

Public Policies - a new perspective on political science

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Abstract

This study focuses on what we call “public policies” and reveals a new perspective of political science as a discipline, centered on policy in its many forms. On the one hand, with regard to political science, we find out that its progress is associated in Europe with “democratization” and with the advent of the welfare state, and among the main traits enroll specialization, fragmentation and hybridization. On the other hand, a public policy can be understood as “a set of measures taken by a legal and responsible authority aimed at improving the living conditions of citizens or designing measures to stimulate the economic growth.

However, public policy is designed to promote generally accepted values in a country such as equality, freedom, welfare, etc.

Key Words: *public policies, political science, democratization, policy, economic growth.*

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The term “public policy” entered the language of the specialized studies and everyday language in Romania quite late (the end of 90’) and there still are many ambiguities of the common sense of the scope of this notion. A possible explanation could be that, the term was borrowed from English - “policy”- but there is not a specific translation into Romanian language, other than that of policy. Traditionally, the policy means the activity of political parties, of institutions legitimated by democratic mechanisms (the Parliament, The government and their working appliances), policy statements, election campaigns, etc, from here the temptation of terminology level’s contamination. So, Romania preferred the term from French literature -”politiques publiques” – which means a network of interrelated decisions about choosing objectives, means and resources allocated to achieve them in specific situations.

The concept of “public policy” meets a whole series of definitions, from the simplest -what governments choose to do or not to do- to the most instrumentalist - a purposeful course of action followed by an actor or group of actors, addressing a problem (Profiroiu, 2009: 13-14).

These definitions, among others detained in the scientific literature, allowed the separation of certain features of public policies: it is a set of actions - includes actions, activities, decisions or financial resources whose achievement or allocation is ensured by constraining force; represents the general scenery of public policy objectives; the subjects or recipients are determined by the public policy objectives; it follows to realize certain objectives or determined purposes. In the scientific literature, these traits”*give consistency to public policy*”(Miulescu, 2009: 7-8).

According to Andrei Trandafira, the importance of this study is to see in what extent we can use the institutional instruments we have available to achieve a more efficient process of public policy.

The public policy research represents a border area between several “classical” disciplines such as: political science,

sociology, social psychology, legal or economic science. The study of public policy would be the most recent branch of political science. Regarding the techniques and research methods, they are borrowed from various social disciplines and adapted to the instruments for each study (Dascalu, 2011: 10).

As a subject, political science is defined by its substance concerns by “dropping” it on the policy in its many forms, becoming more and more a discipline based on articles (Goodin, 2005: 24). The hybridization process consists, first of all, in taking and giving loan concepts, theories, methods. Borrowing methods and statistical techniques is not always beneficial. Many political scientists using quantitative methods extend the boundaries of political knowledge. Still, others are motivated primarily by the interest in technique and not in substance (Goodin, 2005: 101).

The political science borrowed major concepts from: sociology (social class, accommodation), psychology (attitude, personality), economy (resource allocation, deficit), etc.

Regarding the political science and its entire context, no political scientist, claimed to have told the whole story, But inevitably, must be recognized, that we witnessed to the professional maturity of political science like a discipline. The science of politics had its origins and experienced its first increase in the ancient Mediterranean world, in medieval Catholic, Renaissance, Reform, Enlightenment and 19th century in Europe, but it was about individual research. In the 19th century, with the development of the European universities, the teaching about the state, administration, politics and public policy developed, increasing more and more in universities. A number of the magazine “European Journal of Political Research” (Valles and Newton, 1991) is dedicated to postwar history of west - European political science. The political science progress in Europe was associated with democratization, for obvious reasons and the appearance of the welfare state, because an activist, open, penetrating state, requires large amounts of information on the political and policy performance (Goodin, 2005: 79).

Political scientist H. Laswell said it best: at its most basic level, politics is the struggle of “who gets what, when, how”. This struggle may be as modest as competing interest groups fighting over control of a small municipal budget or as overwhelming as a military stand-off between international superpowers. Political scientists study such struggles, both small and large, in an effort to develop general principles or theories about the way the world of politics works. The diverse structure of political science reflects the diverse kinds of problems the discipline attempts to analyze and explain.

Although political scientists are prone to debate and disagreement, the majority of them see the discipline as a genuine science. As a result, political scientists generally strive to emulate the objectivity as well as the conceptual and methodological rigor typically associated with the so-called "hard" sciences. They see themselves as engaged in revealing the relationships underlying political events and conditions. Based on these revelations, they attempt to state general principles about the way the world of politics works. Given these aims, it is important for political scientists' writing to be conceptually precise, free from bias, and well-substantiated by empirical evidence. Knowing that the political scientists value objectivity may help you in making decisions about how to write your paper and what to put in it (Goodin, 2005: 79).

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