

TO THE READER

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BUILDING THE FUTURE THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS: PROBLEMS OF LEARNING AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Introduction

Nowadays, a particular field of applied research has been formed in the world – policy science. It consists of policy study and policy analysis. Each of these components corresponds to a certain type of document that allows you to record the results of policy science. The results of the policy study may be obtained, for example, during the implementation of scientific research works. The results of the policy analysis are carried out as part of the preparation of a draft of policy decision for a specific customer – a particular official, central or local authority, or government organization.

In states with a high potential for public governance, the practice of policy document writing is widespread. The main policy documents are policy papers. They are addressed at a particular official, authority, or government organization. The key components of such documents are a description of the context and importance of the particular issue – public problem, a discussion of its possible solutions, and recommendations for further course of action.

Writing a quality policy paper requires knowledge of the social sciences, and the ability to apply qualitative and quantitative methods, cost-benefit, and risk analysis. Future experts may be acquired relevant knowledge and skills by studying Master's programs in Public Administration (MPA) or Public Policy (MPP), as well as advanced training programs. Such programs have been developed in all OECD member states.

But, there are a lot of problems in policy analysis – problems of learning and practical application that need to be solved.

Basic problems of policy analysis learning and practical application

The procedures of writing policy papers are legally regulated in most OECD member states. But, the practice of teaching the academic discipline "Public Policy Analysis and Implementation" shows that most students have certain difficulties with the practical application of these procedures.

In particular, instead of choosing a public problem suitable for policy analysis students choose to study political problems, which outline political analysts for political parties to win the favour of the electorate. But such issues are not public problems – the situations that cause concern in society and require government intervention, and for which specific recommendations can be developed – instructions for its solution with the resources available to the customer.

The consequence of this is:

- the degeneration of advice offered by students on solving public problems into a list of calls for "reform", "improvement", "improvement", and "strengthening" without considering the environmental features, available limitations, and resources;
- lack of answers to the question: who resists solving the public problem and why; how to overcome this resistance; what resources are needed to solve the public problem; what recommendations should be provided (what to do; why to do it; how to do it); how to implement the policy (the organization or structure that will implement it; the way services are provided; policy tools).

Therefore, it is important to spread among civil servants, officials of local self-government, and experts of non-governmental analytical centres knowledge and skills regarding the process and procedures of developing advice to authorities about the best possible options for actions that solve social problems, monitoring and evaluating the results and consequences of these actions - for building the best future. The first task on this path is a distinction between policy and politics, as well as the spheres of activity of political and policy analysts.

Discussion

In Slavic scientific terminology, the word "политика" corresponds to two different concepts, for which in other languages, in particular, English, different words are used (policy and politics).

Typical examples of definitions of these terms are as follows.

"Politics is the ongoing argument about what we should do as a nation and how it should be done, where the rules by which we argue may themselves become part of the argument" (Boynton, 2013). It is "the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations among individuals, such as the distribution of resources or status" (Webster, 1996). Politics in this sense is the subject of political analysis and the field of activity of political analysts.

The policy is a course of action accepted and followed by the government. "Policy is intended to affect the "real" world, by guiding the decisions that are made" (Lowi, 1972). The policy is the subject of policy analysis and the field of activity of policy analysts. The policy analysis aims to find out what government

actually does: "what government do, why they do it, and what difference it makes" (Dye, 1983). Or "whatever governments choose to do or not to do" (Dye, 1992 cited in Anderson, 1994). In general, policy analysis "determines which of the various alternative public or government policies will most achieve a given set of goals in light of the relations between the policies and the goals and in light of politically feasible courses of action, it generates information and evidence in order to help the policymaker choose the most advantageous action" (Geva-May, Pal, 1999).

The false identification of the concepts of politics and policy occurs as a result of the understanding:

- the policy-making process as decision-making;
- policymakers only as political persons;
- an authoritative decision (that is, a decision regarding a policy course, a specific action) as a political decision based on consideration of various political interests;
- the policy analysis as commenting on political events or critical discussion of the actions of authorities.

According to the above distinction:

- political analysis is a study of politics in the sense of politics, that is, a system of procedures aimed at obtaining a scientifically based forecast of the development of political events, phenomena, and processes (for their use in the practice of political management). Performers of political analysis are political analysts;
- policy analysis – a set of procedures for developing advice on the best of the possible courses of action of the authorities, oriented to the particular official, central or local authority and based on evidence and values. Policy analysts are the direct performers of policy analysis.

Thus, political analysis results in a forecast, while policy analysis results in advice on specific actions of authorities. Since the political forecast is used in the development of policy advice, the advice cannot be a component of the forecast. The idea that policy analysis is reduced to political analysis is false. On the contrary, political analysis is a component of policy analysis, a separate aspect of the future course of action.

The policy analysis should not be identified with:

- scientific research, since policy analysis is measured by solving a problem, not by searching for the truth. Unlike scientific research, policy analysis is limited in time, systemic, multidisciplinary (requires special knowledge and skills), sensitive to the political context, and oriented to the particular official, central or local authority;
- drafting legislation, which is only the preparation of particular tools for solving a public problem. The policy analysis is aimed at writing instructions for

public problem-solving and does not end with the adoption of a law (approval of a program, signing of an order, creation of a new authority, etc.);

- political propaganda, that focuses on positive or negative government activities to gain support from political parties, social groups, or non-government organizations. Therefore, political propaganda can be based on the policy analysis or deny it.

Policy analysis is more about "speaking truth to power" (Wildavsky, 1987) than trying to convince the authority of the possibility of "improving life today"¹ in the absence of the necessary resources.

Based on the above distinction, the spheres of activity of political and policy analysts become clear. A political analyst, writing an analytical document on political risks (for example, a political forecast), creates conditions for making effective political decisions. A policy analyst develops instructions for the complete solution of a specific public problem with the available resources, at the request of the customer – a central authority (ministry, committee, state administration, etc.) or a local self-government body (city mayor, city or village council, etc.).

Thus, the activity of a political analyst is focused, first of all, on the current diagnosis of political texts, political speeches, and the political situation as a whole. It requires the identification and detailed analysis of positive and negative factors affecting political development, clarifying the causes of problematic moments, and establishing the composition of actors, which can change the political situation.

In contrast, the activity of a policy analyst is aimed, first of all, at identifying public problems, establishing the grounds for government intervention, analysing stakeholders and environment, formulating the goal of solving the problem, expected outputs and outcomes, defining and comparing policy options (alternatives), development of policy recommendations, and measures for the implementation of the recommended solution.

At the same time, the activity of neither political analysts nor policy analysts cannot be underestimated or considered unnecessary, because they operate in a common environment and within the framework of a single public process.

Conclusions

1. Unlike politics, which is aimed at using power institutions to realize the interests and needs of various social groups and individuals, the policy is aimed at finding out what governments do or do not do, why they do it and what it changes.

¹ This is a slogan of one Ukrainian political party in the 2014 elections.

2. Unlike political analysis, which is aimed at obtaining forecasts of the development of political processes, policy analysis is focused on developing advice on the best possible course of government action. With this in mind, political analysis is a component of policy analysis.

3. Unlike a political analyst, whose activity is primarily focused on the diagnosis of political texts, political speeches, and the political situation, the activity of a policy analyst consists in developing instructions for solving public problems. Despite the different spheres of activity, political analysts and policy analysts operate in a common environment and within the framework of a public process.

4. Sustainable social development is impossible without the formation of knowledge and skills among civil servants, officials of local self-government, and experts of non-governmental analytical centres regarding the process and procedures of public policy, based on evidence and values. The basis of the activity of policy analysts should be the development of advice on specific actions of the authority – instructions for solving public problems within the constraints and available resources.

5. The study of students, as well as the training of civil servants, should be clearly separated into the training of future political and policy analysts since they develop different documents for different purposes.

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