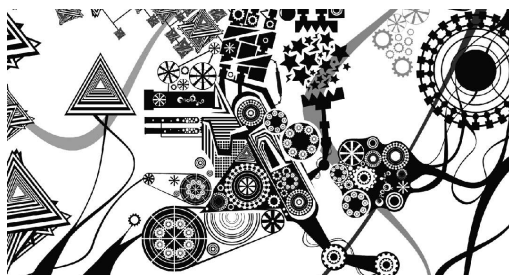


DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND STRATEGIES

Only study guide for

DVA3703



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Development Studies**

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to DVA3703, *Development Policy and Strategies*. The aim of this module is to expose you to ideas about the way in which public policy and strategies directed at development are formulated at local, national and international levels. We also analyse the dynamics and problems of policy implementation and evaluation. As a student of Development Studies you are challenged to consider why policy is important, what it involves, and the anticipated and unanticipated effects of policy-making on the development of communities.

In this module we study the following:

- Study unit 1: The nature and context development policy
- Study unit 2: Contemporary debates on public policy
- Study unit 3: The institutional environment of public policies
- Study unit 4: Policy formulation and agenda-setting
- Study unit 5: Policy formulation process: policy decision-making, implementation and evaluation
- Study unit 6: Capacity enhancement in policy for development

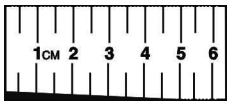
These six study units each contain enabling outcomes (the learning objectives you need to achieve), relevant content, activities that enable you to test your knowledge and outcomes checklists.

Your study package for this module consists of the following:

- this study guide
- Tutorial Letter 101
- a reader with all the prescribed content that you are expected to read
- other tutorial letters that you will receive later

You should always use the study guide as your point of departure. Work through it systematically and complete the readings and activities. You also need to study the prescribed reader if you wish to complete this module successfully.

A number of assignments are given in Tutorial Letter 101. Each assignment focuses on a particular part of the tutorial matter. Doing assignments gives you the opportunity to integrate, evaluate and apply the knowledge you have gained.



You will find this icon at the beginning of each study unit. It indicates the learning outcomes set. You need to achieve these outcomes to complete the module successfully.



This icon indicates that you have to complete an activity. You may be required to make a summary, apply your knowledge, formulate your own ideas and arguments, and so on.



This icon indicates that you should read a section of the prescribed reader.

Each study unit ends with an outcomes checklist in a textbox. The checklists contain pertinent questions about the contents of the study material. If you cannot answer these questions, return to the study unit and revise the material.

STUDY UNIT 1

The nature and context of development policy



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After you have completed this study unit, you should be able to

- summarise the way in which the meaning and objectives of development have changed, and explain what these changes imply for development policy in Africa
 - describe the changes that have taken place in the development environment and the lessons that have emerged from these for development policy in Africa
 - understand and critically analyse key concepts and issues in contemporary and future development policy
 - explain what a public policy is and what its characteristics are
-

1.1 INTRODUCTION

African countries, when regarded from the perspective of public policy-making, share characteristics such as specific power arrangements, slow institutional development and external debt burdens (Mkandawire 2014). Bhattacharyya (2009:1) links the African crisis to “the legacy of extractive colonial institutions”, which gave rise to the structural and historical underdevelopment of the continent. Lawrence (2010:19) summarises the African crisis as follows:

The course of sub-Saharan Africa’s development over the last 50 years has been frequently referred to as the “African tragedy” (Leys, 1994, Easterly and Levine, 1997, Artadi and Sala-i-Martin, 2003). The tragedy of the last 50 years has been played out through war (among many examples, Biafra, Rwanda, Darfur, Angola, Congo/Zaire), disintegration of economies and states (most notably in Somalia and now Zimbabwe), and perhaps most depressingly given the advances in medical science elsewhere in the world, disease. In sub-Saharan Africa in 2007, 1.6 million people died from AIDS, 76 per cent of the world total, and 61 per cent of them women. Malaria kills almost 1 million people a year, while TB, often a side effect of AIDS, kills hundreds of thousands. And if that were not bad enough, road deaths kill 200,000 people in Africa each year. When some parts of the continent suffer drought, as in Somalia in 2008, others suffer floods, as in Southern Africa in the same year. The consequence of all these factors taken together is food shortage causing malnutrition, hunger and death and seriously negative effects on output and on the quality of the labour force, with consequent effects on productivity, costs and competitiveness.

Mkandawire (2014) suggests that policy-making should always be seen in the context of ideas, power and knowledge. This implies that the very nature of public policy-making

is linked to changes in ideas about the meaning of development. In the following section we examine the way in which the meaning of development has changed.

1.2 THE MEANING OF DEVELOPMENT

1.2.1 Economic growth and interventionist policies in the 1950s and 1960s

The Cold War (1947–1991; dates disputed) **and the Marshall Plan** (1948–1952)

After the Second World War (1939–1945), nations of the global North found themselves in an ideological conflict: that between the *communism* of the USSR and its satellite states, and the *capitalism* of the USA and its allies. With Berlin divided between East and West, Europe recovering from the devastation of war and Japan trying to find its feet after the world's first nuclear attack, the globe was in need of aid. These nations were ripe for the picking by any power (be they capitalist or communist) that could help them get back on their feet.

Both sides feared the expansion of the other, therefore several strategies of aid were devised. The **Marshall Plan** (or the European Recovery Plan) was one such initiative. Devised by the American government, Western Europe was granted approximately \$12 billion to

- re-establish trade
- rebuild regions devastated by war
- modernise industry
- prevent the spread of communism (Hogan 1987)

It may be clear to you that this plan was slanted towards *economic* development. Some critics saw this plan as mere American economic imperialism which attempted to gain control of Western Europe as the Soviets controlled the Eastern Bloc (Hogan 1987). Through grants, many nations regained stability by embracing the sheer power of cheap consumer goods and manufacturing. Great profits ultimately seemed more attractive than socially oriented concerns.

While there were humanitarian merits to plans such as this one, we would do well to remember that ideology and, ultimately, greed can be the powerful driving forces in government-led development.

The economic recovery of European countries and Japan (owing to American assistance under the Marshall Plan after the Second World War and the Truman Administration's Point Four Program) was seen as a successful model to be duplicated in Africa. It was assumed that the scale and pattern of economic growth experienced by the global North could be reproduced in the global South by means of foreign aid and capital investment. It was assumed that economic growth and industrialisation would eradicate the poverty problem, and these two processes were consequently regarded as the primary development criteria.

The enormous influence of economic thinking on the meaning of development is well documented by Mkandawire (2014:174–178). The 1950s and 1960s saw the rise of interventionist policies and national planning by states to ensure economic growth. Especially influential was Keynesian economic doctrine, which justified government intervention in the economy through public policies aimed at full employment and price stability. Little attention was given to the standard of living of the population or to non-economic factors of development.

The development phase that followed the post-colonial era, from about 1960 to 1973, showed good results if measured in terms of economic growth. These trends coincided with positive global economic conditions, the expansion and development of the state, and the rapid advancement of health services and education. Even external donors and international financial institutions recognised and supported the important role of the African state.

In economic terms, many African countries had healthy growth rates and increasing investment in this period, chiefly via exporting agricultural primary commodities. The influence of foreign aid and investment meant that these countries' savings rates were well below their investment rates. In social terms, these countries fared a lot worse. In Sierra Leone, for example, life expectancy at birth was 32 years. Infant mortality rates were exceptionally high, for example 255 deaths per 1000 births in Mali. Very few people had access to clean water, the status of women and adult literacy rates were low (Lawrence 2010:20). These factors led to greater inequality, unplanned and chaotic urbanisation, the coexistence of small enclaves of modern industry and large semi-traditional sectors, continued rigidity in trading patterns, an increased demand for imports in combination with lagging export capacity, and serious environmental degradation.

The objective of development was to fight poverty, ignorance and disease. In order to achieve this most African countries offhand adopted the models of the developed countries that had addressed these evils successfully. It was assumed that the benefits of economic growth would trickle down to the majority of the populations. African governments consequently placed little emphasis on the question of raising the income and productivity of the poor, or promoting a more equal distribution of the benefits of economic growth.

Industrial development benefited the higher income groups most. This led to greater dependence on imports, while the expansion of exports and technical progress were neglected. High population growth contributed to a large labour force, but capital-intensive patterns of development and the use of inappropriate technology created few job opportunities. Furthermore, insufficient recognition was given to the vital role of technological and scientific development in the development process, and there was heavy reliance on scientific and technological innovations from the North. This lack of self-reliance led to vulnerability to external shocks and the unsustainability of the internal growth process (Lawrence 2010).

Mkandawire (2014:175) explains how policy planners were trained in national income accounting, input–output models, planning methods and development economics. Such imitation of Western models failed to derive advantage from the South's reserves of traditional knowledge, culture, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit.

1.2.2 Basic needs and project planning approaches of the 1970s

Development in the 1970s

While the previous decade saw growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in most African economies, it became clear in the 1970s that things were slowing down. In other words, while nations of the continent industrialised and grew, poverty only deepened.

It became clear that the so-called “trickle-down effect” simply did not occur. This model of product adoption centred on the idea that the wealth of the upper classes would – through expenditure and the use of consumer services – flow downward to other classes of society. In other words, each social class would be influenced by the one above it.

In actual fact, the rich became richer and the poor became poorer. While there were many factors at play, population growth and a lack of nuance in policy-making contributed to growing inequality and national debt.

By the late 1960s, various approaches to the processes of underdevelopment and development had emerged, which resulted in a redefinition of development objectives. Intellectuals from the Global South such as Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya) and Salvador Allende (Chile) questioned the common characteristics of the so-called Third World. Economists such as Raul Prebisch and Andre Gunder Frank introduced the concept of dependency and concluded that colonial and postcolonial dependency caused by the economic and political subjugation by First and Second World superpowers caused poverty, poor health and low levels of education in the Third World. These ideas from the dependency theorists in turn led to the world systems approach in the 1970s. Ferraro (1996) explains the world systems approach as follows:

A new body of thought, called the world systems approach, argued that poverty was a direct consequence of the evolution of the international political economy into a fairly rigid division of labour which favoured the rich and penalized the poor.

During the 1970s, many African economies had huge foreign debt burdens, exacerbated by oil price hikes and widespread droughts which necessitated food imports. This left many African economies even more dependent on aid (Lawrence 2010). It became apparent that the trickle-down effect did not materialise in practice.

The theoretical ideas of dependency and world systems, coupled with the realities of ever-increasing aid dependency, led to the so-called “deposition of the GNP” as the basis for definitions of development. Studies of income distribution revealed that economic growth often bore no relation to the quality of life of the majority of the people. The complexity of development was recognised and it was realised that social and political aspects played as important a part as pure economic principles. In response to pressures from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and others, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) rearticulated a vision for development that focused on the promotion of appropriate technology (Weinstein 2010:312). In this period, the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism, coupled with African decolonisation, led to what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:34) describes as the phase when

Africa became a theatre of some of the “hottest” aspects of this rivalry, with countries such as Angola and Mozambique experiencing disruption of national projects at birth in 1975. Such ideologies as Marxism, Pan-Africanism, Leninism, Capitalism, Maoism and many others came ‘up for grabs’ by struggling people of Africa. African national projects were formulated and deployed within this context of intense ideological war to the extent that founding fathers of the African states found themselves having to align with particular powers. Those leaders who openly aligned with the East like Patrice Lumumba, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Eduardo Mondlane, Agostinho Neto and others endured surveillance from the West that resulted in sponsored coups, assassinations and sponsorship of counter-revolutionary forces that depleted their potential to launch and sustain socialist-orientated national projects.

In the mid-1970s, the basic needs approach emerged. Todaro (1990:620) points out that this approach involves more than a concern over economic growth. It is focused on raising the material standard of living of the poor masses, promoting human dignity and increasing peoples’ freedom of choice. Economic growth remains an indispensable prerequisite for the development of any country, but economic growth per se is not the solution. Mkandawire (2014:175) refers to this as the “growth with equity” approach to development policy, which places the emphasis on challenges such as poverty, environmental degradation and the empowerment of people. The focus on the means to address these developmental challenges shifted from macro-level development planning towards particular projects, such as integrated rural development and infrastructural development.

In 1974, the Cocoyoc declaration was issued. It was a call to look at the interplay between resource use, the environment and development strategies. The primary concern of the declaration was to redefine the purpose of development so that human development is foregrounded. Thus development would not be limited to the satisfaction of basic human needs, but extended to the freedom of expression, opinion, participation, self-determination, voting and self-actualisation. According to Ghai (1977:6) the declaration intended

... to redefine the whole purpose of development. This should not be to develop things but to develop man. Man has basic needs – food, shelter, clothing, health and education. Any process of growth that does not lead to their fulfilment or, even worse, disrupts them, is a travesty of the idea of development.

1.2.3 The Washington Consensus, the Lagos Plan of Action and the search for stabilisation in the 1980s and 1990s

In April 1980, the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa 1980–2000 was adopted by several African heads of state. The plan, directed at economic self-reliance, the democratisation of the development process and self-sufficiency in food security, stipulated that African development should recognise the importance of

- (1) domestic, sub-regional and regional markets in the continent
- (2) protecting Africa’s natural resource base
- (3) multiple objectives for economic planning
- (4) strengthening intrasectoral and intersectoral linkages in and between agriculture, communications, energy, industry, mining, science, technology and transport

- (5) establishing an African Common Market to inculcate an African Economic Community (Jolly 2009)

The Lagos Plan was a clear forerunner of sustainable development approaches (see below), but it “lacked a pragmatic blueprint of how to achieve these admirable objectives, a timetable for doing so, and a price tag” (Jolly 2009:2). Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s (2013:43 & 44) description of Nyerere’s Ujamaa philosophy for development in Tanzania also demonstrates a people-centred (or family-centred), sustainable orientation as it foregrounded the problems of poverty and material inequality. This national plan intended to promote economic progress, to create material equality through fair distribution of resources, and to promote national dignity and respect.

There was little support for the Lagos Plan from outside Africa and in 1981 the World Bank issued its own plan for African development. It was the complete opposite of the Lagos Plan and stressed export-oriented growth within a globalising capitalist system. Although this plan, known as the Washington Consensus, was rejected in a declaration by several African ministers in 1982, it soon gained hegemonic status. Lawrence (2010:34) refers to the 1981 World Bank report on the state of African economies which advocated the “liberalisation of internal markets, trade and exchange rates, cuts in government expenditure and in the size of government, elimination of subsidies and other forms of price control, and the privatisation of state enterprises”. This smoothed the path for structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) as ways to implement these liberalisation policies.

Mkandawire (2014:180) notes that the Washington Consensus did not have the same reception in Africa as in Latin America. Nonetheless the development policy hegemony that stemmed from the Washington Consensus deepened the African development crisis. In general, the Washington Consensus is a set of ideas directed at the market economy as envisaged by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the European Union (EU) and America. As a set of directives, it advocated trade liberalisation, privatisation of state enterprises, free trade (the World Trade Organisation and the North Atlantic Free Trade Association reduced tariff barriers), free markets (a precondition for the IMF to offer aid bailouts) and macro-economic stability (countries were encouraged to specialise in specific goods and services, meaning that developing economies stuck to primary export production). In Zimbabwe, for example, successful import substitution industrialisation was destroyed (Lawrence 2010:28). Freund (2010:46) comments that

... free trade arrangements promoted by the WTO not only contain loopholes in order to block food imports into wealthy consumer countries but, more importantly, permit the massive introduction of cheap foodstuffs from the West, often tied in with famine and food aid, which do not allow local competition to find much space.

Seen in the light of a world-systems understanding of development, the ideas stemming from the Washington Consensus had devastating consequences for Africa. It made African economies more vulnerable to the prevailing international division of labour, restricting Africa’s part in the global economy to that of a supplier of raw materials. Africa was kept dependent on external expertise and aid, and open to massive debt burdens. These problems accelerated inequalities and the marginalisation of the poor, the erosion of self-sufficient food production, recurring famines and the degradation of the environment. Internal initiatives were undermined and, even more significant, true democratic processes of change suffered a collapse. Many developmental aid efforts

favoured the rich and the powerful in the recipient countries, as Weinstein (2010:317) explains:

Because the vast majority of development aid flowed from one government to another, the elite of the Third World benefited far more than the masses. Rural development programs were routinely administered from capital cities, where interest groups and partisan politics often determined which regions would be targeted and how much would be spent. Local educated people, especially those who could speak English, had special advantages in filling administrative posts, but the majority of illiterate farmers were left out of the loop. Under still-effective systems of patronage in the Third World countryside, absentee landowners who received development aid had newfound means to increase the debt load of their dependents ... for instance, by selling them fertilizer they had been given free by USAID.

As it became increasingly clear in the 1990s that the Washington Consensus was not working, the remedy for development changed from policies to improved institutions. The understanding was that neither people nor nations were able to achieve their full potential and be free of exploitation unless they had equal opportunities to develop and enjoyed equal access to economic, physical, political and intellectual capital; in other words, nations had to have access to means of production as well as political structures, education, skills and information. This implied aid investment in technical cooperation, building stronger institutions and building capacity.

Besides the Lagos Plan of Action discussed above, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed several attempts to create alternative African developmental trajectories, including

- (1) Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986–1990
- (2) the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation 1989
- (3) the African Charter for Popular Participation for Development 1990
- (4) the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa 1991
- (5) the Cairo Agenda for Action 1995

Most of these plans were actively undermined by the IMF and the World Bank (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:50).

1.2.4 The move to people-centred approaches

During the 1980s and 1990s, several variations of SAPs were recommended for African development, and by the 1990s the World Bank had started to adopt a more flexible approach. By the middle of the 1980s, the concept of “sustainable livelihood” gained currency and broadened the discussion on development policy to include issues of culture, gender and the empowerment of women. Such a people-centred approach represents the further evolution of the basic needs approach. It specifically calls for the participation of people in the development process.

This new development paradigm maintains that big is not always better, centralised hierarchies are suspect, big outcomes may be born out of small inputs and that a “more heads are better than one” philosophy would more readily sustain productive, durable change (Jennings 2000:1). It places human beings at the centre of policies and planning via the allocation of entitlements such as command of resources. Vollmer (2010:75)

explains that “these entitlements were created through endowments (assets owned) and exchanges (production and trade by the individual) ... and many of these entitlements take place in the non-monetary/non-marketed economy (in the subsistence)”. Thus the key to the full achievement of wellbeing was policies that aimed at the enhancement of people’s capabilities (Vollmer 2010).

1.2.5 The Post-Washington Consensus, sustainable development and NEPAD

The Post-Washington Consensus emphasised the multidimensional and integrated nature of the development process and the fact that poverty could be ascribed to various factors. The development question was characterised by mutual interaction and complexity, which required a more holistic and comprehensive approach. Themes for development policy intervention included poverty, labour market issues, regional integration, natural resource management and food security. Mkandawire (2014:187) regards three issues as important for this period:

- (1) an emphasis on the importance of strong institutions to ensure that developmental policies were implemented, evaluated and improved
- (2) a renewed focus on the importance of infrastructural development
- (3) an emphasis on national development planning

Sustainable development became a motto for development in the 1990s. It advocated the idea that environmental protection should proceed along with economic growth and should encompass plans to

- (1) revive economic growth
- (2) change the quality of economic growth
- (3) meet populations’ needs for jobs, energy, water and sanitation
- (4) conserve and enhance natural resource bases
- (5) reorient technology for sustainability and manage risks to sustainable development
- (6) merge environmental and economic decision-making (Cloete 2015)

Sustainable development can be summarised as a view of development that is able to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Together with the eradication of poverty, the ecological crisis is recognised as an urgent development issue which requires drastic action. Poverty is both a cause and a consequence of environmental destruction. The poor are caught up in a self-destructive trap (a deprivation trap) in which their immediate survival depends on the overexploitation of natural resources (Sachs 1994:292). Population growth, inappropriate development strategies, rising debt burdens, negative terms of trade and natural disasters invite the overexploitation of productive land, forests and water. The combination of high population growth and poverty leads to environmental crises. Consequently the eradication of poverty is proposed as a direct mechanism to ensure environmentally friendly sustainable development (Sachs 1994:292).

Sustainable development can be said to have dimensions:

- (1) **Social sustainability** refers to the achievement of a development process that brings about substantial improvement in the entitlements of the citizenry and stable, thriving, cohesive communities able to demonstrate continuous improvements in social wellbeing and quality of life.

- (2) **Economic sustainability** refers to a sound, stable economic system, the steady flow of public and private investment, and the effective allocation and management of resources. It subsumes the notion of financial sustainability, which would imply a healthy balance of payments with sustainable growth in assets and capacity.
- (3) **Environmental sustainability** refers to better achievement of a stable ecology and durable biodiversity.
- (4) **Political sustainability** refers to the achievement of a democratic political vision and commitment to legitimate, inclusive and transparent political processes supported by sustainable, responsive and strategic institutions.
- (5) **Cultural sustainability** refers to the recognition and promotion of local values, customs and cultural practices (Cloete 2005:55 & 56).

What was Africa's response to this? In 2002, the African Union (AU) adopted a Programme for Sustainable Development. In addition, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) of the United Nations initiated the African Development Forum (ADF). The ADF held forums on common issues in African development such as globalisation, HIV/AIDS, regional integration, good governance, youth and leadership, and women's empowerment (Jolly 2009). In 2001, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was established. It envisaged a multidimensional development approach for Africa based on the principles of sustainable development, poverty reduction, democracy, good governance, capacity development, regional co-operation and debt reduction (NEPAD 2011). More specifically, the guiding principles of NEPAD included

- (1) African ownership and leadership
- (2) Promotion and protection of human rights, good governance and democracy
- (3) Anchoring Africa's development on the resources and resourcefulness of Africans – people-centred development
- (4) Channelling resources to the highest-quality operation as measured by development impact and alignment with client objectives
- (5) Promotion of gender equality
- (6) Accelerating and deepening of regional and continental economic integration
- (7) Building a new relationship of partnership among Africans, and between Africans and the international community, especially the industrialised world
- (8) A comprehensive, holistic and integrated development programme for Africa (NEPAD 2011:12)

These efforts seemed to have stimulated a move towards integrated development. Many African countries demonstrated significant socio-economic improvements in the early 2000s. However, the global economic downturn in 2008 and 2009 brought new setbacks in most African countries (Jolly 2009). NEPAD certainly placed the notion of democratic, sustainable development based on the principles of good governance on Africa's development agenda. However, as far as NEPAD's developmental successes are concerned, Ottosen (2010:9) comments as follows:

Africa's development challenges remain the same and remain unaddressed, virtually no concrete programmes or projects have been implemented under NEPAD, few countries have fully implemented the African Peer Review Mechanism, and none have fully implemented their programme of action. Two of NEPAD's founding fathers, former President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, have left office, which has led some to question South Africa's and Nigeria's continued support to NEPAD. Another, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, has denounced NEPAD in its entirety, saying, "Expenses adding

up to hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on trips, on hotels. But not a single classroom has been built, not a single health centre completed. NEPAD has not done what it was set up for.”

In light of the above we can conclude that the development process is of a multidimensional and integrated nature, and that the eradication of poverty and hunger requires a holistic and all-inclusive approach. The emphasis on economic growth as the only objective of the development process has been sharply criticised, and is being replaced by a development process that supports and promotes participation, empowerment, the eradication of poverty, people-centred development and sustainability. Poverty cannot be eradicated by economic growth alone. People’s participation is essential to promote the eradication of poverty and hunger and to achieve levels of sustainable development – when people participate they are able to control their own environment, manage their own interests and further their own wellbeing.

1.2.6 Current views on policy and development, and South Africa’s plans for development

Mkandawire (2014:189) notes that the current view of development policy is an eclectic one, influenced in part by the failure of neoliberalist and alternative models for development, and the influence of alternative voices in the arena of aid and donors that push back against the hegemony of the Washington Consensus.

In terms of South Africa, Phiri, Molotja, Makelane, Kupamupindi and Ndinda(2016:124) argue that there is a “need in the current context for a transformative development policy built on a multidimensional approach to development with wide-ranging goals inclusive of economic growth, social equality, social cohesion and “enhancing the productive capacity of its citizens”.

Naidoo and Maré (2015) discuss the National Development Plan (NDP) as the South African government’s articulation of the country’s preferred development trajectory based on a job-intensive growth strategy. They suggest that it is sufficiently

- (1) **complex** to differentiate between short-, medium- and long-term strategies
- (2) **observant** of the unique context of South Africa’s labour market
- (3) **inclusive** of a wide array of policy instruments with macro- and micro-economic strategies
- (4) **sensitive** to the social component of development

However, given the complex nature of the NDP, its implementation might be stifled by the lack of agreement about the development trajectory in government and weak institutional arrangements able to link and resolve opposing interests among policy actors in and outside the state (Naidoo & Mare 2015:424).



ACTIVITY 1.1

Read the contributions by Mkandawire (2014), Naidoo and Maré (2015) and Phiri et al (2016) in the Reader.

- (1) Summarise the ways in which the meaning and objectives of development have changed. Describe in your own words how these changes have influenced views of public policy directed at development in Africa.

- (2) Consider the following statement: *A critical historical study of the nature and objectives of what development entails will show the negative impact of Western neoliberalism on African development trajectories.* Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.
- (3) Discuss the shift in a national development strategy in democratic South Africa from the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy and the NDP. Comment on whether the NDP conforms to the ideal characteristics of a contemporary, transformative African development policy, inclusive of the notions of sustainable development.
- (4) Watch the video by Frank Chikane (2013) entitled “South Africa’s Policy Challenges in the Next Four Years” at:

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/south-africas-policy-challenges-the-next-four-years?gclid=COLI2svx0csCFcQp0wodFGoN3A>

Take notes from this and from the article by Phiri et al (2016) in your reader. Write brief notes on the political, social and economic factors that influence development policy in South Africa.

1.3 DEFINITION AND NATURE OF PUBLIC POLICY

Cloete, Wissink and De Coning (2006:v) explain the importance of studying public policy as follows:

The main reason why it is necessary to study public policy is because public functionaries need to improve the processes and ultimately the outcomes of policy making. Improving public service delivery requires a well-developed understanding of the political and administrative dynamics of policy-making.

Various normative, philosophical or even ideological assumptions, principles, values, models and paradigms can subconsciously or sometimes openly influence both the processes and the substance of public policies. ...

Scholars should also be sensitized to the fact that the mechanisms of the public policy process may produce different results or outcomes in different contexts. Different models and approaches to public policy making may be more appropriate in different situations.

A variety of policy approaches, models, mechanisms and instruments has developed over time to suit different political, economic, social, cultural and technological contexts.

Definitions of public policy vary from being very simple to being very complex. Regardless of their degree of complexity, they all agree on one main aspect, namely that **public policies are the result of decisions made by governments.**

1.3.1 What is policy?

Jenkins (in Howlett & Ramesh 2003:6) defines a policy as

... a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified

situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve.

Public policies involve a fundamental choice by governments to take action or to do nothing. In other words, public policy implies that governments make a choice to undertake some course of action. Jenkins's definition above explicitly states that public policy-making is a process comprising interrelated decisions. This means that a government usually addresses a problem (the focus of the policy) through a series of decisions (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:6). Think here for example of a housing policy. Can you list all of the governmental and non-governmental actors that should be involved and take decisions about how best to finance, administer and implement such a policy? Jenkins's definition also emphasises that policy-making is a goal-oriented process, and that public policies are decisions by governments that define a goal and set out the means to achieve these goals.

1.3.2 The nature of public policy

A government's public policy directly affects a country and its people. In order to understand the effect policy has on societies, we should begin by looking at what policy is, in other words, what its characteristics are. Policy is not simply the final instructions of a government regarding a specific issue; it includes the various stages through which policy passes before it reaches the final stages. Here are some of the characteristics of public policy:

- (1) Public policy is a deliberate or purposeful action. It is aimed at problem-solving and at producing particular results. This policy characteristic refers to the **policy statement** or the "why" of public policy. This not only means that public policy is made in response to a problem that requires attention, but also to the fact that a policy statement expresses the intentions, goals and values of government.
- (2) Policy consists of patterns of action by government officials. **Policy activities** refer to the "how" of policy: how resources should be allocated, how services should be provided or how actions should be regulated. From our earlier definition we can deduce that decisions must be made about how policy will be implemented and put into practice. Policy arises as a result of a demand made on the government by actors in a political system. In question here are demands that the government should take action or refrain from taking action on some public issue. Such demands may vary from a general insistence that the government should "do something" to a proposal for specific action on a specific issue. In reply to such demands public servants take policy decisions that either authorise policy action or give it direction and content.
- (3) Policy intends to achieve outputs. Through policy, governments should actually undertake action and not merely express the intent to do. Based on a typology devised by Theodore Lowi (2009), **policy outputs** can aim to be the following:
 - (a) Distributive, which means that benefits and resources are allocated to address a particular problem. Distributive policies are cooperative and usually intend to benefit as many people as possible. The revised National Curriculum Statement of the Department of Education, adopted in 2002, states that it aims to develop the full potential of all learners as citizens of a democratic South Africa by creating lifelong learners who are confident and independent, literate, numerate and multi-skilled.
 - (b) Redistributive, which means that resources are shifted to those in the great-

est need for such interventions. Redistributive policies may lead to partisan disputes. In South Africa, cash transfers or government grants are examples of social redistributive policies. These grants (such as the old-age grant, the disability grant and the child support grant) are means tested to distinguish the “deserving poor” from the “non-deserving citizens”.

- (c) Competitively regulatory, which means that markets or prices can be regulated through systems of rewards, tariffs or benefits. The Competition Act No. 89 of 1998 of South Africa controls the investigation and evaluation of business practices and mergers to achieve equity and efficiency in the economy.
 - (d) Protectively regulatory, which means that resources or rights are protected through systems of rewards, penalties, tariffs or benefits. Ghana’s Timber Resources Management Act is an example here.
- (4) Public policy may be either **positive or negative**. It may involve deliberate government action to deal with a problem (positive); or it may involve a decision not to take action (negative). In other words, governments can follow a policy of laissez-faire or involvement, either in general or as regards particular aspects of economic activities. Such lack of action can have important consequences for a society or for certain groups in that society. We should emphasise that this involvement becomes public policy when it arises from the fact that officials actively decide to do nothing about some problem; or, to put it differently, when they take a negative decision about an issue. This must be distinguished from a lack of action about something that has not yet become a public issue and that has not yet been brought to the attention of officials.

The objectives and functions of governments arise from the values, desires, needs and claims of societies or groups in society. Through the political process these values, desires, needs and demands are converted into policy decisions and expressed in legislation, which in turn lead to the creation of executive government structures (public institutions) which are responsible for carrying out policy. When policy is decided on, clarity on the government’s aims, as well as clarity on how the government would like society to develop (development pattern), is necessary. Clear development objectives are therefore required. These objectives are framed in terms of the particular government’s priorities, after which programmes are launched in order to achieve the development objectives. It is essential that government institutions should coordinate their activities on several levels. Public servants should be familiar with the policy-making process and with their own role in it. Public servants at all levels of government are the intermediaries between those in public office and society.

In a situation of rapid social change, legislators must be able to make policy that provides for this complex situation if they are to ensure political, social and economic stability. Policy must accommodate the challenges facing society and offer relevant solutions. Any changes in areas such as consumer patterns, working conditions, education, planning, political leadership, social development, participative administration, economic growth and the development of urban and rural areas require an understanding of policy and the policy-making process.

Development policy with the specific aim to address development issues of a country is a special type of public policy:

Developmental policies are public policies which succeed in empowering people to exercise choices ... especially regarding the quality of life that they would prefer to maintain. The objective with sustainable development in this sense is to empower

citizens to aspire to a self-sustaining improvement in medium- to long-term life quality. This implies inevitably a coherent systemic integration of development initiatives, resulting in a structural, functional and cultural consolidation of a new way of life. It culminates in the creation of a developmental culture in society, and implies not only short-term progress towards empowerment for increasing quality of life, but also longer-term durability of those higher standards of life (Cloete 2015:52).

Based on the objectives of contemporary development, the policy-making process requires participation and public choice. This implies direct representation by civil society, empowerment and active decision-making. In study unit 6 we will look specifically at the role and importance of civil society in the policy formulation process. De Coning and Cloete (2006:30) emphasise the following:

[I]f development is defined as the capacity to make rational choices, the participatory nature of policy processes is clearly of primary importance. Policy making processes should incorporate opportunities to exercise choices and explore rational options. Policy making initiatives ... require facilitation of an enabling nature. Development management is a responsibility shared amongst all three main categories of role-players: governmental, non-governmental and private sector. These players all have very specific roles and responsibilities.



ACTIVITY 1.2

Carefully read the contributions by Naidoo and Maré (2015) entitled *Implementing the National Development Plan? Lessons from co-ordinating grand economic policies in South Africa* and Phiri et al (2016) entitled *Inclusive innovation and inequality in South Africa: a case for transformative social policy* in the Reader, and then answer the following questions:

- (1) Use the definition of public policy by Jenkins (in Howlett & Ramesh 2003:6) as given in this study unit to comment on the NDP as a grand economic policy strategy.
- (2) Explain briefly, with specific reference to Africa, why it is important that a student of Development Studies should study public policy.
- (3) Find any contemporary policy in a library or on the internet. Summarise the characteristics of public policy and give appropriate examples of the following:
 - (a) policy statements
 - (b) policy activities
 - (c) policy outputs
- (4) Find an article in a newspaper about a public policy. How is the policy described? Is the author or the article for or against the policy? In terms of the information in this study unit, is the policy discussed in the article negative or positive? Give reasons for your answers.
- (5) Consider the following statement: *All development policies are inventions by the bourgeoisie to protect their privileges*. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give reasons for your answers.
- (6) Can a development policy serve both the goals of distributive and redistributive justice? Give reasons for your answer.

As you will remember from Tutorial Letter 101, the set of questions above may well appear in either your assignments or the examination. Completing these activities is therefore to your advantage.

While this study guide provides an overview of many of the above concepts, you would do well do additional research online.

1.4 CONCLUSION

It is clear from the above discussion that the emphasis on economic growth as the only aim of development has been a failure and that contemporary development requires a holistic, people-centred and comprehensive approach. The basic principles of such an approach are participation, equality, justice and sustainability.

In the study unit that follows, we look at debates about public policy.

1.5 OUTCOMES CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to test yourself.

| Outcome | I can do it, because ... | I cannot do it, because ... |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) I can summarise the way in which the meaning and objectives of development have changed, and argue what these changes imply for development policy in Africa. | | |
| (2) I can describe the changes that have taken place in the development environment, and indicate the lessons that have emerged from these for development policy in Africa. | | |
| (3) I can critically analyse key concepts and issues to be considered in contemporary and future development policy. | | |
| (4) I can explain what a public policy is and what its characteristics are with reference to contemporary examples in my own country. | | |

STUDY UNIT 2

Contemporary debates on public policy



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After you have completed this study unit, you should be able to

- link globalisation and localisation to possibilities and constraints for public policy for development
 - give an account of social capital as a central concept in public policy
 - compare and contrast structural, institutional and interest-based approaches to policy-making
 - describe and critique complexity theory and the notion of resilience as they relate to public policy
 - identify critical dimensions for development policy implementation
-

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous study unit we have seen how the meaning of the concept of development has changed and impacted on the development objectives that should be pursued by development policy. We have also looked at the meaning and nature of public policy. In this study unit we examine selected debates and theoretical views on policy-making.

2.2 GLOBALISATION AND LOCALISATION AS ENABLING OR CONSTRAINING PUBLIC POLICY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Study unit 1 has introduced you to the NDP as South Africa's chosen path for development. However, every African government does not deliberately and systematically follow similar strategies. A government can choose to focus on exports or the local economy, or to make a deliberate attempt to raise the standard of living of the poorest of the poor (redistributive policies), or to emphasise the productive role of elite groups, or to utilise scarce resources and funds to stimulate the agricultural sector or the manufacturing sector.

The appropriateness of a given policy depends on a variety of factors, such as

- the size of the country
- the natural resource base
- the historical evolution
- the distribution of wealth
- urbanisation
- the degree of dependence on external forces (Beall 2005:vii)

You have been introduced to some of these factors as they apply to South Africa in the reading prescribed in the previous study unit. You have also been made aware of

national development policies that lay the foundation for the successful pursuit and implementation of development objectives at both the national and the provincial levels.

As discussed in the previous study unit, the development challenge is to formulate and implement a development policy which is

- multidimensional and integrated in nature
- aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger following a holistic and comprehensive approach

In the current context of sustainable development, national development plans tend to promote participation, empowerment, the eradication of poverty, people-centred development and sustainability. Human participation lays the foundation for sustainable development, because it enables people to control their own environment, manage their own interests and promote their own wellbeing. Government policy to promote human development should therefore put the participation of the people first to ensure that the policy is relevant and appropriate. The South African Legislative Sector (2013:7) describes public participation in public policy in the following way:

Public participation is the process by which Parliament and provincial legislatures consult with the people and interested or affected individuals, organisations and government entities before making a decision. Public participation is a two-way communication and collaborative problem-solving mechanism with the goal of achieving representative and more acceptable decisions. Other terms sometimes used are “public involvement”, “community involvement” or “stakeholder involvement”. Furthermore, in a diverse society such as South Africa, there is also a need to acknowledge that the term public is inclusive and diverse by its very nature. In this context, there should be a focus on those who are confronted with poverty and lack access to resources, including children, women, people with disabilities and the youth. Public participation is a fundamental dimension of democracy and an important factor in the strengthening and maturing of democracies. The latter is of particular interest and importance in a young democracy like South Africa. Good examples and opportunities are emerging, which, if nurtured, can set a trend, and an example on the African continent and internationally.

It is not surprising that policy-makers throughout the world have a central preoccupation with globalisation and localisation, given the influence of these two phenomena on the development process and their consequent implications. Globalisation implies the transformation of the world system into a transnational global system, characterised by mutual dependencies and the condensed massive exchange of time, money, interactions, people, goods and services. It is marked by emerging free trade agreements, neoliberal economic institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and multinational corporations (MNCs).

Globalisation has brought with it new opportunities for expanding markets and disseminating technology and managerial expertise – something which potentially can increase productivity and raise the standard of living in middle and low income countries. At the same time, globalisation creates instability and undesirable changes owing to job losses stemming from foreign imports, and the dominance of local banks, financial systems and even whole economies by an influx of foreign capital and the activities of MNCs. Albrow (2001:29) makes an even stronger point:

Development studies as a discipline faces not global modernities but global poverties, exploitations, and rights abuses, as well as global population management, the power of transnational corporations, and global cities. We know that the fate of child prostitutes in Thailand is linked directly to the sex trade in Europe and that the career of the heroin addict in the urban slums of the West is linked to opium cultivation in South East Asia. **Development studies no longer confront three worlds or even two, but many worlds inhabiting an endangered globe.** Its topic is no longer generic development, but developments of all kinds which call the survival of humanity and human values into question (our emphasis).

The following two thinkers present opposing arguments about the effects of globalisation on development:

On the one hand, Fuhr (2001) gives the following reasons why globalisation aids better public policy:

- (1) Advances in global telecommunication inform and connect citizens, and create a global civil society, which in turn stimulate demand for better services, government transparency and participation.
- (2) Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and businesses that wish to attract foreign investment apply pressure in favour of greater governmental decentralisation.
- (3) Global investments drive the demand for appropriate institutional arrangements, public sector reforms and credible government policies.
- (4) Policy coordination and cooperation among states constrain arbitrary actions by governments.

On the other hand, Watkins (2002) regards globalisation as detrimental to development in middle and lower income countries. His reasons are the following:

- (1) Globalisation exacerbates income inequalities between and within middle and lower income countries.
- (2) MNCs and transnational corporations (TNCs) dominate global commerce and seek to maximise their profits with no regard for the development needs of individual countries or peoples.
- (3) Protectionist policies exclude producers in middle and lower income countries from accessing export markets.
- (4) Countries with weak financial institutions face fiscal and currency crises owing to the sheer volume and volatility of global capital flows.
- (5) Competition to attract foreign investment may encourage policies that threaten the natural environment and resources, and the cultural uniqueness of nations.

Where do you stand in terms of these two contrasting views? Do you agree with Fuhr or with Watkins? Below we offer further ideas about the view that globalisation can place particular barriers on development.

Increasing globalisation creates localisation (and even particularisation and fragmentation) that leads to a growing demand for increased local involvement, representation and active participation by the poor in the planning and management of their environment. Localisation can be used as a tactic by farmers, peasants and other social groups to resist the negative effects of neoliberal globalisation – especially in the pursuit of food sovereignty. Such groups (e.g. social movements or unions) would insist on local control, participatory democracy, local production for local consumption and the use of local

resources under the guidance and control of local communities. The aim is to resist the subjugation of farmers and peasants by large-scale supermarket chains in advanced industrialised markets.

Localisation can drive the decentralisation of governments, which means that policy decisions are taken at subnational levels, closer to the voters. This, in turn, may encourage more responsive and efficient local governance. However, when poorly designed, decentralisation can result in overburdened local governments without the resources or the capacity to fulfil their basic responsibilities of providing local infrastructure and services. The article by Koelble and Siddle (2014) in your reader discusses the failure of local decentralisation in South Africa as an example of this. The important point is that poorly designed decentralisation can threaten macroeconomic stability, if local governments, borrowing heavily and spending unwisely, need to be bailed out by the national government.

Globalisation and localisation will not simply disappear or even decrease in intensity. They are driven by powerful underlying forces such as the new capacities of information and communication technologies, as well as the rising sense of people throughout the world that they have the right to participate publicly in their governments and society. As globalisation brings remote parts of the world closer together and localisation multiplies the range of policy environments, it is possible that successful development policy will achieve results faster, and the consequences of unsuccessful policies will be exposed sooner. While globalisation is uniting the world's countries, the forces of localisation are tilting the balance of power in them. The demand for self-determination can take a number of forms, including the replacement of authoritarian or single-party rule by multiparty politics, greater autonomy of subnational political units, and the involvement of community groups and NGOs in governance.

According to Wates (2000:4–5) the benefits of people being involved in decision-making and managing their local surroundings include the following:

WHY GET INVOLVED?

When people are involved in shaping their local surroundings, the benefits can include:

- (1) Additional resources
Governments rarely have sufficient means to solve all the problems in an area. Local people can bring additional resources which are often essential if their needs are to be met and dreams fulfilled.
- (2) Better decisions
Local people are invariably the best source of knowledge and wisdom about their surroundings. Better decision-making results if these are harnessed.
- (3) Building community
The process of working together and achieving things together creates a sense of community.
- (4) Compliance with legislation
Community involvement is often, and increasingly, a statutory requirement.

- (5) **Democratic credibility**
Community involvement in planning accords with people's right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. It is an important part of the trend towards democratisation of all aspects of society.
- (6) **Easier fundraising**
Many grant-making organisations prefer, or even require, community involvement to have occurred before handing out financial assistance.
- (7) **Empowerment**
Involvement builds local people's confidence, capabilities, skills and ability to co-operate, which enable them to tackle other challenges, both individually and collectively.
- (8) **More appropriate results**
Design solutions are more likely to be in tune with what is needed and wanted. Involvement allows proposals to be tested and refined before adoption, resulting in the better use of resources.
- (9) **Professional education**
Working closely with local people helps professionals gain a greater insight into the communities they seek to serve. As a consequence they work more effectively and produce better results.
- (10) **Responsive environments**
The environment can more easily be tuned and refined continuously to cater for people's changing requirements.
- (11) **Satisfying public demand**
People want to be involved in shaping their environment and mostly seem to enjoy it.
- (12) **Speedier developments**
People gain a better understanding of the options realistically available and are likely to start thinking positively rather than negatively. Time-wasting conflicts can often be avoided.
- (13) **Sustainability**
People feel more attached to an environment that they have helped to create. They will therefore manage and maintain it better, reducing the likelihood of vandalism, neglect and the subsequent need for costly replacement.



ACTIVITY 2.1

Read the following abstract from Tomlinson (2001:53 & 54) and then answer the questions that follow:

In 1997 the *Grupo Solidario de Quiatoni* produced a video documenting their attempts over a number of years to respond as a community to transformations in their way of life that can be attributed to the incursions of global modernity. What globalisation has meant for them has been a complex process of the penetration of their local circumstances by a

range of distant forces. One of these is undoubtedly the global free market ... In fact the Mexican government's neo-liberal structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and the 1990s are prime examples of the – often brutal – marginalising effects on local rural communities that the pursuit of national “success” in the global market produces. This was of course most famously highlighted by the 1994 Zapatista uprising in the neighbouring state of Chiapas, but for the people who made this video it is clear that the global market was not the only, nor perhaps the most immediate, penetration of their locality. One of the main things they were trying to respond to was a dramatic climatic change. This was part of a broader pattern of global environmental change associated with the “El Niño” phenomenon that had been affecting them: the failure of rains over a number of years and the threat this presented to the viability of their agriculture.

The video describes the way in which the community experimented with different farming methods and economic practices to meet the changed material conditions they were experiencing. In the process they rediscover some of the very effective traditional methods employed by their ancestors and re-contextualise these within a modern market system. More than this, however, the video represents what we could call a project of “re-embedding” of cultural identity.

One of the intriguing things about the video is the title: in Spanish, *Buscando el Bienestar* – roughly translated as *In Search of Wellbeing*. This also describes the collective project of the community – they refer to themselves as “people searching for wellbeing”. This is not just a tactic of mere survival or “getting by” in a world that is dramatically changing around them, but a rather sophisticated and deliberate holistic economic-cultural project. “Wellbeing” suggests a way of life that is not only economically viable, but dignified, existentially satisfying and which allows their culture, their identity, and their collective self-understanding to flourish. Most importantly ... it is not a nostalgic, retrospective or “reactionary” project. They are not seeking simply to hold doggedly on to, or to reinstate, a lost set of traditions, but actively to select those traditional practices that seem to work well in a changing context. To use Anthony Giddens's (1990) term, this could be seen as a process of “re-embedding” a set of material-cultural practices in the space left by the “disembedding” of social life produced by globalisation.

- (1) Describe the processes of globalisation and localisation as discussed in this account of a community in Mexico.
- (2) How was the community able to re-embed its lost cultural practices in this example?
- (3) Which of the benefits of local participation as described in this study unit by Wates (2000:4–5) (see box above) can you deduce from this example?
- (4) Critically evaluate the benefits of participation as a localisation strategy according to Wates (2000).
- (5) Do research on the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the textile industry of Lesotho and South Africa. Comment on the negative effects of globalisation on this industry.

2.3 THE SOCIAL CAPITAL DEBATE IN PUBLIC POLICY FOR DEVELOPMENT

The previous study unit and the sections above have already introduced you to the idea of participation in policies for development by people, communities and non-state actors. The notion of social capital takes these ideas further by looking at “networks of social relationships and the resources they embody” as things that “can be invested in and drawn upon to facilitate action, and can be beneficial as a resource for individuals and communities” (Frank 2003:3). Woolcock and Narayan (2000:3) suggest that “the

basic idea of social capital is that a person's family, friends and associates constitute an important asset, one that can be called on in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, and leveraged for gain”.

There are three forms of social capital, namely bonding, bridging and linking.

Bonding social capital occurs in homogeneous groups, families and ethnic enclaves, is characterised by strong interpersonal ties and in-group loyalties, and provides socio-psychological support to its members. Since bonding refers to social ties linking people with others who are primarily like them, examples of groups with bonding social capital are a stokvel, the members of an extended family, a clan, a tribe, a farmers' group, a book club or a youth club.

Bridging social capital operates horizontally across different social cleavages (ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation). It connects members to assets and information. Since bridging happens between socially heterogeneous groups, it serves as a way to bring together individuals who might have diverse interests. This has the potential to create inclusive, democratic institutional structures. Civic groups open to membership of people of all age groups, races, social classes, genders, sexual orientations and so on are examples of groups that experience bridging. Other examples include parent-teacher associations and community volunteer associations.

Linking social capital operates across vertical wealth groups, and enables members of these groups to access resources, ideas and information from formal institutions outside their groups (Frank 2003). Linking social capital can open up economic opportunities for less powerful or marginalised groups and enable them to get ahead by improving trust and tolerance. Can you see that civil society organisations, governmental service agencies, private development agencies and political parties, for example, can play such a linking function?

All three forms can help to connect people to policies and vice versa. Thus social capital is a resource and a process that can be used to achieve policy objectives, for example improved education or better health outcomes.

In the previous sections you have been familiarised with the idea that we live in a complex world where one policy does not fit all contexts or issues – in other words, one size does not fit all. Any policy directed at sustainable, people-centred development should be sensitive to the values, aspirations and social patterns of a target population. Policy should be embedded in an accurate understanding of the values, needs and characteristics of the target population, which implies that an understanding of the possibilities for social capital mobilisation is a key part of policy-making.

The Irish National Economic and Social Forum (2003:75) suggests the following reasons why social capital is a central idea in public policy:

- (1) It establishes an appropriate balance between “bottom-up” and “top-down” approaches in public policy.
- (2) It fosters respect in public policy implementation for individuals, communities and their rights.
- (3) It encourages active citizenship based on principles of mutual help and responsibility.
- (4) It promotes partnerships between citizens, communities, intermediary agencies and the government.
- (5) It nurtures voluntarism in the community.

- (6) It places considerations for the local and locality at the centre of policy aimed at addressing complex problems.

Cox and Caldwell (2000:7) compiled a list of questions we should ask when analysing policies, programmes and projects in terms of successful inclusion of and sensitivity to social capital considerations:

- (1) Does the intervention increase people's skills to engage in social activities with others?
- (2) Does the intervention target some groups at the expense of others?
- (3) Does the intervention encourage the establishment of informal relationships and trust with all stakeholders?
- (4) Does the intervention extend social networks, optimism, confidence and trust among participants?
- (5) Will beneficiaries increase their capacity to deal with conflict and diversity?

Promoting the formation of social capital as the “glue” of civic networks that bind people to their communities can be regarded as a possible democratisation strategy in public policy. Social capital and the closely linked concept of social cohesion have quickly been absorbed into the public policy thinking of governments, NGOs and inter-governmental organisations. Prime among those appropriating these notions is the World Bank (sa):

Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together.

Development thinking has evolved into a broad pragmatism. It has been realised that development should extend far beyond economic growth to include important social objectives – reduced poverty, a higher quality of life, more opportunities for better education and health and far more (World Bank 2000:III) Experience has shown that sustained progress to achieve these objectives requires integrated implementation and should be based on transparent processes that are participatory and inclusive. The results of good policy initiatives tend to evaporate in the absence of a strong institutional foundation.

In the report *Making democracy work for pro-poor development*, which contains the findings of the Commonwealth Expert Group on Development and Democracy (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:vii), the emphasis is on poverty eradication and the notion that development efforts should focus on much more than just economic growth. There is a need to identify specific disadvantaged groups (e.g. in terms of age, occupation and gender) and consequently to design specific policies to improve their lives (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:xii). In addition, democracy should be underpinned by accountable institutions and a democratic culture, which implies representative and accountable institutions (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:xii–xiii).

The South African government's understanding of social cohesion is articulated by its Department of Arts and Culture (2012) as:

... the degree of social integration and inclusion in communities and society at large and the extent to which mutual solidarity finds expression among individuals and communities.

Desai (2015:113), in his analysis of South Africa, comments on this as follows:

In this period of uncertainty and fracture, and in the absence of a fundamental shift in economic policy towards redistribution, attempts to keep things together with ideas like social cohesion will be increasingly hard to sustain.

It would seem that bonding, bridging and linking social capital compete with one another to gain the upper hand in policy agenda-setting.

One of the major points of critique against the over-enthusiastic incorporation of social capital into policy-making ideas is that it remains something that is difficult to measure. A researcher cannot ascertain levels of social capital (sometimes gauged as the amount of civil participation or volunteering in a community) in a particular policy's target population or understand how to maximise its positive influence. Another point of critique is that strong bonding social capital can lead to social exclusion of groups of individuals.



ACTIVITY 2.2

Read the article by Phiri et al (2016) entitled *Inclusive innovation and inequality in South Africa: a case for transformative social policy* in the Reader and then answer the following questions:

- (1) How do the authors describe social capital formation and (a) the dual economy and (b) the informal economy in South Africa? What are the policy implications of social capital formation in these economies?
- (2) How can strong bonding social capital defeat the purposes of a transformative development policy? Look up the meaning of the words (a) political clientelism (b) administrative patrimonialism and (c) prebendalism, and use them in your argument.
- (3) Consider the statements:
 - (a) Social capital formation has become a fashionable, but empty buzzword blaming the disempowered and the disenfranchised for their plight, whilst at the same time ignoring the state's social contract with the poor and vulnerable.
 - (b) Affluent gated communities have plenty of economic capital, but little social capital, and no one is concerned about that. Yet for the homeless, social capital can become a matter of life or death.

Do you agree or disagree with this statements? Give reasons for your answers.

- (4) In India, Thailand and South Africa slum or shack dweller organisations create poor people's networks to scale up the benefits of social capital to fight their isolation and disempowerment. Read about one such organisation and discuss how, as a student of Development Studies, you will describe the functions, structure and aims of that organisation in terms of globalisation, localisation, social capital, social cohesion, democratic participation and transformative development policy.
-

2.4 STRUCTURAL APPROACHES TO PUBLIC POLICY

These approaches see public policy as the outcome of macro-level structures (those that endure and those that change) in society. For example, policies can be formulated to counteract the socio-economic and environmental problems created by intensified

extractive industrialisation. Another pertinent example is how HIV/AIDS has forced many governments to account for the epidemic in their policies as it

- (a) impacts all sectors and all institutions
- (b) follows the contours of social exclusion, poverty, and other power and resource disparities

The social, political and economic environment thus stimulates inputs into the political system, producing public policy as outputs. This implies that the elements of the system are interrelated, that the structural system can respond to forces in its environment, and that it will do so to preserve itself. Thus the policy system is distinguishable from the environment in which it exists and is open to influence from it. System authorities seek to correct disturbances that might be expected to cause system stress in relation to system goals.

From this approach, it becomes possible to understand variations between the public policies of different countries in reaction to their unique contexts and histories. These approaches also acknowledge the role of conflict between groups with and without power in society in shaping public policy – the so-called social cleavages approaches to public policy-making (Knill & Tosun 2012). Can you see that study unit 1 follows a structural approach to changes in policy in Africa?

2.5 INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES TO PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING

Institutional approaches to public policy-making regard policy as the output of formal institutions. Public sector institutions are tasked with implementing public policy, for example by deciding on the policy agenda. Because of this, we can argue that there is a reciprocal link (or mutual socialisation) between these formal institutions and individual people. In other words, institutions constrain the actions of their members, but individuals shape the institutions within which they function. We can argue that a policy is not a public policy until it has been adopted, implemented and enforced by some governmental institution (Knill & Tosun 2012). We will elaborate further on institutions in the next study unit, but for the purposes of understanding the approach, you should consider that state institutions usually have:

- (1) internal organisational structures
- (2) goals
- (3) structured and enduring activities
- (4) defined roles
- (5) responsibilities and accountabilities
- (6) meaningful organisational boundaries

When looking at public policy as an institutional output, you should ask the following questions:

- (1) Who is responsible for policy implementation? (E.g. the executive, legislative and judicial institutions of government.)
- (2) How is policy determined, implemented, and enforced by these institutions?

Here three factors play a role:

- (i) **Legitimacy** (the policy has authorised power). Perceptions of how legitimate a public policy is will be influenced, for example, by its substantive elements and the procedural steps taken by decision-makers during the policy cycle. If the substantive content of a given policy does not align with the dominant attitudes of the affected policy target community or the broader public, it lacks legitimacy. The very unpopular e-toll system in South Africa is an example of this. Consultation, participation and stakeholder engagement shape the legitimacy of public policies.
- (ii) **Universality** (the policy is uniformly applicable). This means that a public policy tends to address the basic rights applicable to all people. Universal utilities (e.g. roads, water pipes) and public services (e.g. the physical protection of human beings, their health status and the environment) are pertinent examples. Universality in public policy is a context-bound idea, determined for example by the arrangements of the state and its constitution.
- (iii) **Coercion**. A government monopolises the power to coerce obedience to policy, or to sanction violators, for example via law enforcement and the courts.

Understanding public policy as shaped by institutions implies that individuals have little impact, instead, the structure and design of state institutions affect policy outcomes, for example by:

- determining the duties and arrangements of ministries and departments
- taking constitutional provisions, administrative and common law, and judicial decisions into consideration
- focusing on the formal arrangements such as executive re-organisations, presidential commission, etc.

Dobson (2002:246) tells us that supra- and macro-institutional arrangements exist and exert a powerful influence on the managerial capacity of institutions. Such supra- and macro-institutional arrangements include systems and spheres of government and their interrelationships. Social and economic forces outside the particular governmental institutions responsible for policy implementation can affect the health of the particular institution (Dobson 2002). When applying these insights to public policy in Africa, consider the following:

- (1) The legacy of colonialism and the problems of redress, high rates of inequality, poor and deteriorating infrastructure, a youthful population and unemployment in the face of a global economic downturn.
- (2) In many African countries policy formulation takes place in institutional environments where governments are preoccupied with attempts at nation building and complex social and political problems which are the legacy of the colonial past.
- (3) Financial problems related to colonial histories play a decisive role in the capacity of African governments to formulate indigenous policies which reflect local needs and priorities. Consequently external organisations often determine the pace and direction of development policies.

The importance of institutions is also acknowledged in South Africa, where public sector reform has been a central idea in the RDP. Two important weaknesses of the public

sector as an agent for public policy implementation have been identified, namely poor technical expertise and deficient governmental coordination (Chipkin & Lipietz 2012). On public sector reforms as a key to better development policies Yanguas and Bukenya (2016:137) comment as follows:

Despite high hopes that public sector reform would pave the way for improved public service delivery and generate a climate conducive to private sector-led economic development across Sub-Saharan Africa, the track record of the past two decades shows public sector reform interventions faltering or failing outright, often implemented without a sound evidence base or a commitment to evaluation. There is some consensus that “stroke of the pen” reforms like liberalisation and privatisation have been much easier to implement than those involving structural and institutional change, like managerial reform and pro-poor service delivery, which require much broader consultation and agreement between social and political actors. Blinded by a fascination with the dissemination of technocratic templates oblivious to local conditions, public sector reform initiatives have by and large failed to generate sustained improvement in government performance and thereby development outcomes. Such disappointing performance has reminded practitioners that the success or failure of public sector reform does not depend merely on technical know-how or resource availability, but on the interactions between regime elites, public bureaucrats and societal groups operating within local incentive and normative structures: public sector reform is – and has always been – an eminently political task.

2.6 INTEREST-BASED APPROACHES TO PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING

This particular approach foregrounds the bargaining, negotiation, compromise and weighing up of competing demands that shape public policy. It acknowledges that interest groups act as bridges between citizens and government. Here, public choice theories argue that the competition between various interest groups is part and parcel of sound public policy. According to the interest-based approach, government’s role is to establish the rules for the interest group struggles. This means that politicians bargain and negotiate with these interest groups such as their political parties. This approach allows for overlapping memberships. The relative influence of a particular interest group is determined by factors such as:

- (1) group size (membership numbers)
- (2) wealth or access to resources, power and decision-makers
- (3) organisational structure, stability and cohesion
- (4) leadership (Knill & Tosun 2012).

Figure 2.1 shows four versions of interest-based approaches, namely:

- (1) the rational model, which holds that despite group competition, it is possible to reach agreement on goals and select those policies offering the greatest benefits and least costs
- (2) the group model, which holds that public policy results from the balance of interest group influences
- (3) the elite model, which holds that public policy is determined by the interests, values and preferences of powerful elites

- (4) the public choice model, which holds that all political actors (voters, interest groups, politicians, legislators) would seek to maximise benefits on policies (Knill & Tosun 2012).

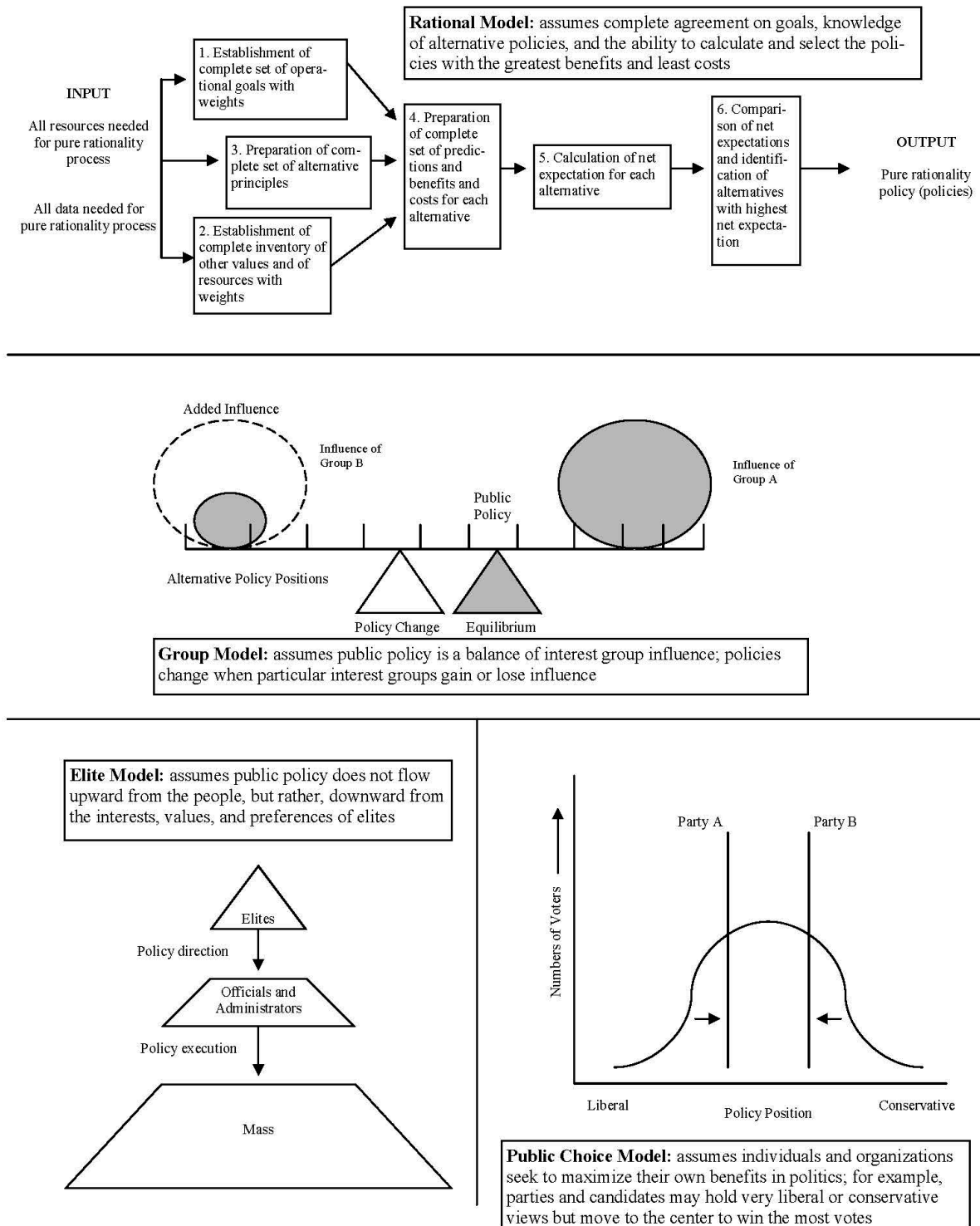


FIGURE 2.1



ACTIVITY 2.3

Read the article entitled *Aligning climate policy with national interest: disengagements with nationally appropriate mitigation actions in South Africa* by Upadhyaya (2016) in the Reader and then answer the following questions:

- (1) Does the author apply the structural, institutional or interest-group approach in the analysis of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) in South Africa? Give reasons for your answer.
 - (2) What, according to the author, are the main reasons for South Africa's disengagements with NAMAs at different policy process stages?
 - (3) Compare and contrast structural, institutional and interest-based approaches to policy-making. In your essay, use NAMAs as an example.
-

2.7 COMPLEXITY THEORY, RESILIENCE AND PUBLIC POLICY

By now you should realise that the contemporary context in which public policies are made and implemented is extremely complex, adaptable and subject to change. Policy interventions can have unintended consequences. Contemporary public policy-making demands a multi-agent, multi-actor, multi-layered, multi-dimensional approach, which recognises the realm of public policy as complex, because:

- there are many similar yet independent elements or agents involved
- these elements and agents interact with other element and agents further away from the direct policy, its formulation and implementation
- the policy-making system adjusts to new situations to ensure survival
- systems and institutions related to the policy environment to self-organise as adaptive systems
- local rules apply to each element and agent
- the policy environment becomes progressively more complex

From the above it becomes clear that complex systems are regarded as adaptable. The idea of complex adaptive systems, in turn, encourages the idea of resilience as a new catchphrase to describe uncertainty and risk (as produced by loss of employment, long-term poverty, homelessness, forced migration, war, natural disasters) in public policy-making for development.

Welsh (2014:15) explains that “(r)esilience is primarily conceived as the property that captures the capacity of the entity to anticipate, adapt to and recover from” traumas or shocks. Taken up into the discourse of development and good governance, resilience then becomes the technocratic solution for creating “autonomous and entrepreneurial subjects in a world of naturalised uncertainty and crisis” (Welsh 2014:16). From these comments, **“it is clear that a major point of critique against the resilience idea is that it assumes a return to equilibrium after a trauma or a shock”** (our emphasis).

Reid (2012:60 & 76) critiques resilience from another perspective:

Resilient people do not look to states to secure their wellbeing because they have been disciplined into believing in the necessity to secure it for themselves ...The human here is conceived as resilient in so far as it adapts to rather than resists the

conditions of its suffering in the world. **To be resilient is to forego the very power of resistance** (our emphasis).

Issues of social justice and power are therefore ignored, while upholding the status quo is not questioned. Welsh (2014:21) calls this the production of compliant neoliberal subjectivities where the social contract of the state to provide for its citizens gets relocated to the individual or communities tasked to become more resilient by themselves.



ACTIVITY 2.4

Read the article entitled *Complexity theory in political science and public policy* by Cairney (2012) in the Reader and then answer the following questions:

- (1) What does Cairney (2012) regard as the four key policy-making insights that complexity theory can add?
- (2) Cairney (2012:350 & 351) uses complexity theory to describe how the institutionalisation of policy can make the introduction of policy alternatives difficult (policy inertia) and more costly over time. Explain in your own words the forces at work here. Focus on issues such as the complexity of institutions, the notion of increasing returns in policy implementation, negative and positive policy feedback, and the problems facing public sector professionals in policy implementation.
- (3) Summarise the main problems related to complexity theory as a conceptual framework for policy analysis, as suggested by Cairney (2012:352 & 353).
- (4) What does Cairney (2012) regard as the three main contributions of complexity theory to better comprehension of public policy for contemporary policy-makers?
- (5) How does the notion of resilience link to complexity theory? What does Welsh (2014) regard as the main problems with a resilience framework?

2.8 CRITICAL DIMENSIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The final section of this study unit considers the debate about what is needed for successful policy implementation. Activity 2.5 asks you to summarise these insights from your prescribed reader.



ACTIVITY 2.5

Read the article entitled *Critical dimensions for policy implementation* by Mthethwa (2012) in the Reader and then answer the following questions:

- (1) Define policy implementation.
- (2) Give at least three reasons why evaluating policy implementation is important.
- (3) Why is policy implementation regarded as political and technical?
- (4) Mthethwa (2012) regards leadership, stakeholder engagement, context, resources and operational issues as drivers to take policy from idea to implementation. Using housing policy as an example, describe the role that each of these play in the policy-to-action continuum.

- (5) Compare and contrast top-down and bottom-up policy implementation approaches.
 - (6) Discuss the seven dimensions of policy implementation as suggested by Mthethwa (2012).
-

2.9 CONCLUSION

In this study unit we have looked at selected debates on public policy. It is clear that the policy context has changed dramatically and that serious development issues determine the development path of many countries. In study unit 3 we look at the institutional environment of the policy formulation process.

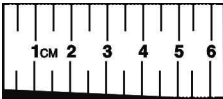
2.10 OUTCOMES CHECKLIST

Use the checklist to determine whether you have mastered the contents of this study unit:

| Outcome | Can do it, because ... | Cannot do it, because ... |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) I can link globalisation and localisation to possibilities and constraints in public policy for development. | | |
| (2) I can give an account of social capital as a central concept in public policy | | |
| (3) I can compare and contrast structural, institutional and interest-based approaches to policy-making | | |
| (4) I I can describe and critique complexity theory and the notion of resilience as they relate to public policy | | |
| (5) I can Identify critical dimensions for development policy implementation | | |

STUDY UNIT 3

The institutional environment of public policies



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After you have completed this study unit, you should be able to

- describe the political, economic, administrative and external dimensions of the institutional environment of public policies
- give examples of the characteristics, factors and limitations of the institutional environment that affect the capacity for policy formulation and management
- explain the framework for institutional policy management

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous study unit we have looked at the role of institutions in policy-making. In this study unit we examine the relationship between policy-making, policy implementation and the institutions that capacitate these. Formal institutions are part of state capacity, whereas informal institutions also shape policy in the exercise of democratic governance. In terms of these institutions, Painter and Pierre (2005:2) speak of how they influence one another “to marshal the necessary resources to make intelligent collective choices about and set strategic directions for the allocation of scarce resources to public ends”. We introduce you to the idea that these institutions can capacitate but also constrain policy systems. This partly explains why the capacity of policies to get things done also varies across space and time. The chief aim of this study unit is to increase your knowledge and understanding of the broader institutional context of policy management in African countries. To achieve this aim, the study unit focuses mainly on the following four dimensions of the institutional environment:

- the political dimension
- the economic dimension
- the administrative dimension
- the external dimension

3.2 THE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF POLICY FORMULATION

Public policy formulation should always be analysed in the context of the national institutional environment. This context comprises political, economic, cultural and social dimensions. As suggested before, in many African countries the postcolonial period saw a preoccupation with nation-building and redress for problems of economic, social and political exclusion. Since geographical boundaries in sub-Saharan Africa were often

the consequence of colonial control rather than natural boundary divisions, in some cases these led to poor national ties and strong alliances along ethnic lines, with the result that political instability was no rarity. In many countries prevailing poverty was aggravated by the countries' vulnerability to external economic shocks, which increased in the early 1970s in particular.

These crises and problems play a decisive role in the capacity of African governments to formulate indigenous policies which reflect local needs and priorities. The Lagos Plan of Action (see study unit 1) expressed the need for regional integration, yet this plan was side-stepped as African countries pursued individual plans for external funding. It is therefore often such external organisations that determine the pace and direction of development policies and in so doing add an international dimension to national policy-making processes (Mkandawire 2010). It is therefore understandable that environmental factors in African countries are often regarded as more of an obstacle to effective policy management than is the case in other countries.

In the following sections we look specifically at the process of policy formulation in the context of the broader institutional environment within which policy is introduced and implemented. This institutional environment is primarily related to the capacity of a government to design, formulate and implement policy – one of the three elements of the governance environment. This element of governance consists of three principal components, namely the institutional environment; the core policy formulation process within the government; and the involvement of civil society.

3.2.1 The political dimension

Democracy needs representative institutions that are fully accountable and able to monitor and restrain any abuse of public power or public funds (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:xiii). Institutional weakness is a major problem in many African countries and constrains state capacity to expand capabilities or to ensure equitable growth. Put differently, democratic institutions can enhance African states' abilities to act as agents of long-term socioeconomic development, enhance coherent and inclusive policy formulation, support effective public administration, and limit corruption. Attempting to appease strong factions (e.g. party supporters or urban consumers), governments can be tempted by political opportunism in policy-making which might not be line with developmental objectives. In the absence of strong institutional checks on how public resources are used, patronage networks can severely compromise the effectiveness of public service delivery (Alence 2004).

Effective institutions are a prerequisite for successful pro-poor democratic development. Institutional mechanisms and appropriate constitutional and legal frameworks should be established to prevent abuse of executive power and corruption. In South Africa, for example, institutions have established in terms of Chapter 9 of the Constitution to guard democracy in exactly this way. These institutions are the Public Protector and the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). In addition, democratic, pro-development institutional design should be flexible, and able to learn and to adapt to changing conditions.

States should avoid the temptation to outsource large parts of government planning capacity and authority to external experts. In South Africa, the high turnover of public servants, especially director generals, indicates the absence of long-term career and

succession planning in many institutions and the loss of skills and continuity (Edigheji 2010:30). Mechanisms must be put into place to ensure that poor communities have a voice in decision-making processes about issues that affect their lives, thereby empowering them (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:12 & 13). Such mechanisms can include public hearings held at municipal levels (in South Africa, local governments are required by law to hold public meetings), stakeholder meetings or participatory budget planning,

The role of the state in this dimension can be described as follows:

A strong, effective, accountable state is the first pillar of democracy and development. Neither can be imported. International institutions alone cannot and should not take responsibility for eradicating poverty, authoritarianism and conflict. National governments should take the initiative by ensuring that their own core institutions of democracy are fully accountable, and by adopting pro-poor development strategies and promoting democratic reforms and human rights at all levels – in local government, at the national level, and in the international organizations in which they participate (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:15).

“Autonomy refers to the extent of the state’s independence from self-serving and conflicting social pressures” (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:60). The degree of autonomy and the capacity of states have a serious effect on their ability to design and implement effective policies.

In addition to autonomy, it is essential that a state has the capacity to design and implement policies. In the words of Howlett and Ramesh (2003:61):

The capacity of the state, which is a function of its organizational coherence and expertise, is also a significant determinant of its success in performing policy functions. Unity within and among various levels, branches, and agencies of the government and high levels of bureaucratic expertise are regarded as crucial to enhance state capacity. An executive bogged down in constant bargaining with the legislative or government departments in constant conflict among themselves cannot be expected to perform policy functions adequately. Similarly, the society will not be well served by a bureaucracy without the expertise necessary to tackle the complex problems it is required to address.

Governments’ policy objectives and degree of success in achieving these objectives depend to a large degree on the domestic and international institutional context in which they operate. The structure of domestic political institutions determines the capacity and autonomy of a government, while the structure of international regimes and the role played by state resources within them also affect a government’s capacity and autonomy. These structures impact on the interests and behaviour of policy actors, and on the outcomes of the policy process (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:85).

The prescription for good governance has dominated much of the debate in the political dimension of public policy. As Lauridsen (2012) explains, the state is tasked with fostering long-term economic growth and development through sound policies, and this in turn requires institutional arrangements that will ensure effective policy implementation. In contrast with the good governance prescriptions steeped in neoliberalism, Lauridsen (2012) advocates for institutions that have a developmental focus (see his article in your reader). Such institutions are context specific and focus on dynamic economic transformation and a state bureaucracy that can implement policies effectively.

3.2.2 The economic dimension

The state's macroeconomic policy stance guides fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies. It also guides its social spending. Macroeconomic stability in a country can be seen in sustained economic growth rates, investment, productivity and job creation. Macroeconomic instability (low growth rates, low investments and poor job creation) in poor countries has a negative impact on policies that are aimed at the eradication of poverty and pro-poor development. In South Africa, for example, unemployment and social exclusion are problems to be addressed through the transformation of the structure of opportunities and widening access to basic services and physical infrastructure – yet at the same time the country tries to integrate into the global market and reduce its fiscal deficit (Edigheji 2010).

Many middle and low income countries tend to lean towards policy stances that would ensure strong, vibrant, mixed economies. Inflation, for example, has a negative tax effect on the poor, for they usually do not own assets whose appreciation can act as a hedge against price increases. Macroeconomic instability also encourages capital outflow from the country.

Governments must make efforts to formulate and implement policies that do not increase inflation, contribute to balance of payments crises and create unsustainable budget deficits, as these impact negatively on the lives of poor people. Welfare programmes and safety nets should be aimed specifically at improving the living standard of the poor and therefore should be well targeted. Furthermore, governments should create macroeconomic stability in order to attract foreign capital. Financial stability in developing countries can create an environment in which small firms and family businesses are encouraged to be innovative. It is also important to increase the efficiency of public enterprises, implement pro-poor market reforms and generate resources for development by deregulating economic processes (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:28–30; Edigheji 2010).

3.2.3 The administrative dimension

Effective state administration is a necessary prerequisite for the successful implementation of government policies. If a government does not have the administrative capacity and/or experience to target those most in need, well-intentioned pro-poor economic and social policies fail to achieve their goals. Ineffective state administration is a failure of good governance and is often caused by poorly trained officials or a lack of experienced officials in public management (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:25). Civil servants, for example, can be trained in gender planning and gender-responsive budgeting to improve the targeting of anti-poverty programmes and to contribute towards the promotion of gender rights. Think about your own country – do you see evidence of sound state administration?

The Commonwealth Secretariat (2003:26) stated the following: “Building civil service capacity can help deliver pro-poor policies in areas such as health and education, thereby ensuring effective state administration and upholding social and economic rights.” Other factors that determine the administrative capacity of governments are:

- low remuneration packages for local officials, causing a lack of qualified officials and poor morale
- the lack of sufficient resources

- entrenched systems of corruption
- the inadequate representation of women at decision-making levels, which means that the interests of women are not represented in the policy formulation process (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:25)

Weak administrative capacity also have a negative impact on the ability to absorb foreign aid, as administrators do not have the capacity to deliver and manage aid programmes at local level (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:26). Developing countries in search of pro-poor development have the “crucial task of building effective state administration to help create, implement and monitor pro-poor development strategies” (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:26).

The establishment of democratic institutions is a key instrument used to achieve more effective state administration. Earlier in this study unit we have mentioned public hearings and consultative budget planning at local government levels to allow the voices of people to be heard. Such mechanisms should be created to increase the involvement of poor communities in the policy formulation process and decisions that affect them. Increased involvement will in turn increase the state’s administrative capabilities as well as popular participation and local democracy. Another key instrument for promoting equity and efficiency is the government’s budget. It is imperative that budgetary processes that ensure accountability, transparency and equity are put into place. This involves consultation processes to ensure that budget allocations are responsive to local needs, and that the impact thereof on disadvantaged groups is monitored, evaluated and addressed when necessary (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:26).

3.2.4 The external dimension

Governments often rely on outside expertise when formulating policies, which means that external experts have significant influence in the policy-making process. Another factor that increases external influence is the financial resources provided by international organisations. The levels of expertise and finance provided determine the level of impact of international actors in domestic policies (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:60).

Economic dependency on the outside world and donor funding put many African countries in a weak political and economic position. Thus, there is a need for action on the side of the international community to enhance pro-poor and democratic development through their bilateral and multilateral partnerships with developing countries instead of implementing policies and aid programmes that impact negatively on the political and economic position of developing countries (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:55).

The Commonwealth Secretariat (2003:xii) states that the following:

Beyond the state, the market and civil society, there is a need for action in the international community. The wealthier industrialized countries must not impede development through their own protectionist measures, including subsidies and restrictions on market access in agriculture and textiles. They must promote and work within a rules-based and transparent multilateral trading system that is more responsive to the needs of poor countries. Having committed themselves to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the industrialized countries must now implement their pledges, providing resources in ways that promote democracy and development. Specifically, this means providing debt relief that releases adequate resources for

governments to pursue development programmes, particularly in the areas of health and education, and increasing untied official aid and direct budgetary support to levels needed to attain the MDGs. Where international economic organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) set down conditionality or constraints on policy, it must be in the pursuit of pro-poor development, and must work in ways that do not erode democratic institutions and human rights at the national and sub-national levels.

Democratically-oriented policies can be used to confront the development challenges posed by the international aid regime. National poverty reduction strategies could have more meaningful participation from poor communities and incorporate more comprehensive public information campaigns. Governments can gain greater ownership and control of their own policies if they do the following:

- Reduce dependence on foreign aid that is tied to donor commercial interest at the expense of national priorities.
- Reduce excessive conditionality in official assistance.
- Provide increased direct budgetary support. Similarly, greater co-ordination and harmonisation between donors and governments would be a way that donors could show their respect for the sovereignty of developing countries (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:55).



ACTIVITY 3.1

Read the contribution entitled *Institutional complexity and unanticipated consequences: the failure of decentralization in South Africa* by Koelble and Siddle (2014), and the one entitled *From good governance to developmental governance: how policies, institutions and politics matter* by Lauridsen (2012) in the Reader. Use the framework for the institutional environment as described in this study unit and then answer the following questions:

- (1) Explain what the institutional environment of policy formulation is.
- (2) Outline the characteristics, factors and restrictions of each dimension (political, economic, administrative and external) that influence the capacity for policy formulation and management.
- (3) Give examples of the characteristics, factors and restrictions that are present in the institutional environment in South Africa and have resulted in poor service delivery at the local level.
- (4) Summarise Lauridsen's (2012) critique of standard "institutional therapy" recipes driven by the international development establishment for middle and low income countries.

From the above discussion it is clear that the institutional environment plays an important role in the effectiveness and capacity of governments to formulate and implement efficient development policies. Dobson (2002) also emphasises that institutionalising policy management capacity is critical to achieving policy success. According to Dobson (2002:246) institutional arrangements have a direct bearing on policy, as they provide the basis of policy management functions, and determine the direction and efficiency of the policy formulation process. Dobson (2002) also identifies four capacities for effective policy management:

- (1) **The capacity of political leadership and direction.** This refers to the political will of government and state actors to support a given policy, as well as the idea of the policy's legitimacy and viability.
- (2) **Administrative capacity.** This refers to the capacity of state institutions to implement, monitor and evaluate a policy.
- (3) **Analytical capacity.** This capacity denotes the ability of government institutions to analyse and predict trends in the environment that would warrant policy interventions, and their ability to allocate resources correctly for policy development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M & E). The analytical capacity also includes Heymans's (as quoted in Dobson 2002:250) idea of the substantive value of a policy – what is its potential value for stakeholders, citizens, beneficiaries, etc? Dobson (2002:250) argues that when the analytical capacity of a government institution is well-developed, it would formulate policies of substantive value.
- (4) **Coordination capacity.** This refers to the capacity of the government to create systems and mechanisms for the horizontal coordination of public policies across national ministries, departments and institutions. It is important for managing and maximising the efficacy of limited resources. Coordination between international policies and national public policy areas is equally crucial. Solving the problems that public policy is intended to address in a coherent manner require efficient coordination, improved cooperation between ministries and involving citizens in planning. The quality of public policy depends largely on the activities of consultation and coordination. These activities should be developed by the public institutions belonging to the executive power (i.e. horizontal coordination), but representatives bodies, interest groups and strategic planners should play a meaningful role in this development (i.e. vertical coordination).



ACTIVITY 3.2

Read the case study entitled *Institutional complexity and unanticipated consequences: the failure of decentralization in South Africa* by Koelble and Siddle (2014) in the Reader and then do the following activity:

- (1) Define policy and policy implementation.
- (2) Outline the institutional approach to policy management (see study unit 2).
- (3) Describe four capacities that are required for successful policy management.
- (4) Outline options for institutional arrangements.
- (5) Consider the following statement:

South Africa's challenges of service delivery indicate flawed policy institutions and a troubled policy environment.

Comment on the statement by describing South Africa's decentralisation of public service delivery in terms of its policy environment, institutions and policy management capacities.

3.3 CONCLUSION

In this study unit we have seen that the institutional environment is a critical determining factor in the process of formulating efficient development policies. The political, economic, administrative and external dimensions are crucial in the establishment of an institutional framework that is conducive to development policy. These dimensions are the origins of the demands and issues to which policy-makers should respond. In the theme that follows, we look specifically at the policy formulation process.

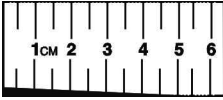
3.4 OUTCOMES CHECKLIST

Use the checklist to determine whether you have mastered the contents of this study unit:

| Outcome | Can do it, because ... | Cannot do it, because ... |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (1) I can explain the political, economic, administrative and external dimensions of the institutional environment of the policy formulation process. | | |
| (2) I can give examples of the characteristics, factors and limitations of the political, economic, administrative and external dimensions of the institutional environment that affect the capacity for policy formulation and management. | | |
| (3) I can explain the framework for institutionalising management. | | |

STUDY UNIT 4

Policy formulation and agenda-setting



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After you have completed this study unit, you should be able to

- describe a typical policy formulation process
 - explain the role of agenda-setting in the policy-making process
 - describe the sources and constraints of goals, objectives and alternatives
 - explain the prioritisation of objectives and the relevant criteria that should be applied
 - discuss policy options generation
-

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study unit introduces the initial moments of policy formulation, namely problem definition and agenda setting. By now you should be aware that policy-making is a complex political and administrative process which often extends across organisational and sectoral boundaries. It is related to national, supranational, international, formal and informal institutions (Knill & Tosun 2012).

In any policy formulation process there are many actors, stakeholders, organisations and citizens who all have concerns or vested interests that they believe merit attention via public policies. Although there are a great many concerns, problems or interests then, only a small number would eventually receive government attention – and this is where policy agenda-setting comes into play (Knill & Tosun 2012). In this study unit we consider the way in which policy problems reach the formal agenda. In the two study units that follow we will look at the different phases of the policy formulation process. In this study unit we focus on the identification of the problem, the specification of objectives and the development of possible options as phases of the policy formulation process, also called the policy-making process or policy cycle. In study unit 5 we will look at policy decision-making, designing an implementation strategy, and policy revision and reformulation (evaluation).

4.2 THE POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS

One of the most popular means of simplifying the policy-making process is to divide it into a series of steps or stages. The sequence of these steps or stages is referred to as the policy cycle. Lasswell (in Howlett & Ramesh 2003:11) suggests that the policy process be divided into the following seven stages:

- (1) **Intelligence.** The policy process starts with intelligence-gathering about the problem the policy will address, by collecting, processing and disseminating the relevant information.
- (2) **Promotion.** Specific options to address the problem are put forward.
- (3) **Prescription.** Decision-makers prescribe a particular course of action.
- (4) **Invocation.** A set of sanctions is developed for those not complying to the policy prescriptions.
- (5) **Application.** The policy is enforced by courts and the implementation bureaucracy.
- (6) **Termination.** The policy might terminate at a given time.
- (7) **Appraisal.** The policy is evaluated in terms of the aims and goals set by the original decision-makers.

Lasswell's model of the stages of policy-making focuses on decision-making by government, but mostly ignores the external and institutional influences on government behaviour or capacity. Brewer (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:12) devises a less complex version of the policy model and identifies the following stages in the policy formulation process:

- (1) invention (problem identification)
- (2) estimation (calculation of risks, costs and benefits of each possible solution)
- (3) selection (deciding on one or some combination of solutions)
- (4) implementation of selected option
- (5) evaluation of results
- (6) termination of policy based on the conclusions reached by its evaluation

Brewer's model includes the recognition of problems and the identification of the various stages of the process. It also regards the policy process as an ongoing cycle. The principle behind the notion of the policy cycle is the logic of applied problem-solving. Conceptualising policy-making as a cycle model does not imply that policy-makers go about solving public problems in a systematic and linear fashion. In practice the phases are often compressed or skipped, or followed in a different order than that specified by the model (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:14).

There are some obvious advantages to envisioning public policy as a policy cycle. These advantages include the following:

- (1) It makes policy processes more comprehensible.
- (2) There are delineated stages that can be analysed and reviewed.
- (3) Each phase can be looked at separately.
- (4) Phases can be compared in terms of what extent each goal was achieved successfully.

One of the biggest disadvantages of using the policy cycle model is that it creates an artificial and idealistic view on policy. As you would have gathered by now, policy formulation and implementation in real life are much more unpredictable and not always purely rational and goal-oriented.

In contrast to these cyclical models, Dunn (in De Coning & Cloete 2006:48) provides a process model of policy-making. Such a model reflects international experience of policy-making. According to this model the process is a series of intellectual activities that take place within a set of mainly political activities. These political activities constitute the policy-making process. Dunn sees the process as a series of interdependent phases. See figure 4.1 for Dunn's policy-making model.

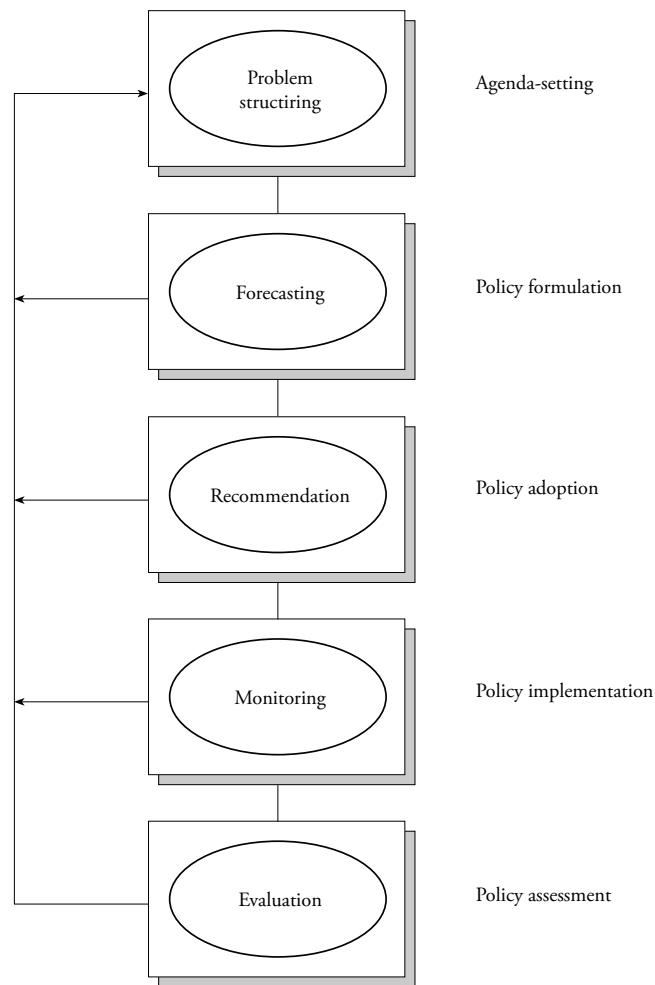
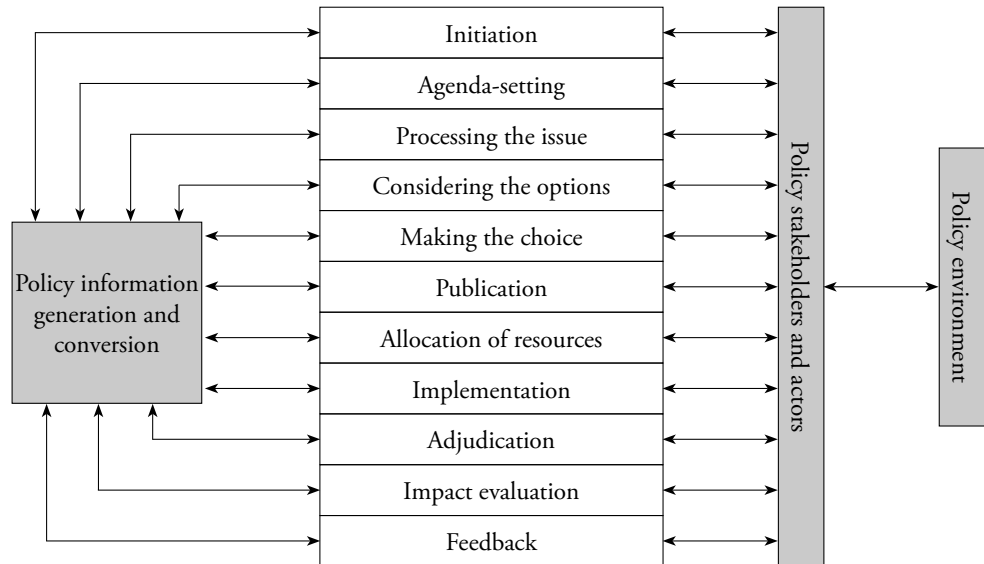


FIGURE 4.1 DUNN'S POLICY-MAKING MODEL

Source: De Coning and Cloete (2006:50)

Wissink's stage model of policy-making is an important contribution to the improvement of the process model. He provides an alternative approach by dividing the different phases of the policy process into descriptive stages according to the specific dynamics and activities leading to policy outputs. According to De Coning and Cloete (2006:49) this model reflects the policy-making process as "consisting of activities which are often present, but ignored, in contemporary models". The process starts with an activity of initiation or becoming aware of a problem, followed by agenda-setting and deciding on priorities. Subsequent activities are the identification of the problem and stakeholders, and evaluating the different options. These are followed by the selection of one option and making the decision public. The allocation of resources to achieve the desired result is part of the implementation stage, which refers to the design and initiation of a programme of action to achieve the policy objective. Adjudication (enforcing the policy choice through administrative and legal means) follows on implementation, before the stages of impact evaluation and feedback come into play (De Coning & Cloete 2006:49). See figure 4.2 for Wissink's stage model.



- 2 Proposal of solution
- 2 Policy formulation
- 3 Choice of solution
- 3 Decision-making
- 4 Putting solution into effect
- 4 Policy implementation
- 5 Monitoring results
- 5 Policy evaluation

FIGURE 4.2 WISSINK'S STAGE MODEL OF POLICY-MAKING

Source: De Coning and Cloete (2006:51)

De Coning (De Coning & Cloete 2006:51–53) has developed a generic process model that reflects the redefinition of existing process models into a generic model. This model accommodates the need for a comprehensive and generic policy process, and can be applied to identify key considerations in policy-making endeavours. See figure 4.3 for De Coning's generic process model.

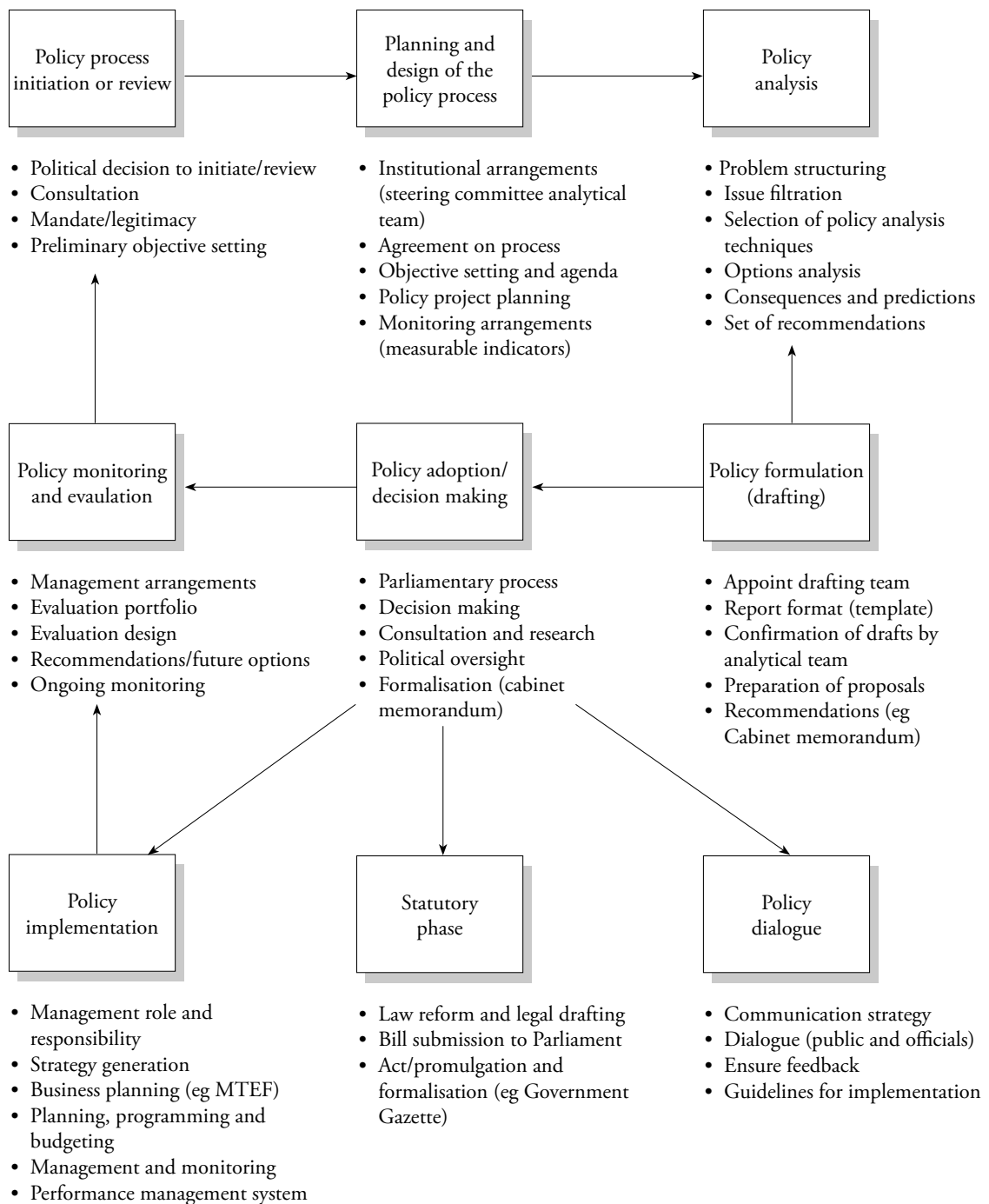


FIGURE 4.3 DE CONING'S GENERIC PROCESS MODEL OF POLICY-MAKING

Source: De Coning and Cloete (2006:53)



ACTIVITY 4.1

- (1) Compare and contrast the Lasswell, Brewer, Dunn, Wissink and De Coning models of the policy formulation process.
- (2) Which model is best suited for developmental policy? Explain your answer.

4.3 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND POLICY AGENDA-SETTING

In its most basic form, agenda-setting is nothing more than the recognition of a problem by government. However, we can ask why certain issues appear on the agenda and others not. The process by which issues and problems are acknowledged as possibilities for government action is not that simple a procedure. Some demands for action originate from international and domestic actors, while others can be identified by governments themselves. The identified issues originate in a variety of ways and undergo complex processes before they are put on the agenda.

According to Cloete and Meyer (2006:105) the policy-making process starts when a problem or issue is identified by one or more stakeholders in society. These stakeholders mobilise support to influence government decision-makers to change the status quo to their advantage. Problem identification can be data driven (the result of research) or it can be socially constructed as a particular issue that warrants attention – this is referred to as problem framing. There is thus the possibility that particular issues may be inflated or not recognised as problems at all.

Gerston (1997) identifies factors that help determine whether the framing of a given policy issue is likely to gain the attention of policy-makers. These are the following:

- (1) **Scope or how widespread a problem is.** Gerston (1997:33) says “if only a small percentage of the population is worried, then the issue will fail the scope test because of its inability to generate enough attention”. A national policy issue (e.g. the development model a country would follow) is likely to attract lots of attention, whereas localised issues (e.g. street lights in a given neighbourhood) might not.
- (2) **Intensity or the emotional connection to the policy issue.** Think of typical emotive issues here, such as abortion, gun control or land redistribution.
- (3) **Duration, or the period that the issue would enjoy sustained interest.** In South Africa, the sustained pressure by activists about ARV treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS meant that the issue had currency on the agenda until the rollout of treatment.
- (4) **Resources, particularly the projected costs of addressing the problem.** Here, think of how expensive the provision of electricity to all citizens can be as opposed to building a few clinics.
- (5) **Focusing events such as national disasters or terrorist attacks.**

Cobb and Elder (1972) differentiate between discussion agendas and decision agendas. The discussion agenda, or public agenda, refers to those issues that have become highly visible and have thus become the subject of discussion, but are not yet part of the formal agenda. The formal agenda is the decision agenda which lists the issues the government has decided to address

Howlett and Ramesh (2003:120) regard agenda-setting as the most critical stage of the policy cycle. Cloete and Meyer (2006:105) agree and add that this stage determines who influences or controls the policy-making process, and also how stakeholders influence the policy agenda.

Kingdom (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:120) defines the agenda-setting stage as follows:

The agenda, as I conceive of it, is the list of subjects or problems to which government officials, and those people outside of government closely associated with those

officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time. Out of the set of all conceivable subjects or problems to which officials could be paying attention, they do in fact seriously attend to some rather than others. So the agenda-setting process narrows this set of conceivable subjects to the set that actually becomes the focus of attention.

Howlett and Ramesh (2003:120) point out that what happens at this stage has a definite impact on the entire policy formulation process and its subsequent results. The manner and form in which problems are acknowledged and identified determine how they will be addressed by policy-makers.

Cloete and Meyer (2006) suggest that agenda-setting is shaped by the following:

- (1) **The power dynamics surrounding policy formulation.** In this regard, who (individual actors or groups) has the power to say that an issue is a problem?
- (2) **The nature, status, scope, particularity, potential impact and intensity of the problem.** Here the issue might be whether this is an actual existing problem, or even a crisis.
- (3) **The institutional environment that is needed for policy implementation.** In other words, who is responsible for addressing the problem?
- (4) **The emotive connotation of the problem,** such as whether it is attracting media attention, or points to the abuse of human or animal rights.
- (5) **The question whether there is general consensus** about the problem and its causes and cures.

Schattschneider (1960) argues that in agenda-setting, there is conflict (and consequently winners and losers) as different role-players have different reasons for wanting to bring their issues to the agenda or to keep particular issues off the formal agenda. Thus, losers in this struggle will want to expand the conflict, whereas the winners will be content with the status quo. The outcome of the conflict is determined by factors such as the range and number of participants in this conflict and the public salience of the issue. See figure 4.4 for Schattschneider's model.

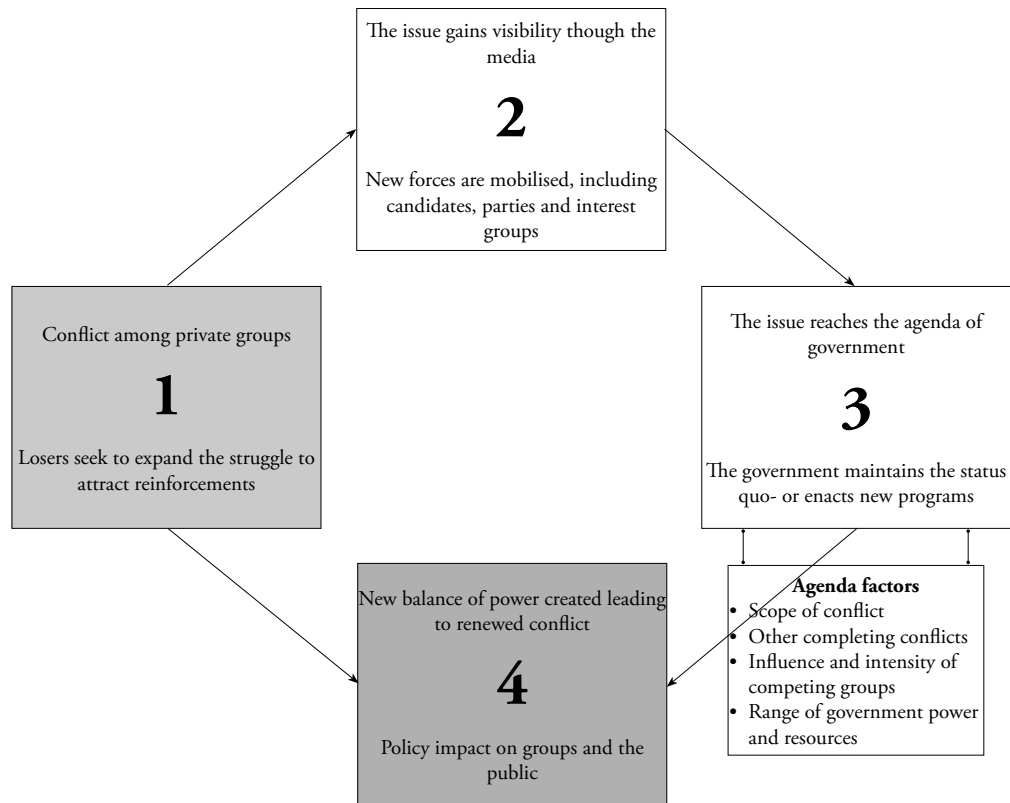


FIGURE 4.4 SCHATTSCHNEIDER'S MODEL OF CONFLICT EXPANSION FOR AGENDA-SETTING

Different actors play a role in agenda-setting when the policy problem moves onto the public agenda. Figure 4.5 summarises some of the actors and the possible roles that they may play.

FIGURE 4.5 THE INFLUENCE OF ROLE-PLAYERS IN THE SETTING OF POLICY AGENDAS

| Role-players | What might their interests be? | The power of these actors in agenda-setting | Tactics used by these actors to ensure that their interests are prioritised |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Elected officials and the state bureaucracy | The most obvious agenda builders. A partisan congruence exists between the government and the parliamentary majority. | These actors control the legislative process, amendment process | Ability to exploit the legislative process. |
| Civil society | Varied interests in matters important to communities, such as housing, education, health care, safety, water, electricity. | The public plays a small direct role in the policy process, but it does provide the backdrop of norms, values and attitudes against which the policy process takes place. | Activism, voting and lobbying. Can address the accountability deficit of state and market. Can enhance the information base, thereby improving the quality of debates, procedures and outcomes. |

| Role-players | What might their interests be? | The power of these actors in agenda-setting | Tactics used by these actors to ensure that their interests are prioritised |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Research organisations | Difficult to foresee what their agendas might be, but in the end they are also dependent upon funding and therefore would act in their own interest. | Research organisations take part in policy process through research on particular policy issues. | Might suggest problems for the systemic agenda. Can provide monitoring, evaluation and other informative functions. |
| Mass media | The mass media provides a crucial link between the state and society. | It has a significant influence on the identification of public problems and their solutions. They help form public opinion. | Awareness creation in the media about important issues affecting individuals, interest groups and communities. |
| National interest groups | Can help to destroy policy monopolies. Public policy cannot redress the disadvantaged position of minority groups without a solid understanding of context-specific needs and practicalities. In theory the state should define such needs accurately, in reality minority groups may find that their needs are not represented accurately or faithfully. | Different forms of lobbying exists, namely 1. inside advocacy via informal meetings with elected officials 2. outside advocacy via press conferences 3. grassroots advocacy via mass mobilisation. | Generating awareness about issues and striving for public support. |
| International organisations | The force of globalisation implies that external agencies often play a great role in countries' internal policies. | The role of the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO in prescribing African policies was mentioned in the previous study units. Can you think of others? | Making particular policy trajectories conditional to development aid. |

Source: Knill & Tosun (2012); Cloete & Meyer (2006)



ACTIVITY 4.2

In South Africa, Green Papers are drafted by ministries or state departments to express official deliberation about a particular policy issue. Green Papers are published so that citizens can comment, make suggestions and submit ideas. In some cases a Green Paper is followed by an improved discussion document called a White Paper. White Papers are also published to invite interested parties to comment. Based on these processes, parliamentary committees may propose amendments to these policy papers for further work by the relevant ministries or departments. Go to <http://www.gov.za/documents/white-papers> and read about a recent White Paper. Note that you do not have to analyse the White Paper in detail; just familiarise

yourself with its contents. Based on the selected White Paper and the knowledge you have gained thus far, answer the following questions:

- (1) Why is agenda-setting so important in the policy-making process? How did the issue of your chosen White Paper find itself on the discussion and decision agendas?
 - (2) Which factors influence (a) problem framing and (b) agenda-setting? Which factors have shaped problem framing and agenda-setting in your chosen White Paper?
 - (3) Who are the major role-players in agenda-setting, and what are their possible roles? Does your chosen White Paper list the people, groups or institutions who commented on it? Who are they? Where do they fit into figure 4.5? Who are excluded?
 - (4) Use Schattschneider's (1960) model to explain how the issue that your chosen White Paper aims to address could have or should have moved through the four stages of his model.
 - (5) Which types of policy agendas can be distinguished?
-

4.4 SPECIFICATION OF OBJECTIVES

Roux (2006:127 & 128) says the following:

Problem identification ... leads nowhere if clear goals and objectives are not identified and formulated. In other words, where do we want to go, what do we want to achieve, and where and how do we want to address the issue at stake?

Governments should primarily be concerned with serving the interests of the public, which implies that the state has the responsibility of "ensuring a minimum or reasonable right of existence for all inhabitants, particularly the underprivileged section" (Roux 2006:125). This section focuses on the complexities involved in the identification of objectives and goals in the policy-making process, while the next section focuses on the identification of possible policy options and preferred choice. We also look at the factors to consider when evaluating alternative options in order to select the most appropriate option available.

It is important to note that the specification of objectives and the development of options are intertwined and interrelated series of actions or phases in the policy formulation process. However, for the purpose of this discussion we separate the two.

Policy goals describe the range of desired outcomes to be achieved when the policy is implemented. For example, Unisa's Library Access Policy states that its goals are

- (1) to control admission to the Unisa library and its resources and services
- (2) to control electronic access to the Unisa library and its resources and services
- (3) to stipulate the categories of authorised library users

Policy objectives stem from policy goals, but there is an important difference between goals and objectives. Goals must be measurable. If we had to rewrite the Unisa Library Access Policy goals into objectives, we might suggest the following:

- (1) Access to the Unisa library and its resources and services is subject to users' compliance with library rules at all times.
- (2) No uncontrolled or unauthorised electronic access to the Unisa library and its resources by any user is permitted.

- (3) Unisa library users are the following:
 - (a) Primary user groups. Unisa employees and students may obtain admission to the Unisa library by presenting their employee card or currently valid Unisa student card.
 - (b) Secondary user groups. These are users who obtain admission to the Unisa library by presenting the required documentation.

In order to devise suitable goals and objectives for a policy, the problem that the policy is intended to address should be carefully analysed, and the magnitude and extent of the problem should be established. Measurable objectives can be formulated. These objectives focus on the central, critical factors relevant to all stakeholders. Policy-makers usually list several alternatives and set rules or criteria for comparing such policy alternatives, which may include:

- (1) the administrative ease of implementation.
- (2) calculating costs and benefits.
- (3) considering effectiveness, equity, legality, political acceptability or social justice.



ACTIVITY 4.3

Find the 2014 White Paper on post-school education and training in South Africa at the URL address <http://www.gov.za/documents/white-papers>. Based on your reading of this White Paper and the knowledge you have gained thus far, answer the following questions:

- (1) Why is it necessary to have clear goals and objectives for a policy?
 - (2) What are the main policy objectives of the 2014 White Paper on post-school education and training in South Africa?
 - (3) What is the difference between goals and objectives? Do the objectives you have listed under question 2 meet the requirements for clear, measurable objectives? Give reasons for your answer.
 - (4) Which criteria should guide the prioritisation of objectives? Can you detect any application of such criteria to the White Paper on post-school education in South Africa? Give reasons for your answer.
-

4.5 DEVELOPMENT OF POSSIBLE POLICY OPTIONS TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES

After a problem has been recognised and the need to take action has been acknowledged, policy-makers need to decide which actions they are going to take. Formulating a course of action is the second stage in the policy cycle as set out by Howlett and Ramesh (2003:13). This stage of policy formulation refers to the assessment of possible solutions or options available for addressing the problem. It needs to be emphasised that choosing a solution does not resemble an orderly process, as policy-makers may not share the same understanding of the causes of a problem. This implies that the search for possible solutions will be contentious, and subject to a wide variety of opinions and disagreement. The crux of the matter is that the search for solutions to a problem depends not only on which actions are technically capable of solving the problem, but also on which ones are considered to be possible or feasible to achieve (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:143 & 144). Howlett and Ramesh (2003:146) suggest that the extent to which policy options

are developed is also in part dependent on whether they are intended as small changes to existing policies or as novel or dramatic solutions to problems.

Roux (2006:144) emphasises that problem identification, specification of objectives and development of options as phases in the policy formulation process do not imply a linear series of steps. They rather represent an iterative and interactive series of events. He describes it as follows:

Good or proper policy rarely proceeds in a straightforward fashion from the definition of the problem to the selection of the preferred action (alternative). Rather, it works backward and forward as one's understanding of the problem deepens (Roux 2006:144).

If many policy alternatives are created, some selection of the best options must take place. Selecting the best criteria to judge policy alternatives is not only a problem of analysis, but also an ethical dilemma. MacRae and Whittington (1997) argue that such criteria should satisfy the following meta-criteria:

- (1) The criteria should focus on ends, not means.
- (2) They must be clearly and precisely formulated so that it is apparent how they will be applied to measure the policy alternatives.
- (3) They should be complete and inclusive of all the concerns of all stakeholders.
- (4) They should be mutually exclusive.

The means by which alternatives can be generated include consulting policy experts, brainstorming, conducting a Delphi study and scenario writing. From such methods, alternatives can be compared in terms of their relative strengths, weaknesses, and best and worst case scenarios. The selection of one given policy alternative should rule out the other alternatives. In the current context that emphasises participatory, multi-layered and multi-stakeholder development as an important alternative to top-down approaches, the development of alternatives should include consultations with development policy experts, technocrats and the intended beneficiaries of the policy. In the light of South Africa's declared developmental trajectory in its NDP, policy alternatives should be measured according to criteria that include social justice, democratic inclusivity, environmental sustainability and economic prosperity.



ACTIVITY 4.4

Read the article entitled *Indigenous voices and the making of the post-2015 development agenda: the recurring tyranny of participation* by Enns, Bersaglio and Kepe (2014) and the one entitled *A post-2015 monitoring and accountability framework* by Ocampo (2015) in the Reader, and then answer the following questions:

- (1) Enns et al (2014) argue that some groups remain marginalised in the processes of policy option generation. What are the main reasons for this?
- (2) In light of current participatory development approaches, what should be considered when determining the feasibility of goals of and alternatives for policies directed at development?
- (3) Enns et al (2014) conclude that the post-2015 development agenda of the United Nations (UN) foregrounds participation instead of issues. What do they base this conclusion on? Do you agree with their assessment? Give reasons for your answer.
- (4) Enns et al (2014) have found that the policy concerns of indigenous people include (a) education, (b) land, natural resources, the environment and (c) culture and language.

These concerns do not feature prominently in the final post-2015 development agenda of the UN. What are offered as the reasons for this? Imagine that you, a student of Development Studies with knowledge of mobilisation for agenda-setting, are approached by any of the indigenous groups mentioned by the authors. The leaders of the group want you to promote these claims as issues worthy of policy intervention in their countries. What would you advise?

- (5) Ocampo (2015) envisages different forms of accountability option generation in developmental policy. What are these? How do they relate to the role-players mentioned in figure 4.5?
-

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this study unit we have dealt with policy problem framing, agenda-setting, the specification of objectives, and the development of possible options and preferred choice as phases of the policy formulation process. In the next study unit we will look at the following phases: policy decision-making, policy implementation, and policy review and reformulation. It is important to keep in mind that the phases of the policy formulation process do not follow on one another logically and in a systematic and linear fashion. In practice, the phases are often compressed or skipped, or followed in a different order than the one we have discussed.

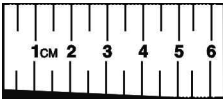
4.7 OUTCOMES CHECKLIST

Use the checklist to determine whether you have mastered the contents of this study unit:

| Outcome | Can do it, because ... | Cannot do it, because ... |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) I can explain agenda-setting in the policy-making process. | | |
| (2) I can describe and explain the sources and constraints of goals, objectives and alternatives. | | |
| (3) I can explain the prioritisation of objectives and the relevant criteria that should be applied. | | |
| (4) I can discuss policy options generation. | | |

STUDY UNIT 5

Policy formulation process: policy decision-making, implementation and evaluation



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After you have completed this study unit, you should be able to

- define decision-making and briefly describe the different types of decision-making
 - define policy implementation and discuss the challenges of policy coordination at a programme level
 - discuss policy evaluation in terms of reasons for evaluation, evaluation decision, evaluation design, types of evaluation, evaluation constraints, requirements for effective evaluation and evaluation foci
-

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study unit focuses on policy decision-making, the process of policy implementation, and policy review and reformulation. As we have said earlier, the phases of the policy formulation process do not normally follow one another in an orderly sequence. It is a repetitive process, since it is often necessary to go back to previous phases in view of new information and changes that are taking place.

5.2 POLICY DECISION-MAKING

The decision-making phase cannot be regarded as a stage that is self-contained, nor is it the equivalent of the entire public policy formulation process. It is a stage that is rooted in the prior stages of the policy cycle. The decision-making phase of the policy formulation process is the stage where some formal or informal statement of intent by the authorised public actors to take action, or to refrain from taking action, emerges (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:162).

Brynard (2006:166 & 167) states that decision-making is no more than a choice between alternatives at a given moment, and that the choices can be active (decision to take action) or passive (decision not to take action). It is important to note that the decision-making phase is influenced by the political system involved and the constraints under which policy actors or decision-makers operate (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:183). John Forester (in Howlett & Ramesh 2003:183) explains that the rationality of decisions

...[d]epends on the situations in which they [administrators and politicians] work. Pressed for quick recommendations, they cannot begin long studies. Faced with organizational rivalries, competition and turf struggles, they may justifiably be less than candid about their plans. What is reasonable to do depend on the context one is in ...

Decision-making is to choose an appropriate action from all the relevant alternatives or options. It is regarded as the crux of administrative action. It involves making a rational choice between options and it can be regarded as an intellectual activity (Brynard 2006:167 & 168). The quality of decision-making determines the quality of the policy-making process, which ultimately determines the efficiency and effectiveness of the whole process. Brynard (2006:168–171) identifies the following types of decision-making:

| TYPES OF DECISION-MAKING | CHARACTERISTICS |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IMPULSIVE DECISION-MAKING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs on the spur of the moment. • Can be irrational. • No discretion, value judgement or alternatives are considered. |
| INTUITIVE DECISION-MAKING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High degree of rationality or clarity of thought is implied. • Decision not based on facts and its results cannot be determined by facts or statistics. |
| PROGRAMMED DECISION-MAKING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmed decisions are standing decisions and serve as guides to make repetitive and routine decisions. • Objectives, standards, procedures, methods, rules and policy are examples of programmed decisions. • Standards refer to the criterion against which anything is measured or compared. • Procedures are a series of consecutive steps that must be taken for the realisation of a particular task. • A method is one step of a procedure. • Tasks can be subdivided into procedures, which in turn are subdivided into methods for each step of the procedure. • Rules are clear statements that indicate what is allowed and what is not allowed. • Policy comprises guidelines for decision-making and allows the public manager to use his/her discretion. • Policy can be manifested in the form of precedents, meaning that a decision made in an earlier example must be followed in similar situations. |
| UNPROGRAMMED DECISION-MAKING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are decisions that require a large degree of creativity and discretion, and are usually made for special purposes such as programmes, strategies and budgets. • These decisions have a short lifespan as they are made for a particular or single use. |

| TYPES OF DECISION-MAKING | CHARACTERISTICS |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SINGLE-CHOICE DECISIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This means that the decision-maker has only two choices. He/she must either accept the alternative or reject it. For example, if a commission of inquiry has made a recommendation, the decision-maker has the freedom to accept or reject the findings. |
| MULTI-CHOICE OR MULTI-CRITERIA DECISIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are more complex decisions with various competing considerations that impinge upon the final decision. Competing considerations must be prioritised in order to determine the most appropriate decision at a given time. • A final decision can be a combination of strategies that depend on the level of prioritisation accorded to the various factors contributing to the final outcome. |

Human factors play an important role in the decision-making phase, because the personal value system, perceptions, limitations of human ability, influence of political power and time constraints can enhance or hinder effective decision-making by public policy-makers.

- Decisions are determined by the individual policy-maker's value system (attitudes, prejudices and personal point of view), and are therefore subject to the limitations of human behaviour. Individual perceptions also play an important role in the sense that problems and solutions, just like beauty, exist in the eye of the beholder.
- Policy-makers' perceptions are determined by their value system, experience and ability to interpret the given situation and problems that have to be solved (Brynard 2006:172–174).
- The limitations of human ability refer to the policy-maker's ability to make decisions that are completely rational. Brynard (2006:173) explains that:

...decisions are made in an environment of bounded rationality. The decision-maker gathers from the environment the information he considers to be important, but it remains limited to or bounded by that particular area... A further limitation is that it is not always possible for the administrator to gather the information directly. ... The leading officials must usually rely on information supplied by subordinates... Since not all information can be checked, the administrator must make decisions based on filtered information. This information is mainly filtered through the perceptions of others.

- Individual policy-makers' political power also influences their decisions as they want to protect their interests. Decision-makers often satisfy a need in a way that serves their best interests instead of taking the best action or choosing the most appropriate option on the basis of their political power.
- Decision-makers often have to make decisions based on incomplete information. They often act under pressure as time constraints may prevent the gathering of sufficient reliable and relevant information (Brynard 2006:173).



ACTIVITY 5.1

Read the article entitled *Monitoring and evaluation of women's rural development extension services in South Africa* by Mtshali (2000) in the Reader, review the sections above and then answer the following questions:

- (1) Define decision-making as part of the policy-making process.
 - (2) Briefly describe the different types of decision-making. Mtshali (2000) feels that the planning of extension services for rural women in South Africa is largely shaped by the way policy planners frame the needs of rural communities. What type of decision-making informs this? What type should it be to address the problems Mtshali describes?
 - (3) Which human factors play a role in policy decision-making? Which of these factors influence the framing of rural extension in South Africa according to Mtshali? How can the problem be addressed?
-

5.3 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Knill and Tosun (2012:1495) describe the policy implementation phase as follows:

Policy implementation is the stage in the policy-making process where a policy is put into effect by the responsible bureaucracies. So implementation is the stage in the policy cycle where there is a connection between policy-makers and policy addressees, mediated by the implementation. In more technical terms, implementation involves the transformation of a policy output into a policy outcome. The attainment of the intended policy outcome can be directly affected by the implementers but not the policy impact since the latter might also be affected by additional factors.

The bureaucracy or different bureaucratic agencies at different levels of government play a significant role in policy implementation. These agencies each have their own interests, ambitions and traditions that affect the implementation process and shape its outcomes. The process is often characterised by intra- and inter-organisational conflicts endemic to it (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:187).

According to Howlett and Ramesh (2003:187) politicians, agencies and other members of policy subsystems often use the implementation process as a mechanism or platform to influence the process or advocate and promote specific issues. They often continue with struggles they may have lost at earlier phases of the policy formulation process, such as particular problem identification, the specification of objectives and/or preferred solutions. However, it is important to note that target groups, that is, those people whose behaviour is being affected by government action and policies, are major role-players in the implementation process. Their political and economic resources are an important determinant of the implementation of policies (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:188 & 189). Politically and economically powerful target groups can determine the implementation of a policy by either supporting it or rejecting it. Policy-makers therefore often compromise to make the implementation process simpler, or try to use the groups' resources to make implementation of a policy less expensive (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:189).

In the 1940s and early 1950s, policy implementation was characterised by the classical model. This model was based on the assumption that implementation would happen automatically once the appropriate policies had been formulated and accepted. The focus

was on management and institutional design. Policy implementation was conceived as a scientific, rational, predictable and machine-like exercise. This approach viewed the implementation process as a series of steps that would be carried out at increasing levels of specificity as it proceeded through the administrative bureaucratic machinery that served the government (Brynard & De Coning 2006:184 & 185; Howlett & Ramesh 2003:189).

The limitations of the classical approach began to emerge in the period after the Second World War, when it became clear that government policy did not operate in an efficient and orderly machine-like fashion. This approach was criticised for underestimating the complexity of the policy implementation phase and was labelled the “top-down” approach in the 1970s. It came under attack, firstly, because of its assumption that decision-makers could provide implementers with clear and direct goals and, secondly, because of its focus on senior politicians and officials who often played only a marginal role in the day-to-day implementation of policy compared to the lower-level government officials and civil society. In reality policy decision-makers often provide vague, unclear, or even contradictory goals and direction (Brynard & De Coning 2006:185 & 186; Howlett & Ramesh 2003:189 & 190).

The top-down approach neglected lower-level officials, which led to the development of what became known as the “bottom-up” approach to policy implementation in the 1980s. This approach was largely a direct reaction to the top-down approach. It was based on identifying weaknesses in the top-down approach and suggesting alternatives to address them (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:190). Knill and Tosun (2012:155) describe the bottom-up approach as follows:

Bottom-up models regard effective implementation in a process-oriented way that abandons the divide between policy formulation and implementation... Policy objectives and instruments are no longer defined as benchmarks to be reached; instead it is expected that they may undergo modifications during the process of implementation. Implementers have flexibility and autonomy to adjust policy in the light of particular local requirements and changes in the perception or constellation of policy problems, as well as new scientific evidence on the causal relationships between means and ends. Hence, effective implementation is not measured by the attainment of a certain centrally defined objective, but judged by the extent to which the perceived outcomes corresponded with the preferences of the actors involved. The crucial question for evaluating implementation success is the extent to which a certain policy allowed for process of learning, capacity building and support building in order to address problems associated with it in a decentralised way, consistent with the interests of the actors involved...

Key private and public actors in a policy sector play a crucial role at all stages of the policy process. This is just as true of policy implementation as it is of agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision-making and other stages of the policy cycle.

The top-down and bottom-up approaches are not contradictory, but complementary. The top-down approach starts with government decisions, the functions of administrators and the extent to which they implement decisions, and the factors determining the extent of implementation. The bottom-up approach, on the other hand, starts at the other end of the scale. In other words, it sets out from the opposite end of the implementation chain of command and focuses on the activities of those actors directly involved in

implementing programmes and projects to achieve the overall objectives of policy decisions (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:190).

As we have seen earlier, the decision-making phase is influenced by the current political system, the constraints under which policy actors or decision-makers operate as well as the nature of the problem being addressed by the policy. Similarly the implementation process of policy is also affected by its social, economic, technological and political contexts. Changes in any of these spheres may impact on the way the problem is interpreted, and consequently on the implementation of programmes to achieve the policy objective. Howlett and Ramesh (2003:193) explain it as follows:

Changes in economic conditions can have a similar impact on policy implementation. A program targeting the poor and unemployed, for instance, can be expected to undergo changes after an economic upturn or downturn. Economic conditions also vary by region, necessitating greater flexibility and discretion in implementation. The availability of new technology can also be expected to cause changes in policy implementation. Policies towards pollution control, for example, often change in the course of implementation after a more effective or cheaper technology has been discovered. Variations in political circumstances are also important. A change of government may lead to changes in the way policies are implemented. Many conservative governments, for example, have been known to tighten the availability of social security programs established by labour or socialist governments without necessarily changing the policy itself.

According to Howlett and Ramesh (2003:203) implementation studies carried out over the last three decades have created an understanding of implementation activities and instrument use. These have clarified the possible factors and constraints impacting on the implementation stage of the policy formulation process, and on the capacity of practitioners to design and improve implementation steps.

Commenting on South Africa, Khosa (2003:49) says that:

... the discrepancies between policy and implementation are largely caused by unrealistic policies, and a lack of managerial expertise. Another key finding is that policy implementation has suffered from the absence of a people-driven process. Insufficient coordination of policy implementation is cited in virtually all sectors, and has significantly hampered the implementation of policies. In addition, insufficient staffing and capacity of all three spheres of government, as well as the linkages between them, have largely worked against the successful implementation of policies.

Most studies have drawn a direct link between implementation activities and larger-scale, more permanent arrangements of policy instruments or styles of implementation. These studies share the notion that implementation is not just technical in nature – it is in fact much more than simply executing decisions or matching goals with means. Policy implementation must be evaluated in terms of the actors involved and the institutional framework within which decisions are taken. Political factors (in terms of state capacity and subsystem complexity) determine the implementation process and the consequent outcomes.

Brynard and De Coning (2006:180–203) refer to the 5 C protocol for policy implementation. The 5 Cs are:

- (1) content, such as whether the policy is distributive, regulatory, or redistributive

- (2) context, referring to the policy environment, the social, political, administrative and institutional context in which it will operate
- (3) commitment, which is about the political will to see the policy through to effective implementation
- (4) capacity, including tangible resources (such as financial, human, logistical, material and technological resources) and intangible requirements (such as perseverance, resolve, leadership, drive and steadfastness)
- (5) clients and coalitions, which refer to the importance of linkages between different state officials, interest groups, opinion leaders and other actors who are implicated in the implementation process



ACTIVITY 5.2

Read the article entitled *The challenges of policy coordination at a programme level: why joining-up is hard to do* by Naidoo (2013) in the Reader, review the sections above and then answer the following questions:

- (1) Define policy implementation as explained in this study unit.
 - (2) Explain the 5 C protocol of policy implementation.
 - (3) Summarise the problems related to policy synergy and resource maximisation in the South African Expanded Public Works Programme.
 - (4) Imagine that you are a policy advisor. Use the 5 C protocol to advise on better policy synergy for the South African Expanded Public Works Programme.
-

5.4 POLICY REVIEW, EVALUATION AND REFORMULATION

Policy review and reformulation is the last phase in the policy formulation process. In simple terms this phase can be described as the stage of the policy process when it is determined how successful a public policy has been or how it has fared in action. It refers to the evaluation of the instruments used and the realisation of objectives. According to Cloete (2006:246) the foregoing stages of the policy formulation process to improve policy outputs and results are meaningless if the impact and success thereof are not evaluated or assessed.

Policy evaluation is needed to determine whether the desired outcomes have been achieved, and whether to continue, curtail, terminate or expand the policy. Policy evaluation is an assessment of the effectiveness of a public policy in terms of its perceived intentions and results. It may set in motion actions to reformulate a policy completely; for example, the problem and solutions may be rethought entirely. Policy evaluators may acquire new insights into the possible consequences of the enactment of public policy, the means employed and the objectives served by it. To evaluate a policy, analytic research methods should be employed to measure performance with the aim of improving the policy. An important element of evaluation is its focus on the policy impact on real world conditions. This entails comparing explicit and implicit policy objectives with real or projected outcomes, results or impacts.

In the words of Larry Garston (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:207), "... policy evaluation assesses the effectiveness of a public policy in terms of its perceived intentions and results". After policy evaluation, a need may arise to reformulate the policy completely

(the problem and solutions may have to be rethought entirely). This implies that the policy cycle may have to start all over again from agenda-setting or any other phase of the policy formulation process. Alternatively, the status quo may be maintained (Howlett & Ramesh 2003:206).

Evaluation is often aimed at improving specified societal institutions or technologies, processes or behavioural patterns leading to normative or value changes in a community or society. Cloete (2006:249) states that the foci of policy evaluation may include the following seven ideas. We elaborate on Cloete's discussion in each of these foci below:

- (1) **The description of intended and unintended changes that the policy brings about.** The intended consequences of the policy relate to its goals and objectives. In some cases, policies can have unintended consequences. Wynberg, Laird, Van Niekerk and Kozanayi (2015) report on such unintended consequences of policies directed at the trade in natural products (specifically baobab trees and the Umckaloabo plant) in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Lesotho. They document how such policies have blurred the lines between bio-trade (selling fruits and crafts for direct consumption) and bio-prospecting (granting harvesting licences to international companies). The granting of harvesting rights drew powerful elites into the industry to which they did not belong before and marginalised women and poor people who should have benefited from these arrangements even more.
- (2) **The goal-effectiveness of the policy.** In essence effectiveness measures the extent to which the policy outputs contribute to the achievement of outcomes. Although efficiency and effectiveness are related, a policy can be efficient (using its resources well) without having an effect (no change in the problem), or an effective intervention can be implemented in an inefficient way (e.g. leading to a waste of implementation resources). To measure goal-effectiveness, the policy evaluator would need to have baseline data (or information on the situation prior to the policy implementation), and data pertaining to changes that can be attributed to the policy intervention.
- (3) **Calculating cost–benefit ratios.** With these evaluation tools, a policy evaluator can quantify the total monetary costs and benefits of a policy. Although this approach is steeped in economic rationality, contemporary analysts also employ social cost–benefit frameworks that take issues of social justice into account.
- (4) **The efficiency of the policy.** This can ascertain if resources (inputs) have successfully been converted into the desired results. Currently policy evaluators tend to assess both the quantity and the quality of inputs and outputs. This is because the most cost-effective input may not necessarily be the most appropriate. So assessment of efficiency requires a comparison of alternative approaches.
- (5) **Participation, empowerment and satisfaction of the stakeholders or target policy population.** Democratic participation in the policy evaluation process refers to the bottom-up approach already discussed. Empowerment evaluation warrants further discussion. It is defined as “an evaluation approach that aims to increase the probability of achieving program success by (1) providing program stakeholders with tools for assessing the planning, implementation, and self-evaluation of their program, and (2) mainstreaming evaluation as part of the planning and management of the program/organization” (Wandersman, Snell-Johns, Lentz, Fetterman, Keener, Livet, Imms & Flaspoler 2005:28). In other words, when policy evaluation focuses on empowerment of the target population, criteria such as participation, self-determination, capacity building and social justice should feature prominently. The notion that a policy evaluation can be

focused on assessing whether the policy beneficiaries are satisfied is also not unfamiliar, although of the three foci grouped together here (participation, empowerment and satisfaction) it is the least directed at empowerment, and the least transformative, collaborative, participative and inclusive of all voices.

- (6) **Equality and equity.** These two foci of policy evaluation are compatible with the empowerment evaluation approach mentioned above. The empowerment approach means that the policy facilitates transformation aimed at changing the existing oppressive material and social conditions of particular groups.
- (7) **The sustainability of projects or programmes stemming from the policy.** When considering this policy evaluation focus, keep in mind that it can refer to the preservation of programme outcomes and/or the continuation of the programme itself. If the former is the evaluation focus, then it moves closer to the assessment of efficiency as discussed under point 4 above. If the latter is the evaluation focus, then the programme would become institutionalised. Nevertheless, it cannot be assumed that the successful achievement of goals would automatically guarantee the continuation of a programme beyond the initial funding.

According to Cloete (2006:248) the reasons for undertaking a policy evaluation might include:

- (1) addressing the requirements of political or financial accountability of government
- (2) improving public relations.
- (3) improving the advocacy for a cause.
- (4) learning lessons from the project or programme as part of policy review or to redesign implementation strategies.
- (5) measuring the progress in achieving policy objectives.
- (6) testing the feasibility of the assumptions, principles, models or strategies undergirding the policy.

A carefully planned evaluation provides a sound assessment of the potential policy impacts so that the resources invested can be put to best use. Moreover, a successful evaluation may indicate whether or not observed changes have been due to the project or due to external factors. It can also identify groups that are likely to benefit the least from certain projects and propose social measures to address this (Cloete 2006:248).

There are different variables that determine the evaluation decision and evaluation design. For example, policy evaluators should establish what type of evaluation should be undertaken at each stage of the policy life cycle. In addition, evaluators should establish steps that should be taken to achieve the policy evaluation objectives, and the appropriate criteria, standards, values and indicators to be applied. A decision would have to be taken whether the evaluation should be performed by outsiders or insiders. Finally, the policy evaluator should establish how the conclusions from the analysis should be disseminated and utilised for maximum effect on the policy process (Cloete 2006).

Cloete (2006:259) also discerns some requirements for effective evaluation, such as that the evaluation should be:

- (1) legitimate, which refers to the idea that the evaluation must have the support of the major stakeholders involved.
- (2) objective, meaning that the evaluation should conform to the highest standards of propriety and ethics to yield an unbiased, impartial assessment based on verifiable facts.

- (3) original, which means that it should yield information not already known and available.
- (4) relevant, which means that it should be appropriate to address existing problems related to the policy.
- (5) reliable, which means that the data used in the evaluation must be dependable, trustworthy and accurate.
- (6) significant, implying that it should make a difference.
- (7) timely, as the evaluation should be in step with the policy cycle time so that further decisions, projects or programmes can be planned.
- (8) usable or reported in an accessible, practical, problem-resolving way.
- (9) valid, which implies that the evaluation should deliver findings and conclusions that demonstrate links between descriptions and facts.



ACTIVITY 5.3

Read the article entitled *Monitoring and evaluation of women's rural development extension services in South Africa* by Mtshali (2000) in the Reader, review the sections above and then answer the following questions:

- (1) Define policy evaluation.
- (2) What is the link between the monitoring and evaluation of a project, and policy-making?
- (3) Which are possible foci for a policy evaluation? Which of these would be most appropriate for the women's rural extension services discussed by Mtshali? Give reasons for your answer.
- (4) Which variables determine the design of the evaluation exercise?
- (5) Outline the requirements for effective policy evaluation. Relate each of the requirements to the example of women's rural extension services.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In this study unit we have looked at the process of policy decision-making, policy implementation, and policy review and reformulation as phases of the policy formulation process. In the next theme we will focus on the action instruments that provide links between the various phases in the policy formulation process, the role and involvement of civil society, and the key issues necessary for capacity enhancement for policy formulation.

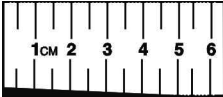
5.6 OUTCOMES CHECKLIST

Use the checklist to determine whether you have mastered the contents of this study unit:

| Outcome | Can do it, because ... | Cannot do it, because ... |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (1) I can define decision-making and briefly describe the different types of decision-making. | | |
| (2) I can define policy implementation and explain the 5 C protocol of policy implementation. | | |
| (3) I can discuss policy evaluation in terms of reasons for evaluation, evaluation decision, evaluation design, types of evaluation, evaluation constraints, requirements for effective evaluation and evaluation foci. | | |

STUDY UNIT 6

Capacity enhancement in policy for development



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After you have completed this study unit, you should be able to

- (1) evaluate information gathering, information analysis and consultation as action instruments linking the phases of the policy formulation process
 - (2) consider policy advice as constrained expert discourse operating in a particular marketplace for policy ideas
 - (3) offer informed opinions on intersectionality as a perspective for policy consultation, and the implications and consequences of such an approach
 - (4) critically reflect on the ability of civil society to function as incubators of alternative ideas for development
-

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study unit focuses on the action instruments that link the different stages in the policy formulation process. It also discusses some key issues shaping policy formulation. Finally, the role of civil society in policy formulation is interrogated.

This final study unit brings together the ideas expressed in earlier, namely that the implementation of a public policy may not always stay true to the tone, goals and intentions of the policy at the formulation stage. Such slippage or distortions between policy intentions and implementation can be anticipated to some extent and thus they can be guarded against in the design or implementation phases of the policy. It is important to note that we cannot assume that policy formulation will lead to immediate or successful policy implementation. In cases where the policy is broad, vague and sweeping, or where the governmental bureaucracy lacks the capacity for executing it, or where open clashes between organised interests groups exist in terms of the policy, policy implementation will be heavily constrained. This is where action instruments come into play – thinking of ways to craft appropriate links between the phases of a policy that ensure commitment and capacity.

6.2 ACTION INSTRUMENTS LINKING THE PHASES OF THE POLICY CYCLE

Action instruments in public policy refer to information-based and learning-oriented tools that can be used to structure collective action to address the policy objectives and implementation strategies. These tools include information gathering, information analysis and consultation. These action instruments provide links between the various

phases in the policy formulation process, as well as inputs between each of the various phases. The application and use of these action instruments imply that the policy formulation and implementation processes cannot be represented as a straight sequential line, but rather as a web or maze. The policy analyst has to go back and review previous phases in the process in the light of the events or information that emerges during a subsequent phase.

6.2.1 Information gathering for policy implementation

If you review the phases of the policy cycle as discussed in previous study units, you will see how the identification and definition of the problem to be addressed by the policy is a key initial step. This first knowledge-generation phase of the policy cycle determines such factors as policy priorities, goals, implementation instruments, strategies, resources, programmes, and implementation agencies and partners. In a complex policy environment, policy-makers in government should take decisions about intervention risks and priorities in highly uncertain circumstances. What is needed is information about the current and future trajectory of the problem within complex interactions between social, political, economic and environmental factors.

When it comes to policy implementation, information is needed about the problem, its context and the implementation strategies, targets and agencies. In countries with less developed information infrastructures, finding appropriate, up-to-date and reliable data is often a big challenge. The required data may not yet exist, or may be unsuitable for the purpose of information gathering for policy implementation without some adjustment or manipulation. Having to collect data anew can be costly and time consuming. Any challenges related to information should thus be identified and reported, and a strategy for dealing with these problems should be devised.

Policy analysts often seek for comparative data that may enable them to make informed recommendations on:

- trends in the problem that the policy attempts to address in different regions, countries and contexts.
- trends in policies.
- current dimensions of the problem.
- historical data (to identify cyclical or temporary trends and fluctuations).
- international trends.

Howlett (2011:33) suggests that policy information forms part of the governmental knowledge utilisation system, forming a particular marketplace for ideas and information. According to Howlett (2011:33), this marketplace comprises three major components:

- (1) The supply of policy advice (from those so-called knowledge producers located in academia, statistical agencies and research institutes).
- (2) The demand for advice by policy-makers and implementers (including cabinet ministers, executives, members of parliament and senior administrators).
- (3) Information brokers who connect the demand and the supply. These people “serve as intermediaries between the knowledge generators and proximate decision-makers, repackaging data and information into usable form” (Howlett 2011:33).

Information brokers may be located in specialised research units of government institutions or they may be commissioned as consultants or think tanks. In addition,

Howlett (2011:33) suggests that policy advice is a “constrained expert discourse” because of the decisive role played by core actors, and the way in which such actors’ roles change to become more or less direct, influential or constrained over the policy cycle. Micro-level details of implementation often need to be planned at ground level. Moreover, there may be a mismatch between demand for and supply of research for policy.



ACTIVITY 6.1

Listen to the lecture by Dr Paul Cairney on evidence-based policy-making which is available at: https://paulcairney.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/paul-cairneyn-evidence-based_policy-lecture-5-2-16.mp3.

Answer the following questions:

- (1) Is information gathering an important action instrument in policy implementation? Give reasons for your answer.
- (2) What should count as evidence when considering the implementation of a public policy?
- (3) Dr Paul Cairney suggests that policymakers use two types of shortcuts to make decisions. What are these? Which factors contribute to each of these shortcuts?
- (4) Do you think that successful policy implementation is guaranteed if all stakeholders recognise the value of evidence? Give reasons for your answer. Include a brief discussion of data availability, data quality, and structures for generating and using data.
- (5) Do you agree with Howlett (quoted in section 6.2.1 above) that policy advice is a “constrained expert discourse”? Give reasons for your answer with reference to (a) Howlett’s notion of a marketplace for policy ideas and (b) a public policy example of your choice.

6.2.2 Information analysis for policy implementation and review

Analysing information collected for policy is more than mere information gathering and processing for new policy options. It also includes the review, monitoring and evaluation of existing policies with the view to modify or discontinue those policies. The same problems of capacity, supply and demand as discussed above for information gathering may also constrain and shape information analysis for policy implementation and review. In this regard Howlett (2011:141 & 144) concludes that information action instruments are tempered by the specific policy design space and time:

[P]olicy formulation typically occurs within the confines of an existing governance mode and policy logic which simplifies the task of policy design. It does this by restricting the number of alternatives which are considered feasible in any given planning situation, reducing to manageable proportions the otherwise almost infinite range of possible specific micro-level instrument choices ... but only if these contextual constraints are diagnosed accurately...

[S]pecific instrument choices are embedded decisions, existing within a nested, multi-level environment of governance modes, policy regime logics and tool calibrations, and are heavily context laden. The basic nature of possible governance regimes, however, is well known and the general implementation preferences they entail are also quite clear. That leaves the essential design challenge in many sectors as one of the identification and articulation of specific policy measures, more or

less carefully calibrated, from within each resource category, within an already existing governance mode. However, the common existence of fairly “routine” design situations should not be taken to suggest complete stability in all areas and it is certainly the case that preferred governance modes do change as governments move away, for example, from legalistic and corporatist modes towards more flexible modes associated with market and network governance and governance styles. And such moves, as adherents of the globalization network hypothesis have noted, can have a large impact on the types of policy design choices taken by government, such as a shift away from “direct” government activities towards an increased reliance on the indirect manipulation of market and policy network actors. There is a temporal aspect to these policy designs contexts, therefore, which policy designers must also take into account.

Howlett (2011:22) suggests that a rationalist approach to policy design and implementation favours an analytical orientation to be employed to:

- (1) discover policy alternatives.
- (2) improve implementation strategies.
- (3) test the feasibility of the policy for a given context.
- (4) measure policy performance.
- (5) avoid biases that can be part of policy proposals made in the absence of careful information analysis.

Howlett (2011:30) quotes from the work of Harold Thomas about key information analytical tasks to be performed. These tasks include appraisal, dialogue, formulation or assessment, and consolidation. With **appraisal**, the evidence needed for policy formulation and implementation is identified by looking for example at existing or specially commissioned research reports, and hearing testimony from experts, stakeholders or the general public. This is followed by **dialogue** between various policy actors to air different views, possible solutions and so on. Such dialogue can be open and less structured or very structured to include specific experts or stakeholders. Once all evidence and opinions have been elicited, **formulation and assessment** can proceed. Policy-makers and implementers can now start drafting proposals. Policy-makers and implementers are aware of opinions (approval and dissent) about the proposals, and can then **consolidate** these ideas and evidence as emergent policies and policy designs.



ACTIVITY 6.2

What does Howlett (as quoted in section 6.2.2 above) mean when he suggests that information analysis is shaped by the specific policy design space and time? Discuss this with reference to (1) a public policy example of your choice and (2) the discussion of “space as an analytical dimension in intersectionality policy analysis” in the article by Hankivsky and Cormier (2011) entitled *Intersectionality and public policy: some lessons from existing models* in the Reader.

6.2.3 Consultation for policy implementation

Consultation with various stakeholders throughout the policy process is crucial as it heightens government transparency in public policy-making and implementation. For many governments it has become increasingly important to show that their national policy statements and local implementation plans have incorporated the results of consultations. The nature of the consultation becomes important. If consultation is merely often tokenistic, unrepresentative and non-participatory, then the goals of transparency and sharing are missed. Problems in consultation are related to questions of how to:

- ascertain appropriate, participatory modes of consultation in the given context of the policy implementation.
- include people who are not already participating in the process.
- give feedback about the consultation to participants.
- ensure participants' sustained involvement (Cook 2002:520).

Consultation also facilitates knowledge sharing between policy-makers, implementers and target communities. It is important that the process should not be regarded as a sequential road map, but instead as an iterative process aimed at accumulating information and knowledge.



ACTIVITY 6.3

Read the contribution by Hankivsky and Cormier (2011) entitled *Intersectionality and public policy: some lessons from existing models* in the Reader, and then answer the following questions:

- (1) Explain intersectionality (Hankivsky & Cormier 2011) as an important vantage point for public policy today. How does this notion link to the issue of consultation?
- (2) Hankivsky and Cormier (2011) support the view that consultation and the policy cycle should be regarded as an iterative process aimed at accumulating information and knowledge. They call this as the “additive approach”. What are the main problems that such an approach may cause?
- (3) Did the multi-strand approach to policy-making as discussed by Hankivsky and Cormier (2011) have the desired results? Give reasons for your answer.
- (4) You have been appointed as a consultant to plan a strategy linking gender, vulnerability and poverty eradication in Lagos. Write a short briefing paper in which you discuss information gathering, information analysis and consultation as action instruments linking the phases of the strategy. Refer to your answers to activities 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 while you are answering this question.

6.3 THE INVOLVEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society more or less refers to the particular political space in which voluntary associations (including non-governmental actors) operate to shape the rules that govern their daily lives. Can you see that “civil society” is therefore more than NGOs or NPOs? It can include different groups of actors (e.g. the church or religious groups, labour and trade unions, political parties and the media) able to build political and economic democracy (McIlwaine 2007:1256). We can argue that civil society is beneficial to inclusive, participatory development.

There are also commentators who argue against such a view. They contend that the ability of civil society to act as a counterbalance or watchdog for state power is not as straightforward as it may seem. Perera-Mubarak (2012), for example, concludes that after the tsunami had struck Sri Lanka, civil society was instrumental in corrupt practices to redistribute aid funding. McIlwaine (2007:1257) says that “civil society can act as a site of resistance, counter-hegemony and revolutionary praxis depending on the context”.

Whether we argue that civil society is a force for good in development or not, it remains true that civil society has a vested interest in the outcomes of the process of national policy formulation. Two critical factors that influence participation are (1) general awareness of the value of the contributions by civil society, and (2) the availability of institutional mechanisms to facilitate participation:

Building the capacity of citizens’ organizations and a free and well-informed media are critical for promoting citizen participation, holding government to account and empowering poor communities. Poor people and poor communities, for example, are in the best position to understand and articulate their own needs, and their voices should be heard directly within government. But often they are not and here political rights and opportunities can be bolstered through community action. The media plays an important role both in giving voice to citizens and in holding government and the private sector to account on their behalf. The responsibility of civil society is to ensure that their own practices respect democratic values such as tolerance and accountability, and that their actions positively promote pro-poor development and the strengthening of democratic culture (Commonwealth Secretariat 2003:xi).

We can therefore conclude that civil society can be a force in favour of reform. It can act in partnership with government to reform public policy, or even challenge or stall the reform process. Information-sharing, consultation and participation by civil society can encourage greater government accountability. In this regard De Coning and Cloete (2006:31) suggest that the media and civil society must be included in the policy formulation process. Public policy-makers have an obligation to stimulate and provide opportunities for public debate and participative policy-making.

Civil society actors at national and global levels have developed substantive capacity and influence in a range of development issues. Partnering with them can help contribute to the effectiveness of development interventions, especially with respect to marginalised and vulnerable groups. The success of development and participatory governance depends equally on a robust state and an active civil society with healthy levels of civic engagement. Many civil society organisations (CSOs) have a proven capacity for broad-based mobilisation and creating bottom-up demand that fosters responsive governance. Civil society advocacy can facilitate the participation of poor and vulnerable populations in the design and implementation of development policies and programmes. This can enhance the delivery of basic social services, such as health services and education. Civil society organisations also play a critical watchdog role in public life. Last but not least, members of civil society organisations volunteer their time, skills and expertise for the sake of development.



ACTIVITY 6.4

Read the contribution by Piper and Nadvi (2010) entitled *Popular mobilisation, party dominance and participatory governance in South Africa* in the Reader. Then review the above discussion about civil society and answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the role and importance of civil society in the policy formulation process? Give recent examples of cases where non-governmental actors and stakeholders have played a decisive part in policy formulation and implementation.
 - (2) Can civil society function as incubators of alternative ideas for development, or do they merely react to the policies of government? Give reasons for your answer.
 - (3) Piper and Nadvi (2010) contrast the role of political parties with the role of civil society in influencing policy at local level in South Africa. Summarise their use of the concepts “invented” and “invited” spaces for participation to explain how the role of civil society has changed in South Africa since 1994.
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6.4 CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study unit has been to increase your knowledge and understanding of the action instruments that link the different stages in the policy formulation process. You have also been given insight into the involvement of civil society in the public policy process. Keep in mind that there is no universally applicable recipe for creating policy management capacity or popular participation in the policy process. The potential contribution of civil society in policy formulation and implementation is an important factor in the public policy process.

6.5 OUTCOMES CHECKLIST

Use the checklist to determine whether you have mastered the contents of this study unit:

| Outcome | Can do it, because ... | Cannot do it, because ... |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) I can describe the importance of information gathering, information analysis and consultation as action instruments linking the different phases of the policy formulation process. | | |
| (2) I can evaluate the three action instruments that enhance capacity for policy formulation. | | |
| (3) I can explain the role and importance of civil society in the policy formulation process. | | |

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