

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

# MPA 842



Public Analysis &  
Implementation  
**Module 1**

# **MPA 842 Policy Analysis and Implementation Module 1**

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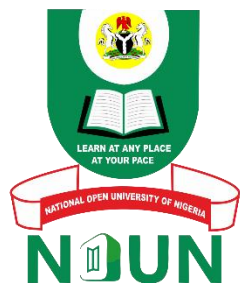
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## Unit I The Concept and Field of Public Policy Analysis

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### 1.0 Introduction

According to Olaniyi (1998:13), public policy analysis is a field of study that has its meaning enriched by two separate terminologies, namely- "public policy" and "analysis". Thus, any attempt at understanding the field must first explain the two concepts, separately, before their integration.

### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define public policy
- state the features of public policy
- explain policy analysis.

### 3.0 Main Content

#### 3.1 Definition of Public Policy

A policy can refer to the proposal of a programmed, major decision or the refusal to make certain decisions (Sharkansky, 1978). In other words, policy is simply actions taken or to be taken by government or private organisation (Ikelegbe, 1996). A policy option made by an individual is known as "private policy" because it affects the person alone, and no any other person (Olaniyi, 1998:13). Another school of thought opines that:

"Public Policy" Emanates from the 'public sector' including both the institutions of central and local government and state created agencies such as water or health authorities, commission and corporations- it may be implemented through and directed at a wide variety of individuals and organisations which may or may not be part of the state apparatus and which may be to a greater or lesser degree independent of state influence or control (Barrett and Fudge: 1981.V).

Chandler and Plano (1988:107) defines public policy "as the strategic use of resources to alleviate problems or government concerns." Similarly, Dimock et al. (1983:40) describes public policy as deciding at any time or place, what objectives and substantive measures should be chosen in order to deal with a particular problem issue or innovation. It also includes the reasons they should be chosen.

#### Self-Assessment Exercise

Define public policy.

### 3.2 The Features of Public Policy

The main features of a policy is that, first, it involves a choice. It is an important choice or a critical or important decision taken by individuals, groups or organisations. Therefore, there has to be several policy alternatives and policy formation involves the development of several policy alternatives and the choice of an alternative.

Secondly, policies are proposed courses of actions or projected set of decisions. Policies are prospective or are statements of future actions. Policies states what is going to be done or would be done. It outlines a course of contemplated or desired action in relation to certain desired objects or events in the real world. Thirdly, a policy is goal oriented. It is directed at the attainment of certain end states or objectives. A policy has certain purposes or intention. Also, policies have to do with particular problems or problems areas. They are not abstracts, but rather relate to and are actually responses to the challenges and pressures arising from an environment. Furthermore, policies are designed and targeted at dissolving existing or future problems or satisfying certain needs.

Finally, a policy is a course setting action. It provides the direction, the guide and the way to the achievement of certain goals. It provides the frame within, which present and future actions are undertaken. It is a major guideline for action (Ikelegbe, 1996:2-3).

### 3.3 The Meaning of Policy Analysis

Policy analysis is defined as a set of techniques that seeks to answer the question of what the probable effect of a policy will be, before they actually occur (Shafritz, 1986:409). This refers to a "before the fact" analysis of public policies. However, the term is also used by many to refer to both 'before and after the fact' analyses of public policies. However, a policy analysis undertaken on a programme that is already in effect is more properly called a "programme evaluation" (Shafritz, 1985: 410). All policy analysis involves the application of systematic research techniques most of which are borrowed in other disciplines.

Similarly, Chandler and Plano view policy analysis as an attempt to determine organisational effectiveness, through an evaluation of the qualitative impact of a programme. They further opine that:

Policy analysis is a systematic and data based alternative to intuitive judgments about the effects of policy or policy options. It is used (1) for problems assessment and monitoring, (2) as a "before the fact" decision tool, and (3) for evaluation (Olaniyi: 1998:17).

Furthermore, Roberts and Edwards (1991:98) argue that policy analysis is the study of the formation, implementation and evaluation of public policy, the values of policy makers and environment of the policy-making system and the cost of policy alternatives. Finally, policy analysis may be used, on a secondary level, as a term to describe the detailed examination of a particular policy-making system at any and/or all the stages of policy-making process.

### Self-Assessment Exercise

What is policy analysis?

### 4.0 Conclusion

The study of public policy analysis is necessary to all citizens for better understanding of government decisions and programmes.

## 5.0 Summary

The unit has examined public policy and its characteristics. In addition, the meaning of policy analysis was also analysed to enhance your understanding of the concept.

## 6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Public policies are more than decision-making. Discuss.

## 7.0 References/Further Reading

Barrett, S. & Fudge, C. (nd.). *Policy and Action Essays on the Implementation of Public Policy*. (Eds). London and New York: Methuen.

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## Unit 2 The Uses and Types of Public Policies

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### 1.0 Introduction

Public policy analysis can be said to derive its importance and relevance in its contribution to the determination, study and assessment of public problems; policy making, policy performance, impact evaluation, policy prediction and advocacy, policy forecast, prediction and anticipation (Ikelegbe: 1996:8). Public policies have been classified on the basis of several criteria. This unit discusses uses and types of public policies.

### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state the uses of public policies
- identify types of public policies
- differentiate between redistribute and fundamental policies
- explain major, functional, mega and meta policies.

### 3.0 Main Content

#### 3.1 The Uses of Public Policy Analysis

Public policy analysis is a systematic activity and process, which involves the determination and delineation of pertinent public problems and issues. The following are uses of public policy analysis.

- It involves the ascertaining of public problems
- It is the definition of public problems, in precise and perhaps quantifiable terms
- Public policy analysis is the study of such problems and issues
- It is in the monitoring of such problems through the provision of statistical and other information on the state of problems; and
- Policy analysis provides a base to determine strategies for the resolution of public problems (Ikelegbe, 1996:8).

Therefore, policy analysis is a problem solving discipline, which encompasses methods, techniques, and more precisely, a scientific approach to public problem resolution (Dye, 1978:3).

#### Self-Assessment Exercise

Mention three uses of public policy analysis.

## 3.2 Types of Public Policies

Theodore Lowi (1964:677) classified policies into distributive, regulatory and redistributive on the basis of intent operating processes, issues and clientele. Similarly, McKinney and Howard, (1979:73) categorise policies in terms of their hierarchy or levels such as fundamental, major, functional policies; furthermore, Dror (1973:18) identified two types of policies. All these policies are discussed below.

### 3.2.1 Distributive Policies

These are types of policies, which involve incremental dispersal unit to different segments of the population and to individuals and institutions. They can be the actual favours, benefits or patronage policies that are dispensed to a small number of people. This dispersal is continual and those not favoured at one point, may be favoured at another time. However, the nature of distributive policies is that recipients and losers do not come into direct confrontation. Although potential beneficiaries seek required favours, they do not often oppose or interfere with favours to others. Examples of distributive policies are those that relate to public land, tariff, etc.

### 3.2.2 Regulatory Policies

They are policies, which refer to law or policy outputs that regulate distribution, practices, actions and activities. These are policies, which relate to directions, rules and frameworks on activities in various areas such as business, commerce, agriculture, transportation, etc. Their impact bothers on, either increases in costs or restrictions, or expansion of activities and alternatives to private individuals, organisations. Examples are NAFDAC and Standard Organisations of Nigeria (SON).

### 3.2.3 Redistributive Policies

These are policies, which relate to relations between or among classes or categories of the population. They benefit particular segments or category of the population, such as the unemployed, the homeless, the poor, the retired, etc. Their target and impact are normally large scale or broad. They are largely discriminatory to the disadvantages and advantages, working or retired, etc. They relate particularly to transfer of resources among large groups or classes (Anderson, 1975:58). Examples of distributive policies are social welfare programmes and some educational and tax policies.

### 3.2.4 Fundamental Policies

These are policies derived from the constitution; hence, they are based on constitutional provisions or judicial interpretations of the constitution. Such policies can only be changed or abolished by constitutional amendment and are characterised by large size, high importance and long tenure.

## Self-Assessment Exercise

What is a redistributive policy?



### 3.2.5 Major Policies

Major policy is based on legislature enactment made by the highest legislative bodies at varying levels of government. They are either in the form of laws or programmes. Major policies are, therefore, important and backed by the highest legislative bodies. They could be regarded as general policies, stating broad outlines and frameworks.

### 3.2.6 Functional Policies

They emanate, largely, from the executive branch, but could also emanate from decision and resolution set by legislatures and the courts. They are, actually, minor policies that relate to regulations and guidelines. They can also be administrative decisions that are made in the process of implementing or administering public policy programmes overtime and indifferent situation and circumstances. They are therefore functional and operational policies.

### 3.2.7 Mega Policy

It is a policy that constitutes a framework for other minor or secondary policies. Mega policy is a master policy within which and by, which some other policies within a specific policy issue or area are made. It provides the guide, the direction and the major assumptions and goals for other policies. Mega policies dictate the pace of more specific policies in relation to scope, time, levels of change and orientation.

### 3.2.8 Meta Policy

It is a policy that relates to policy making. Its attention and goal is on how to make other policies and particularly how to make better policies. Meta policy is concerned with the mode of policy and the system within, which public policy is made. It relates to policies on the process, guides, techniques, methods, requirements and characteristics of policy-making system. It is concerned with the design and redesign of policy-making systems in terms of structure, procedures, patterns, outputs level, models, methods, components, personnel and requirement. The goal of Meta policies is to influence positively or improve policy-making systems and, thus, policy-making (Ikelegbe, 1996:18-19).

## 4.0 Conclusion

The analyses of uses and types of public policies, in this unit, have educated you more on public policy analysis. The essence is to make you a good public policy analyst.

## 5.0 Summary

In this unit, you were exposed to the uses and types of public policies. The types of public policies discussed in this unit are distributive, regulatory, redistributive, fundamental, major, functional, mega and meta policies.

## 6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Differentiate between mega and meta policies.

## 7.0 References/Further Reading

Dror, Y. (1973). *Public Policy Making Re-Examined*. London: Leonard Hill Book.

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## Unit 3 The Prescriptive, Descriptive, Micro and Macro Approaches in Policy Analysis

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### 1.0 Introduction

Several approaches are used in the study of public policy analysis. In this unit, you are exposed to prescriptive, descriptive, micro and macro approaches, to begin with. This will enable you understand their meanings and characteristics.

### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the prescriptive approach and the descriptive approach
- differentiate between micro approach and the macro approach.

### 3.0 Main Content

#### 3.1 The Prescriptive Approach

The prescriptive approach, basically, is the generation of information and analysis directed at better policy making and performance. It proffers policy options or alternatives, solution and strategies- based on analysed data which could emanate from the social and policy problems, social indicators, evaluation of existing or past programmes and projects. There are four characteristics of prescriptive approach; these are considered below.

- It is analytical. It emphasises the generation of data analysed with social science techniques and methodologies, models and concepts, especially quantitative techniques.
- Prescriptive approach is goal and problem oriented. It is directed at specific problems, and the goal is to proffer solutions and advice.
- It is tended to be more client-oriented. The emphasis is on the practice and relevance of public policy analysis to real life and societal needs.

#### 3.2 The Descriptive Approach

Descriptive studies describe and explain public policies. The focus of research is on history, development, causes, implementation, consequences and problems of public policies. Descriptive studies also focus on the description of the national and state policy process and individual policy or policy sector processes. The characteristics of the descriptive approach are as discussed below.

- It is more of academic studies, and the intentions and goals are not informed by the needs of prompts of clients or policy actors.
- Descriptive approach seeks the understanding of policy processes, policy problems and stations. It, particularly, seeks to explain the causes of public policy, the nature and

trends of expenditure in policy sectors or areas, and the problems of public policies, among others.

- It is more concerned with the investigations of policy contents implementation, output and impact of particular policies.
- iv. Descriptive approach is evaluator, and therefore, retrospective, and relates the studies of on-going or completed programmes.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

What is prescriptive approach in the study of public policy analysis?

## **3.3 Micro Approach**

The micro approach relates to the scope of research studies undertaken and focuses on the study of specific public policies and policy problems. Its aim is a thorough investigation of a particular policy's process of formulation, enactment, implementation, output, performance, impact and problems.

The approach, generally, involves intensive studies of the policy involving examination of reports, documents and other sources of information on the development, implementation and impact of the policy. It also involves historical narratives, accounts and chronological presentations of information on the policy. It reports or describes the policies as they are, and involve limited explanations of causes and problems.

Micro approach enhances understanding of the workings of the policy and political process and, particularly, enlightens us on how the various institutions of government, interest groups and influential elites interact and contribute to policy development and implementation. It broadens our outlook to the input and effects of various persons groups and institutions in the policy process.

While some researches may study a specific policy as a whole, seeking to understand and describe it others focus on aspects of the policy such as the policy formulation, implementation and impact.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Describe the micro approach.

## **3.4 The Macro Approach**

Macro approach is broad and place more emphasis on the development of knowledge, understanding and generalisations on the nature of public policies. It focuses on general aspects of public policy analysis such as types of policies, policy process models and policy areas. Macro approach comprises wide range studies and analyses of policy issues. The aim is to provide broad structures of analyses or basic organisation of policy studies and guides for analyses of more specific policy areas. Such studies also provide broad concepts, tool, models, generalisations and knowledge for understanding and analysis.

There are four broad categories in macro approach studies. First, it focuses on the nature of policies themselves. Second, it also focuses on thorough investigation of the policy-making process and implementation. Third, it develops models, theories and concepts to explain or

interpret policy issues. Fourth, it focuses on public policy areas rather than on specific policies.

The macro approach contributes immensely to enriching our understanding of policy activities and providing a better framework for the systematic study of public policy (Ikelegbe, 1996:26).

## 4.0 Conclusion

Approaches in the study of public policies are important to enable you understand public policy analysis better. More of them are discussed later on in this study.

## 5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have been exposed to prescriptive, descriptive, micro and macro approaches to the study of public policy analysis. It is recommended that you revise them often for better understanding.

## 6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Differentiate between micro and macro approaches.

## 7.0 References/Further Reading

- Ikelegbe, A.O. (1996). *Public Policy Making and Analysis*. Benin City: URI Publishing Ltd.
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