

What is Policy, Social Policy and Social Policy Changing

José G. Vargas-Hernández, M.B.A;Ph.D.

Profesor Investigador miembro del Sistema Nacional de Investigadores
Departamento de Mercadotecnia y Negocios Internacionales
Centro Universitario de Ciencias Económico Administrativas
Universidad de Guadalajara.
Periférico Norte 799 Edificio G-306
Zapopan, Jalisco C.P. 45100; México
E-mail: josevargas@cucea.udg.mx, Tel y fax: +52(33) 3770 3343 Ext 5097

Mohammad Reza Noruzi, EMBA, PhD Student

Policy Making in Public Sector
Islamic Azad University, Bonab Branch, Iran
Young Researchers Club Member, IAU Bonab, Iran
E-mail: mr.noruzi@modares.ac.ir, Phone: +98- 412-7238893-5

Farhad Nezhad Haj Ali Irani, PhD (Corresponding Author)

Islamic Azad University, Bonab Branch, Iran
Email: F_NejadHajiAliIrani@yahoo.com, Phone: +98- 0412-7238893-5

Abstract

Today we are experiencing good improvements in policy, social policy and policy making. A lot of good researches have been done on these issues and helped for the development of policy. The contributions of university professors, politicians and elites cannot be considered low. And the academic papers are deployed to offer from the major theoretical and methodological approaches and empirical research. To put in their proper context the important contributions of the processes of social policy change in the construction of social development should make some notes theoretical and methodological research into social policy.

Key Words: Policy, Social policy, policy changing process

Introduction

The role of social policy is related to economic, social and political. The search for coordination and coherence of policies should take into account the fact that ideas about social policy and its role in development have changed over time, indicating the difficulty to find clarity on the approaches to social investment, poverty alleviation and equity. The result of the implementation of social policies that have gone through profound changes in its design is alarming in terms of deep social inequalities and the welfare of individuals in society.

Social policy primarily refers to guidelines and interventions for the changing, maintenance or creation of living conditions that are conducive to human welfare. Social policy are education, health, housing, employment and food for all people. Social policy is part of public policy but public policy is more than that, it is economic policy, industrial policy, and also social policy, etc. Definitive answers to the supply, poverty and inequality are likely to remain elusive, and as such, it is important to sustain the opportunities for discussion, experimentation, innovation and learning in social development approaches considered. Finding ways to preserve these conditions and to encourage deeper appreciation for the contextual factors that shape development outcomes can be significant contributions, despite themselves be counterintuitive new forms of coherence and cooperation international.

Thus, social policy is that part of public policy that has to do with social issues. The Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy at Harvard University describes it as "public policy and practice in the areas of health care, human services, criminal justice, inequality, education, and labor." (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Social policy often deals with issues which Rittel & Webber (1973) called wicked problems. Social Policy is also distinct as an academic field which focuses on the systematic evaluation of societies' responses to social need. For example in Iran some pioneer universities have a specific university courses and studies on policy and policy making universities like Tarbiat Modarres University is as an example of this pioneer university who has a good background on this studying (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Social Policy is the study of social services and the welfare state. In general terms, it looks at the idea of social welfare, and its relationship to politics and society.

The nature of policy issue is thus relevant not only to scientists and scholars of politics, sociology and public administration but also for scholars and practitioners in institutions and organizations of different governments, businesses and NGOs and civil society in general. While social policy and its impact on society have been subject to much debate, often of a critical nature, the evidence continues to mount that a better formulation, design and implementation of an adequate social policy has a positive impact on social development, mainly.

More specifically, it also considers detailed issues in

- policy and administration of social services, including policies for health, housing, income maintenance, education and social work;
- needs and issues affecting the users of services, including poverty, old age, health, disability, and family policy; and
- the delivery of welfare (Spicker, 2007; Irani & Noruzi, 2011).

Therefore, with the noble purpose of discussing the progress of research on social policy is an important step to stimulate the debate on an issue as controversial. With this in mind, research embodies an important contribution to the generation of scientific knowledge, the creation of theoretical and methodological models for analysis and communication and dissemination of key findings in the context of the state and civil society today.

What does social policy do:

Social policy will help the community much more improvement in different aspects for example some come in the following:

- Quality of life
- Education
- Citizenship
- Culture
- Income
- Economic
- Resident in the rural areas

Policy-based management

There are different approaches in management especially in today's turbulent ongoing days. Because environment changes a lot so policies and policy making strategies always changes and becoming more complicated and sophisticated. Now policy-based management is one of these strategies. Policy-based management is an administrative approach that is used to simplify the management of a given endeavor by establishing policies to deal with situations that are likely to occur. Policies are operating rules that can be referred to as a way to maintain order, security, consistency, or otherwise furth a goal or mission. For example, a town council might have a policy against hiring the relatives of council members for civic positions. Each time that situation arises; council members can refer to the policy, rather than having to make decisions on a case-by-case basis (policy-based management, 2011; Rahimi & Noruzi, 2011).

Policy Cycle

In political science the policy cycle is a tool used for the analyzing of the development of a policy item. It can also be referred to as a "stagiest approach". One standardized version includes the following stages:

1. Agenda setting (Problem identification)
2. Policy Formulation
3. Adoption
4. Implementation
5. Evaluation

An eight step policy cycle is developed in detail in *The Australian Policy Handbook* by Peter Bridgman and Glyn Davis: (now with Catherine Althaus in its 4th edition)

1. Issue identification
2. Policy analysis
3. Policy instrument development
4. Consultation (which permeates the entire process)
5. Coordination
6. Decision
7. Implementation
8. Evaluation (Wikipedia, 2011)

The Althaus, Bridgman & Davis model is heuristic and iterative. It is intentionally normative and not meant to be diagnostic or predictive. Policy cycles are typically characterized as adopting a classical approach. Accordingly some postmodern academics challenge cyclical models as unresponsive and unrealistic, preferring systemic and more complex models (Young & Mintzberg, 2009). They consider a broader range of actors involved in the policy space that includes civil society organizations, the media, intellectuals, think tanks or policy research institutes, corporations, lobbyists, etc (Medvetz, 2004: Wikipedia, 2011).

Social Policy and Administration

Social Policy and Administration is an academic subject concerned with the study of social services and the welfare state. It developed in the early part of the 20th century as a complement to social work studies, aimed at people who would be professionally involved in the administration of welfare. In the course of the last forty years, the range and breadth of the subject has developed. The principal areas relate to

- policy and administrative practice in social services, including health administration, social security, education, employment services, community care and housing management;
- social problems, including crime, disability, unemployment, mental health, learning disability, and old age;
- issues relating to social disadvantage, including race, gender and poverty; and
- the range of collective social responses to these conditions.

Social Policy is a subject area, not a discipline; it borrows from other social science disciplines in order to develop study in the area. The contributory disciplines include sociology, social work, psychology, economics, political science, management, history, philosophy and law (Spicker, 2007: Rahimi & Noruzi, 2011).

Iran, Islam and History of Social Policy

Islamic republic of Iran is an Islamic country which has a good and comprehensive policy making system with its base and foundation on holy Quran and Islamic roles.

Evidence suggesting that policy and policy making is one of the fundamental parts of any government. And there are different types of policy making process in different countries, for example some countries having democratic and some have dictatorship policy making process (Danaee Fard & Noruzi, 2011: Rahimi, & Noruzi, 2011). Islam is one of the most important proponents of social policy Muslims were always pioneer in helping and giving money for the poor to have good life as the other and the earliest example goes back to Umar ibn al-Khattāb's rule as the second caliph of Islam. He used zakah collections although it is now be used and a lot of Muslim countries use it and also other governmental resources to establish pensions, income support, child benefits, various stipends for people of the non-Muslim community. In the West, proponents of scientific social planning, such as the sociologist Auguste Comte, and social researchers, such as Charles Booth, contributed to the emergence of social policy in the first industrialized countries. Other significant examples in the development social policy are the Bismarckian welfare state in 19th century Germany; social security policies introduced by the New Deal in the United States between 1933 and 1935, and health reforms in the UK following the Beveridge Report of 1942 (social policy, 2006).

Modern government is based on a social contract between citizens and the state in which rights and duties are agreed to by all to further the common interest. Citizens lend their support to a government through taxes and efforts to a country's good; in return, governments acquire legitimacy by protecting the people's rights and through public policies that benefit all. However, policy making is often captured by powerful groups and elites, making government policies biased and unaccountable to the majority of citizens. With half the world's population living below the two-dollar –aday poverty line, ineffective social policies can be the spark for state breakdown (Ortiz, 2007, p. 7).

The Role of Policy in Management

Policy plays an important role within the University. It provides the principles which dictate how the members of the University will act. The variables of uncertainty and ambiguity are often associated with some post-classical approaches to social policy that seem to pervert. Moreover, risk and risk assessment are central to contemporary welfare state to involve both critical approaches, and to the more orthodox social policy, pointing to the pensions which are a good example to illustrate the elements of exclusion and notions of risk-based insurance and their inherent limitations for much of the design schemes of social policy. But more than any essential contradiction, it is argued that we need a more informed dialogue and proud, to ensure a frank exchange of ideas on some initial clarification of the major social policy issues. Those principles are derived from and shaped by: the law and regulations that govern the University; national standards and community expectations, and the values and mission the University articulates in its strategic plan (Rahimi & Noruzi, 2011).

It is the role of Policy to:

- translate values into operations;
- ensure compliance with legal and statutory responsibilities;
- guide the University towards the achievement of its strategic plan;
- set standards; and
- Improve the management of risk (policy library, 2011).

Policy Contents

A policy always has different contents but mainly there are some similarities among them below we bring the common ones

- A **purpose statement**, outlining why the organization is issuing the policy, and what its desired effect or outcome of the policy should be.
- An **applicability and scope** statement, describing who the policy affects and which actions are impacted by the policy. The applicability and scope may expressly exclude certain people, organizations, or actions from the policy requirements. Applicability and scope is used to focus the policy on only the desired targets, and avoid unintended consequences where possible.
- An **effective date** which indicates when the policy comes into force. Retroactive policies are rare, but can be found.
- A **responsibilities** section, indicating which parties and organizations are responsible for carrying out individual policy statements. Many policies may require the establishment of some ongoing function or action. For example, a purchasing policy might specify that a purchasing office be created to process purchase requests, and that this office would be responsible for ongoing actions. Responsibilities often include identification of any relevant oversight and/or governance structures.
- **Policy statements** indicating the specific regulations, requirements, or modifications to organizational behavior that the policy is creating. Policy statements are extremely diverse depending on the organization and intent, and may take almost any form (Irani & Noruzi, 2011).

Some policies may contain additional sections, including:

- **Background**, indicating any reasons, history, and intent that led to the creation of the policy, which may be listed as **motivating factors**. This information is often quite valuable when policies must be evaluated or used in ambiguous situations, just as the intent of a law can be useful to a court when deciding a case that involves that law.
- **Definitions**, providing clear and unambiguous definitions for terms and concepts found in the policy document (Wikipedia, 2011).

Results and Discussions

In any society, governmental entities enact laws, make policies, and allocate resources. This is true at all levels. Public policy can be generally defined as a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives.

Individuals and groups often attempt to shape public policy through education, advocacy, or mobilization of interest groups. Shaping public policy is obviously different in Western-style democracies than in other forms of government. But it is reasonable to assume that the process always involves efforts by competing interest groups to influence policy makers in their favor (Kilpatrick, 2000). In any case, critics of welfare tend to take two forms. First, the social engineers of the welfare state took it wrong, and second, the current defenders of the welfare state continue taking it wrong. If this is true, then the possibility of finding common ground with critical social policy seems to be difficult.

Citizens cannot become a great idea for social policy without acknowledging the changes in the locality in which they have occurred since 1945. You need to remember the older meaning of the term; this is the status of resident of a village or a big city. What is becoming clearer is that the new inequalities emerge since 1940, which has to be taken into account when discussing the social policy objective. A distinctive critical perspective on the role of the welfare state is the close link between social and economic policies in the postwar period and the accumulation and legitimating functions assigned to social policy. One of the most powerful ideas that inform the dominant tradition of social policy and public administration even before the seventies was the notion that social policy is concerned with producing social integration. The social policy analysts have moved beyond the concept of poverty to the concept of social exclusion since the early nineties is not a coincidence that corresponds to the worsening economic climate, with higher social and demographic profiles of needs and increased fiscal pressures on welfare provision. If the new social policy approach has been to promote the values and personal responsibility, social institutions outside of government must be mobilized.

Some cases emphasize the thought of social policy at this time, such as a commitment to full employment, relations between central governments and local welfare provision, the contributions of philanthropic and charitable organizations, the participation of citizens and civil society organizations, etc. The way in which inequality affects the lives of many people is through the consolidation of policy areas which are not conventionally thought of as social policy. The processes of economic globalization adjustments bring political and social system, setting up new institutional arrangements and governance systems, the formation of a culture of peace, the pursuit of a global ethic, the cohesion of social relations by rules the promotion of sustainable development, etc.

The achievements and scope of economic globalization processes deepened by a neoliberal model of economic development since the seventies of last century can make a rethinking of the institutional responsibilities of the state in social policy and encourage academics and researchers to study new objects evident in the paradigm shifts. The new social policy emerges from a narrow neoliberal ideology of the capitalist state action on social welfare assistance and only authorized to operate the social changes require the dominant economic structures to benefit their own interests to the detriment of the solution of demands of society as a whole. A state with this configuration neoliberal capitalist polarizes the distribution of wealth with dysfunctional effects that deepen poverty, marginalization and social exclusion. A state with this configuration of neoliberal capitalism tries to be more democratic than, its internal contradictions hinder the promotion of equal opportunities, capacities and rights of citizens.

Finally, aiming to approach the processes of social policy change in the construction of social development, the responsibility lies with the agents capable of promoting these changes, such as academics, researchers and analysts, civil society, technology information and communication technologies (ICTs) used by the media, individual subjects of rights from holders, etc.

First, if the students are encouraged to reflect social policies in a critical fashion, trying to make it easy to imagine and understand the contents of the various issues that focus on social policy, there have been many opportunities for social policy analysts to be closely involved in framing policies. Especially in the past 30 years, during which presumably has been responsible for a range of reforms to infinity in both progressive legislation to operational the model of economic development. Virtually everyone in the academic world of social policy has to be critical of government policies. Therefore it can be argued that there is no distinctly social policy despite criticism that it would be an exaggeration to suggest that social policy criticism is in danger of evaporating into the dry heat of the cynicism of post-classical analysis.

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