous processes applicable to all societies was overly simplistic. These criticisms paved the way for a new stage in the development of comparative public policy analysis.

1.2 The Second Stage: Flourishing and Transformation in Comparative Policy Analysis⁸⁷

Beginning in the 1960s, the field of comparative politics entered a period of expansion and transformation. This shift resulted largely from criticism directed at the developmental perspective, which emphasized economic factors and assumed that economic progress represented a universal path that all societies would eventually follow.

At the same time, quantitative and statistical approaches in comparative public policy analysis proved insufficient for explaining the political problems experienced by welfare states in Western countries. Researchers increasingly examined indicators such as public spending levels, social support expenditures, tax rates, inflation rates, and unemployment rates in relation to the partisan orientation of governments.

Comparative public policy studies during this stage relied on large numbers of cases and quantitative data, but unlike earlier studies, they focused primarily on political variables. The central question became: “Does politics matter?” In other words, scholars sought to determine whether the political affiliation of ruling parties significantly influenced the development and outcomes of public policies.

To answer this question, researchers examined specific historical periods using indicators such as public spending, social expenditures, taxation, inflation, and unemployment rates. These indicators were then linked to the partisan

⁸⁷Lijphart Arend, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method”. *The American Political Science Review*, 65(3), 1971,p 677.

orientation of governments in order to determine whether political ideology influenced public policy outcomes.

Comparative works published during this period argued that the dominant development and modernization models of the 1950s and 1960s neglected the role of political forces in shaping public policy outcomes. Consequently, numerous approaches emerged to demonstrate the importance of politics in public policy analysis.

The party-government framework became especially influential. According to this approach, public policies differ depending on which political party controls the government. This model was widely used in comparative studies, particularly in the United States, where researchers attempted to demonstrate that welfare policies varied according to whether governments were led by Republicans or Democrats. Later studies explored the complex relationships between political parties and policy outcomes in greater depth.

Accordingly, comparative public policy analysis during this stage focused heavily on the political dimension as a crucial factor for understanding similarities and differences in public policies across countries. It also enabled scholars to compare policy performance among countries with different political, social, and economic characteristics by examining governmental outputs and actions aimed at achieving specific objectives.

Within this context, a wide range of approaches and methodologies emerged to reinforce the argument concerning the “importance of politics.” The framework of party-based government was widely employed to explain variations in public policies according to changes in partisan control and political interactions.

This approach was used extensively in comparative political studies. Early American researchers attempted to demonstrate that welfare policies changed according to shifts between Republican and Democratic administrations. Many later studies expanded this analysis by examining the complex links between political parties and public policy outcomes across different countries and political systems.

Against this backdrop, the question of why governments adopt specific courses of action is as difficult to answer as it is important to ask. Why did the United States follow Europe in adopting certain social policies while preceding it in implementing other social programs? Why did some countries preserve their

major cities as national treasures while others tolerated greater urban decay? Why is the social security “safety net” regarded as a stable and widely accepted policy in some contexts, while in other places and periods it becomes an ideologically contested political issue?

For this reason, the lengthy and complex process of public policymaking differs significantly from decision-making, which simply involves choosing between a set of alternatives. Anderson emphasized this point by arguing that public policy is often the result of a process involving multiple actors whose roles and influence are shaped by institutional and structural factors. Consequently, comparing public policies essentially means comparing the political and institutional influences that shape policymaking processes.

In this second generation of comparative studies, a central question emerged: “Does politics matter?” In other words, does the political affiliation of ruling parties significantly influence the production of public policies? To answer this question, researchers developed time-series analyses based on indicators such as public spending levels, social expenditures, tax rates, inflation rates, and unemployment rates. These indicators were then linked to the partisan orientation of governments in order to determine whether there was a relationship between the political orientations of ruling parties and the policies adopted during specific periods.

As a result, comparative studies during the 1960s and 1970s increasingly sought to answer the question “why,” emphasizing the significant influence of the ideological orientations of ruling parties on public policies. At the same time, scholars highlighted the importance of historical developments in shaping contemporary policymaking. Even though present-day policymakers may not always be aware of these historical influences, it remains essential to examine the roots of a nation’s political culture and its social composition⁸⁸.

Therefore, when comparing public policies, it is important to analyze how nations choose different policy tools in areas such as education, healthcare, and economic management. This requires a thorough understanding of the factors that shape political choices within each country. It also requires continuous

⁸⁸ Roy Anupama, “Comparative Method and Strategies of Comparison”, *Punjab Journal of Politics*, 25 ,2, 2001, p27.

reference to the historical foundations of political development, which create long-term effects on policymaking processes.

These underlying factors, together with the interactions among politicians, bureaucrats, interest groups, public opinion, and policy beneficiaries, constitute the basis for interpreting similarities and differences in public policies across countries.

Despite the major comparative contributions produced during this period, which established comparative public policy as an important field of study, this methodological approach faced three major criticisms.

The First Criticism

The first criticism concerned the measurement of the political variable associated with ruling parties. Critics argued that public policy cannot be explained solely by the ideology of the governing party. Rather, political influence is distributed across broader political elements capable of shaping policy directions, including institutional power structures, the existence or absence of majority coalitions, the role of opposition parties, and the influence of interest groups connected to political parties.

The Second Criticism

The second criticism focused on the limitations of output-based measurement indicators. Quantitative indicators such as inflation rates, public spending levels, and social expenditures were criticized for two reasons. First, they failed to capture broader policy dimensions that, although important, could not easily be quantified. Second, these indicators focused mainly on macroeconomic and social protection policies while neglecting other important policy areas.

The Third Criticism

The third criticism concerned the empirical results of these studies. Critics argued that the findings did not establish a clear and lasting relationship between public policy outcomes and the presence of a particular political party in power. Such a relationship was confirmed in only a limited number of the cases studied.

1.3 The Third Stage: National Approaches to Public Policies

In response to these criticisms, an important shift occurred in comparative public policy analysis toward the end of the 1970s. This transformation was reflected in three major developments:

- The focus shifted from public policy outputs and results to the process of policy production itself.
- Researchers moved from quantitative studies based on large numbers of cases to qualitative studies based on a smaller number of cases, shifting from variable-centered approaches to case-centered research strategies.
- Scholars also moved away from isolating explanatory variables and measuring their individual effects toward examining the interaction among multiple variables and understanding their combined influence.

As a result, the third generation of comparative studies focused on the policymaking process itself, emphasizing qualitative dimensions and the interaction between variables. Proponents of this approach stressed differences in national processes of policy production, leading to classifications that reflected diverse “national approaches” to public policy.

This perspective emerged from the interaction between two major dimensions: the way governments address public problems and the structure of interactions among the various actors involved in policymaking. As Jeremy Richardson argued, this stage adopted an institutional political process perspective, which viewed politics as the outcome of external pressures such as socio-economic conditions, partisan demands, and interest-group influence exerted upon governments.

Institutional analysis placed the state at the center of analysis. In practice, this involved at least three dimensions:

- Recalling the distinctive historical models through which nation-states and their institutional structures were formed;
- Examining how state institutions and capacities interact with and influence economic sectors;
- Analyzing the impact of political feedback on alliances, party competition, and other features of the policymaking environment.

It is important to note that comparative works published during this period often focused on the specific public policy style of individual countries. As a result, many critics argued that comparative public policy analysis at this stage became more descriptive than analytical or explanatory.

Nevertheless, this approach revitalized the field by emphasizing interactions between the state and interest groups, introducing the concept of policy

networks, and renewing institutional analysis through the development of neo-institutionalism as a major analytical framework.

Within this perspective, historical institutionalism introduced influential concepts such as “path dependency” and “national trajectories,” which became important theoretical approaches in comparative public policy analysis. These perspectives also highlighted issues related to policy change and reform.

This model of comparative public policy analysis remains influential today. However, recent studies have demonstrated that, despite its strong explanatory power, it continues to face important methodological and theoretical limitations.

2. Concept and Stages of the Development of Comparative Public Policy Analysis

Comparative public policy analysis is a systematic process aimed at studying, examining, and comparing governmental policies across different countries or sectors in order to identify similarities and differences, evaluate policy performance and effectiveness, and derive lessons that can improve decision-making processes.

Comparative analysis of public policies, like other approaches within comparative politics, offers researchers broad opportunities to interpret similarities and differences among countries and political systems through comparative political methodologies. Over time, this field has passed through important historical stages that contributed to its consolidation and development as a distinct area of study. Comparative public policy draws heavily on disciplines such as political science and public administration.

It is important to note that comparative public policy analysis has evolved through three major stages. Comparative studies played a central role in shaping the questions, issues, and methodological transformations associated with the development of the field.

2.1 The First Stage: Emergence and Consolidation

This stage was characterized by the dominance of the behavioral perspective, particularly development and modernization theories. During the 1950s, comparative public policy analysis was strongly influenced by economic approaches, especially rational choice theory, which formed the foundation of the behavioral perspective. These approaches dominated political science

throughout the 1950s and 1960s, a period marked by the prominence of social and economic theories.

Early comparative politics studies argued that states respond to economic growth and social modernization through similar policy patterns. According to the development and modernization perspective, high levels of economic development and industrialization generated economic, social, and environmental challenges while simultaneously providing governments with greater financial resources to address these problems.

For example, social security systems and welfare-state policies were expected to emerge and expand as countries reached higher levels of economic development. This pattern suggested a convergence of national policies and a gradual decline in ideological conflict as societies moved from traditional agrarian structures toward advanced industrial economies.

And on this basis, comparative public policy studies focused on comparing the performance of public policies in countries with different characteristics and in different parts of the world using the output approach, that is, according to the actions and measures taken by governments to achieve their goals and objectives. Therefore, most comparative studies within the emerging field of public policy in the late 1950s focused on advanced industrial societies and aimed at identifying increasing convergence among developed countries that had adopted a market economy system. The primary objective of most comparative studies was to examine the convergence of public spending levels driven by economic growth and technological development. In this regard, Harold Wilensky's work focused on increasing convergence in the development of the welfare state by measuring the size of social protection expenditures relative to the gross national product. His work relied primarily on statistical data and concentrated on specific economic variables that fall within the theoretical framework of convergence among industrial societies. Most of the research that dominated the academic scene was American and aimed at advancing the convergence thesis. It assumed that all political systems, whether communist, capitalist, democratic, or authoritarian, tend toward the same pattern: the welfare state. This assumption denied that the outcomes of public policy differ according to the nature and characteristics of the political system.

Accordingly, interest in the outputs of political systems in political science increased, with attempts to understand and analyze differences in public policies among developing countries. This led to a re-examination of the initial findings that did not assign any role to the characteristics of the political system in explaining public policy differences. In other words, scholars began asking whether structural differences among developing countries regarding governmental institutions, citizens' rights, and the activities of political parties and interest groups were related to differences in allocation, distribution, and other public policies in those countries. To answer these questions, comparative public policy studies focused on discussing the impact of political system characteristics on public policies and their outcomes; that is, examining the relationship between the political system and the outputs and results of public policy.

With the dawn of the 1960s, criticisms of the socio-economic model proliferated within comparative politics circles. For example, why were some countries pioneers in certain social welfare programs much earlier than others, despite having similar levels of economic growth? Why did the policy approaches of some developed countries, measured by the size of government spending, differ from those of others? More generally, how could a political vision determined by a unified socio-economic trajectory explain the striking differences in policies observed among advanced democratic countries? It should be noted that many studies highlighted that democratic political systems could produce indirect positive results through the outputs and outcomes of public policy. Furthermore, there was no evidence to support the hypothesis that political systems, regardless of their type, tend toward a similar pattern of public policies related to social welfare. There was also no conclusive evidence regarding the impact of democratic systems on economic growth, inflation, and other economic indicators.

It is worth noting that most definitions during this period focused on the economic aspects of public policy, viewing it as the process of allocating financial resources (the budget) along with its associated sources of power, such as relationships, priorities, advantages, information, and so on. An institution deemed important by the government would receive a large share of financial allocations, and vice versa, according to the principle of allocation based on

importance and budget size. Furthermore, the entire body of behavioral policy work in the field of comparative public policy focused on the developmental perspective that prevailed throughout the 1950s and 1970s. During this period, comparative studies mainly focused on comparing a large number of cases.

Despite the contributions made at this stage, it faced major criticisms centered on falling into the trap of economic determinism, which formed the basis of the developmental perspective that assumes development and progress are continuous and universal processes that all societies will eventually achieve. This paved the way for comparative public policy studies to move to another stage of development.

2.2 The Second Stage: Flourishing and Transformation in Comparative Policy Analysis

With the beginning of the 1960s, the field of comparative politics witnessed significant flourishing and expansion. This was due to the criticism directed at the developmental perspective, which emphasized the economic dimension and assumed that economic progress and development were universal processes that all societies would eventually reach. Furthermore, the quantitative and statistical methodological approaches adopted in comparative public policy analysis did not provide sufficient explanations for the political problems that welfare states in Western countries began to experience. Indicators such as public spending, levels of social support, tax rates, inflation rates, and unemployment rates were linked to the partisan orientation of governments in order to determine whether there was a relationship between the political orientations of ruling parties and the public policies pursued at that time.

Comparative studies of public policy were conducted using a large number of cases and quantitative data, but they focused on political variables rather than the economic variables emphasized in the first stage. These comparative studies centered on the question: “Does politics matter?” In other words, does the political affiliation of ruling parties affect the development of public policies? To answer this question, specific historical periods and phases were studied using indicators such as public spending levels, social expenditures, tax rates, inflation rates, and unemployment rates. These indicators were then linked to the partisan orientation of governments to determine whether there was a

relationship between the political orientations of ruling parties and the public policies adopted during those periods.

Comparative works published during this stage were based on the argument that the prevailing development and modernization model of the 1950s and 1960s neglected the role of political forces in shaping the outcomes of public policies. A wide range of approaches emerged, all aiming to demonstrate the “importance of politics.” The party-government framework was widely used to argue that policies differ according to which political party controls the government. This model was applied in several comparative studies in which American researchers attempted to demonstrate that welfare policies varied depending on whether the United States government was led by Republicans or Democrats. More recent in-depth analyses examined the complex relationships between political parties and public policies.

Accordingly, comparative public policy analysis at this stage focused on the political dimension, which provided an important basis for understanding differences and similarities in comparative public policy. It also allowed researchers to compare the performance of public policies in countries with different characteristics and in different parts of the world using the output approach, that is, according to the actions and measures undertaken by governments to achieve their goals and objectives.

In this context, a set of approaches and methodologies emerged aiming to prove and emphasize the “importance of politics” (politicization/politics). The framework of party-based government was widely used to argue that public policies differ according to changes in the political party controlling the government and according to political and partisan interactions. This approach was used in several comparative studies in which American researchers attempted to demonstrate that welfare policies changed depending on whether the United States government shifted from Republican to Democratic control and vice versa. Many studies focused extensively on examining the complex links between political parties and public policies.

Against this backdrop, the question of why governments adopt specific courses of action became as difficult to answer as it was important to ask. Why did the United States follow Europe in adopting some social policies while preceding it in adopting other social programs? Why did some countries preserve their major

cities as national treasures while others tolerated greater urban decline? Why is the “safety net” of social security considered a consensual and stable policy in some contexts but an ideologically contested issue in others? For this reason, the lengthy and complex process of public policymaking differs from simple decision-making, which merely involves choosing between alternatives. Anderson emphasized this point by arguing that public policy is often the outcome of a process involving multiple actors whose roles and influence are shaped by institutional and structural factors. Thus, comparing public policies essentially means comparing the political and institutional influences on the policymaking process.

In this second generation of comparative studies, a central question was raised: “Does politics matter?” In other words, does the political affiliation of ruling parties significantly affect the production of public policies? To answer this question, time series were developed using indicators such as public spending levels, social expenditures, tax rates, inflation rates, and unemployment rates. These series were then linked to the party affiliation of governments to determine whether there was a relationship between the political orientations of ruling parties and the policies adopted during those periods. Consequently, comparative studies in the 1960s and 1970s increasingly sought to answer the question “why,” emphasizing the major influence of the ideological orientations of ruling parties on public policies. At the same time, they stressed the importance of historical developments and the roots of political culture in shaping national policy choices. Therefore, comparing public policies required discussing countries’ choices of different policy instruments in areas such as education, health, and economic management, while considering the historical, cultural, political, and institutional factors influencing those choices. These elements, combined with interactions among politicians, bureaucrats, interest groups, public opinion, and policy beneficiaries, constituted the basis for interpreting similarities and differences in public policy.

Despite the significant comparative contributions and studies that emerged during this period and gained considerable popularity, making comparative public policy an important field of study, this comparative methodological approach faced three major criticisms.

The first criticism concerns the measurement of the political variable represented by the ruling party. This variable is not limited solely to the ideology of the ruling party, but extends to broader political elements capable of explaining the directions of public policies. These elements include the institutional structure of power, the existence or absence of majority coalitions, the position of the opposition toward government policies, and the role of interest groups associated with political parties.

The second criticism concerns the adopted output measures. The quantitative indicators used to measure public spending and inflation rates were considered flawed in two respects. First, they failed to capture broader policy dimensions that, although important, could not easily be quantified. Second, they were limited to a small number of indicators, mainly representing macroeconomic and social protection policies.

The third criticism relates to the results obtained from those studies, which did not establish a clear and lasting relationship between public policy outcomes and the presence of a political party in power. Such a relationship was confirmed in only a very limited number of the cases examined.

2.3 The Third Stage: National Approaches to Public Policies

Based on these criticisms, an important shift occurred in the comparative analysis of public policies toward the end of the 1970s. This stage reflected three major transformations⁸⁹:

- The focus shifted from the outputs and results of public policies to the process of producing them.
- Research moved from quantitative studies based on a large number of cases to qualitative studies based on a smaller number of cases; in other words, from a variable-centered strategy to a case-centered strategy.
- Scholars moved away from isolating explanatory variables and examining the effect of each variable separately toward analyzing the interaction between different variables and understanding their combined effects.

Accordingly, the third generation of comparative studies focused on highlighting the process of public policy production, emphasizing its qualitative dimensions and the interaction between variables. Its proponents stressed the differences in

⁸⁹ Kevin A. Clarke and David M. Primo. 2007. "Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach," *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 4, p 567.

national processes of public policy production, leading to classifications that presented diverse “national approaches” to public policy. This perspective emerged from the interaction between two dimensions: the way governments manage public problems and the structure of interactions among the various actors involved in public policy, as indicated by Jeremy Richardson.

Within this stage, the institutional political process perspective was adopted. This perspective views politics as the result of external pressures, including socio-economic pressures, partisan demands, and interest-group activities exerted on governments. Institutional analysis places the state at the center of analysis, which implies at least three practical dimensions:

1. Recalling the distinctive historical models through which nation-states were formed and the institutional structures that distinguish one state from another.
2. Examining the ways in which state structures and capacities interact with and influence the prospects of economic sectors.
3. Analyzing the impact of political feedback on political alliances, party competition, and other features of the policymaking environment.

It is worth noting that comparative works published during this period focused on the public policy style of particular countries. This led many critics to argue that comparative public policy analysis at this stage was more descriptive than analytical or interpretive. Nevertheless, this stage revitalized the field of comparative public policy by highlighting interactions between the state and interest groups, incorporating the concept of policy networks, and renewing the institutional perspective through the development of neo-institutionalism, which became a new focus of analysis.

Within this framework, historical institutionalism introduced the concepts of “path dependency” and “national paths,” representing new theoretical approaches in the comparative analysis of public policies, while also emphasizing issues related to policy change and reform.

This pattern of comparative public policy analysis remains dominant today. However, recent studies have shown that, despite its explanatory strength, it is not free from methodological and theoretical shortcomings.

3. Methodological Problems

Weak comparative work in public policy can generally be classified into four categories.

3.1 Poor Comparisons

3.1.1 First Category: Artificial Comparisons

These works are characterized by a discrepancy between form and substance. Although they adopt the appearance of comparison, their content is largely devoid of genuine comparative analysis. This type is evident in collective works addressing sectoral policies, where each chapter examines a national public policy written by an author from the country under study. In such works, comparison is based only on vague and general observations presented in the introduction and conclusion. The different national cases are not analyzed using a single and coherent analytical framework shared by all contributors. For this reason, such studies are referred to as artificial comparisons⁹⁰.

3.1.2 Second Category: Remote or Office Comparison

The internet has become an important tool for comparative researchers, enabling them to collect large amounts of secondary literature quickly and effortlessly from their offices. It also facilitates communication with national and foreign researchers. Nevertheless, this method remains insufficient for fulfilling the requirements of comparative study because political phenomena cannot be separated from the environments in which they emerge and interact.

A valid comparison requires direct contact with the phenomenon under study and a degree of familiarity with the relevant national contexts. For this reason, studies that rely mainly on secondary literature, newspaper articles, or questionnaires sent to experts without direct field engagement are referred to as “remote comparisons” or “office comparisons.”

In order for researchers to achieve accurate scientific results in comparative analysis, several conditions must be met:

- The researcher must be able to reconstruct the patterns of thinking and reasoning acquired through interaction with foreign researchers.
- The researcher should immerse themselves in the case under study for a sufficient period to gain a deep understanding of its details.

⁹⁰ J. M. Smits, ‘Comparative Law and Its Influence on National Legal Systems’, in M. Reimann and R. Zimmermann (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Law* (Oxford University Press, 2006, p612.

- The researcher must possess strong intuition and the ability to adapt to the foreign phenomenon being observed.
- The researcher should be capable of unpacking complex and ambiguous phenomena and understanding the thought processes of foreign actors in order to interpret their behavior.
- The researcher must immerse themselves in the environment surrounding the phenomenon under study in order to understand its contexts and modes of reasoning.

3.1.3 Third Category: Overly Simplistic and Reductive Comparisons

This type of study is especially common in quantitative research relying heavily on numerical indicators. Such studies reduce the comparison process to a single indicator while neglecting other important variables that significantly affect the phenomenon under study. For example, the development of the welfare state may be reduced solely to levels of social spending, or economic policy may be evaluated only through inflation and unemployment rates.

Similarly, some analyses of national approaches to public policy rely on only a few visible characteristics and provide superficial comparative criteria such as obligation versus consensus or expectation versus responsiveness. As a result, these studies oversimplify the complex realities of national contexts. This tendency is particularly visible in quantitative studies based on variables, which dominated the first and second stages of comparative public policy analysis.

3.1.4 Fourth Category: Distorted Comparison

In this type of comparison, the argument is based on predetermined conclusions rather than empirical investigation. Comparison is used deductively to prove a particular hypothesis while ignoring alternative explanations. Empirical work serves merely as illustration or embellishment. In such cases, the researcher effectively guides the comparison process and determines its results, becoming, in practice, the spokesperson for the comparison itself.

4- Conditions for a Good Comparison⁹¹

4.1 Constructing a Comparable Research Problem

Comparison is based on two opposing perspectives. The first perspective argues that certain phenomena are incomparable, while the second assumes that everything is comparable as it appears. In the first perspective, excessive focus

⁹¹ Saleh Belhadj, *Public Policy Analysis (Theories, Approaches and Methods)*, Dar Qurtuba, Algeria, p. 221.

is placed on the minute details of political processes, causing these processes to appear contradictory and impossible to compare. In the second perspective, however, the assumption that two phenomena are comparable is not self-evident; rather, comparability must be carefully constructed. This highlights the need for caution when selecting the elements to be compared.

The elements chosen for comparison may carry the same name in two different countries while referring to entirely different realities that cannot truly be compared. In practice, the meanings and connotations associated with a concept may vary significantly depending on the national context under study. Therefore, the comparative researcher must deconstruct terms, statistics, records, classifications, and national linguistic conventions by exploring their multiple meanings and determining the relative significance of the concepts they contain, as well as the intellectual and political contexts in which they are used.

This process is essential when identifying the actors involved in public policy or when defining the category of public policy selected for comparison. The analytical purpose is to clarify the relationship between the concepts being compared and the patterns of interaction and actors within which those concepts operate.

The next step is the reconstruction process, during which the researcher develops clear concepts and methodologies appropriate to each national context in the countries under study. This is achieved by formulating common research questions that are not restricted to a single national context, thereby enabling the researcher to examine all dimensions of the phenomenon without distorting the concepts. Consequently, constructing a comparative study requires re-examining national assumptions, analytically defining concepts, and empirically testing the selected concepts.

4.2 The Practice of Comparison

In comparative practice, the researcher must apply a unified analytical framework to similar fields by collecting data from the same category. The researcher then has two options: relying on a single researcher to conduct the comparison, known as the individual approach, or relying on a team of researchers, known as the group approach. The choice between these two approaches depends on their respective advantages and disadvantages, as well as other practical considerations.

Researchers may prefer the individual approach because it ensures consistency in both the research question and the comparative analysis. However, the nature of comparative studies often makes this approach difficult because it narrows the scope of comparison and limits the number of cases studied. This limitation results from financial constraints related to travel and residence abroad, as well as time constraints associated with conducting repeated field visits.

For these reasons, researchers may prefer the group approach, since it allows for the study of a larger number of national cases and provides greater material, temporal, and linguistic resources. Nevertheless, group comparison also presents certain drawbacks. It requires a period of collective familiarization with the analytical framework and agreement on how to apply it in practice. Furthermore, it does not always guarantee consistency in the research question or methodology, and researchers often face significant time pressures in completing the comparative work.

The current trend in comparative studies, particularly those commissioned by public, regional, or international institutions, favors the group approach. These institutions often establish multinational research teams to conduct comparative studies. Two important points should be emphasized here.

First, group comparisons require a considerable amount of time to ensure their success. Team members need time to become acquainted with one another, develop mutual understanding, and build trust. This facilitates a collective understanding of the comparative issue and reduces the risks of misunderstanding, inconsistency, and conflict among team members. In short, effective collaborative comparative fieldwork requires accumulated experience developed through participation in several successive studies.

Second, the formation of multinational teams, although beneficial, also presents challenges. As previously noted, group comparison is often the most suitable approach because it facilitates precise, realistic, and context-sensitive analysis, thereby reducing errors, overcoming psychological barriers, and lowering research costs. However, it may also produce some of the weaknesses associated with artificial comparison. Geographical distance and differences in linguistic competence among team members can lead to disparities in understanding and interpreting the comparative problem. Consequently, the number of comparative problems may increase in proportion to the number of countries studied, since

each researcher may unconsciously apply their own analytical framework to their national context.

4.3 The Problem of Writing a Comparison⁹²

The issue of writing comparative research arises particularly in collaborative studies involving multinational teams. In such cases, presenting the comparative work becomes more complex because the researcher must determine how to organize the components of the study, that is, which comparative writing strategy to adopt.

Generally, there are two main options for writing comparative studies. The first consists of organizing the work according to the field or country being compared, while the second relies on analytical approaches to structure the comparison.

In the first option, the researcher provides a detailed description of each national case and places the countries side by side. However, this approach often makes comparison difficult for the reader because the writing is guided by the country or sector rather than by the comparability of the predefined research problem. As a result, comparative tables and charts may lose much of their analytical significance, and the researcher may once again fall into the trap of artificial comparison.

Despite these limitations, this remains the most commonly used method in collaborative comparative studies, especially those conducted by multinational research teams.

⁹² Saleh Belhadj, *op cit*, p. 221.

Conclusion:

Public policy sits at the heart of what governments actually do for people. When we shift the lens from how administrative structures are organised to what policies produce for citizens, a powerful analytical emerges: the Comparative analysis of public policies.

This approach encourages us to examine how different countries tackle similar challenges, whether it's delivering healthcare, managing cities, or protecting the environment, and to draw useful lessons from those comparisons.

Comparative policy analysis is a research area aimed at explaining policy outputs and outcomes, at the crossroad of political science, sociology, economy, history, international relations and administrative studies.

Comparative public policy analysis systematically assesses how and why different governments address similar problems. By examining policy designs, implementation frameworks, and outcomes across different jurisdictions or time periods, it enables policymakers to adapt evidence-based solutions and improve governance in ways that are appropriate to local contexts.

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