

Tutorial Letter 202/2/2018

Development Policy and Strategies DVA3703

Semester 2

Department of Development Studies

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

This tutorial letter contains important information
about your module.

BARCODE

Dear Student

FEEDBACK ON ASSIGNMENTS FOR DVA3703

We trust that you have enjoyed this module and have gained a holistic understanding of development policy and issues. This tutorial letter contains feedback on assignment questions 2 – 7 set for DVA3703.

We hope that you will find the feedback to the assignments helpful. If you have any problems regarding this module, feel free to contact your lecturers.

Assignment 03, 06 and 07 : **Mr. Wilmont Gertse**

Assignment 02, 04 and 05 : **Prof Linda Cornwell**

Good luck with your studies and the upcoming examination.

Kind regards

MR WILMONT GERTSE
ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATOR

ASSIGNMENT 02

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 answer.

Prescribed readings:

- Study guide, study unit 1
- Reader 2016: contributions by
 - Mkandawire (2014)
 - Naidoo and Maré (2015)
 - Phiri *et al* (2016)

How to approach this question

Introductions typically outline what you are going to say in this essay. Note that this question gives you a provocative statement to consider, but asks you to provide a discussion of the debate on development policies first. In other words, you need to understand what the key concepts (public policy, development policy, policy outputs, distributive and redistributive justice) mean. Consider this when starting to write your essay.

You may start your discussion by defining **development policy** as a specific kind of public policy (see Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016:13-14). This should lead you to consider key concepts and issues in contemporary and future development policies. Pay special attention to **the need for participatory, inclusive development planning, and consider the context and history** in which a development policy is planned and implemented.

A point of discussion can be made from the need for policy coordination – which is extensively discussed by Naidoo and Maré (2015). Pay attention to the statement by Mkandawire (2014:189) that current understanding of development policy is shaped by the knowledge that neo-liberalist and alternative models for development have failed to alleviate poverty and inequality. He also suggests that new voices from marginalised groups, aid donors and others who challenge the ideas imposed by the Washington Consensus shape such understanding. Here, you can use examples from the South African National Development Plan (NDP) to demonstrate these ideas. The article by Naidoo and Maré (2015) will help you with additional insights in this regard. You need to decide whether the so-called ‘new voices’ are heard, allowed in or whether they represent feasible ideas for inclusive development so that development policies become more than a vehicle for the privileged to protect assets and power.

In the next section, describe the characteristics of a development policy, and pay special attention to **policy outputs versus policy outcomes**. Policy outputs refer to the tangible actions that the government would take to achieve the goals of the policy. This is different from

a policy outcome, because an outcome is the societal, developmental, social, economic or political impact of a policy (which can also include unintended consequences). You must substantiate your discussion with relevant examples. The article by Naidoo and Maré (2015) discusses the feasibility of the NDP for inclusive economic transformation in terms of long-term political coalitions and improved, transformed institutions to implement its policies, programmes and projects. These authors seem to conclude that the tension between intended policy outputs and possible unforeseen policy outcomes relate to the tension between top-down steering of a grand, national plan and local ownership of the process. The latter, local ownership can be fraught with constraints of resources, capabilities, and “*limitations of what is possible and achievable in a specific timeframe*” (Naidoo & Maré 2015:425).

You should then move to a discussion of the difference between **distributive and redistributive justice**. Note that a policy that serves distributive justice addresses the problem that gave rise to the policy intervention by fairly allocating benefits and resources. Such a policy will emphasise cooperation and aim to benefit as many people as possible. A redistributive policy will attempt to move resources to those with the greatest need. Such a policy often causes tensions and conflicts about who is “deserving” or “non-deserving” of such interventions. The differences here are crucial to what you need to debate in this assignment – namely whether development policies merely reify (reinforce) old power positions or whether they are actually transformative. In terms of your prescribed readings, Mkandawire (2014) seems more sceptical of whether any grand national development plan can be truly redistributive. Naidoo and Maré (2015) on the other hand, seem to suggest that this can be achieved but only with the injection of the mentioned resources, a focus on coordination and the empowerment of local institutional arrangements and some independent oversight over policy outputs and outcomes. Phiri *et al* (2016) offer arguments about the constraints to distributive and redistributive justice via development policies in South Africa. In particular, this prescribed article discusses

- (i) production (for example growing the economy and making it competitive)
- (ii) protection (for example social security and investment)
- (iii) reproduction (for example skills development and education)
- (iv) redistribution (such as inclusive innovation) and
- (v) social cohesion as five aspects of true socioeconomic transformative impacts.

You need to factor all of the above into your essay and create a logically flowing argument that reveals your position on whether development policies are inventions by the bourgeoisie to protect their privileges. Of course, you can also argue that this is not the case at all.

Indicators for mark allocation

50% – 59%: Your answer provided a fair and satisfactory discussion of all the key parts of the question. Appropriate examples were used to substantiate your arguments. You showed appropriate use of prescribed material and citation/referencing style.

60% – 74%: You provided an adequate discussion of all the key parts of the question. Your answer displayed evidence of critical engagement with the prescribed reading. Your content showed a logical and integrated development and a balanced, holistic unit (e.g. few repetitive and unstructured arguments). Using more than just the prescribed resources and ability to show

consistent and correct application of referencing techniques and citing sources in the text and the list of references would have earned you marks.

75% and above: You provided a comprehensive discussion of all the key parts of the discussion. You demonstrated all of the above, and showed the ability to present a discussion in a logical and coherent manner. The discussion was also reflective of your own independent thought.

ASSIGNMENT 03

Assignment question

Compare and contrast structural, institutional and interest-based approaches to policy-making. In your essay, use the Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) in South Africa as an example.

Prescribed readings:

- Study guide, study unit 2
- Reader 2016: contribution by:
 - Upadhyaya (2016)

How to approach this question

Have you ever wondered why certain public policies are unpopular amongst citizens while others enjoy considerable public support? Having an insight in how policies are made can partly help you understand this phenomenon. Public policies are the manifestation of different factors within particular political systems, institutions or competing interests in society. However, the manner in which they are made has a decisive influence on how effective policies are in practice and whether different role players will accept policies as legitimate government interventions to specific societal problems. With this as your point of departure, you must first describe and discuss structural, institutional and interest-based approaches to policy-making.

In terms of the structural approach, Du Plessis and Kotzé (2016:24) note that public policies are the result of conditions emanating from macro-level structures of society. In other words, the manner in which the economic or political system is structured or functions could necessitate the need for a particular policy. Your study guide also emphasises that the economic, social and political environments of countries have a formative influence on policy outputs or decisions that governments implement. To illustrate these points, let us briefly consider Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) as an example. You may know that when South Africa transitioned to democracy in 1994 the new government inherited several socioeconomic ills that were largely a result of the race-based separatist development policy approach of the apartheid state. Upon democratisation, the structural features of the apartheid economic system that produced immense inequalities and uneven distribution of wealth along racial lines were not

departed from immediately. Thus, the policy dilemma that arose for the democratic government was finding ways to empower previously disadvantaged groups and businesses to play a meaningful role in the economy. Are you able to see how BBBEE may be policy output that resulted from the structural make-up of the economy? Try to think of other similar examples to bolster explanation and understanding of the structural approach.

When considering institutional approaches, highlight that public policies are considered as the output of the activities and functions of formal government institutions (Du Plessis and Kotzé, 2016:25). That is to say, that policy is shaped by a particular institutional context. You needed to explain how institutional factors such as internal organisational structures, goals, structured and enduring activities, defined roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, as well as meaningful organisational boundaries influence the nature and outcomes of public policies. Here you need to factor into your discussion how government departments are structured and its relation to the broader political system. Identify a government institution in your domestic context and probe whether this institution has sole power to implement policies or whether other institutions in the broader political system, such as the judiciary and parliament, for instance limit its powers. Are there specific constitutional provisions, administrative and common laws that guide how government departments make policies? Your discussion must reflect these complexities. You also need to elaborate briefly on some of the factors that affect the capacity of government institutions to formulate sound public policies in African countries. Pay attention to issues such as colonial legacies, financial constraints, external influences, public sector transformation and lack of technical expertise amongst others. See pages 25 and 26 of your study guide.

When discussing interest-based approaches to policies, highlight that this is underpinned by the theoretical assumption that policies are the outcome of contestation between different interest groups in society. Note that the government assumes a mediatory role by setting the rules for such contestation (Du Plessis and Kotzé, 2016:27). What kind of interest groups are we referring to here? Any societal group interested in influencing the nature and content of public policies. Examples here are trade unions, civil society organisations or lobby and advocacy groups. Are you able to identify a policy interest group in your domestic political context? How has this group influenced the public policy process? Also, consider that the ability of interest groups to influence the public policy processes is largely dependent on the size of the group, its wealth or access to resources, its proximity to power and decision-makers, its organisational structure and its cohesion and leadership (Du Plessis and Kotzé, 2016:27). Remember to explain briefly the different versions of the interest-based approach, namely the rational-, group-, elite- and public choice models. For a full explanation, see pages 27 and 28 of your study guide.

In light of the perspectives outlined above, your answer must reveal the extent to which Upadhyaya's "*Aligning climate policy with national interest*" correlates with any of the approaches. Substantiate your position with evidence extracted from the article.

Indicators for marks allocation

50% – 59%: Your answer provided a fair and satisfactory discussion of all the key parts of the question. Appropriate examples were used to substantiate your arguments. You showed appropriate use of prescribed material and citation/referencing style.

60% – 74%: You provided an adequate discussion of all the key parts of the question. Your answer displayed evidence of critical engagement with the prescribed reading. Your content showed a logical and integrated development and a balanced, holistic unit (e.g. few repetitive and unstructured arguments). Using more than just the prescribed resources and ability to show consistent and correct application of referencing techniques and citing sources in the text and the list of references would have earned you marks.

75% and above: You provided a comprehensive discussion of all the key parts of the discussion. You demonstrated all of the above, and showed the ability to present a discussion in a logical and coherent manner. The discussion was also reflective of your own independent thought.

ASSIGNMENT 04

Assignment question

Write an essay on the institutional approach to policy management in which you also describe four capacities that are required for successful policy management and outline options for institutional arrangements.

Prescribed readings:

- Study guide, study unit 3
- Reader 2016: contributions by
 - Koelble and Siddle (2014)
 - Lauridsen (2012)

How to approach the question

The essay should consist of a sound discussion that includes a definition of policy management and the institutional approach. Reflect on the third study unit that covers this topic.

The discussion should link policy management with the role of the institutional environment – in other words describe how the institutional environment determines, implements and enforces policy. Factors contributing to this include legitimacy, universality and coercion (see Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016: 26). Note that the structures and design of institutions affect policy outcomes (or policy management). Consider, for example, the right to freedom of assembly as enshrined in Section 17 of South Africa's Constitution; this grants all citizens the right to peaceful and unarmed assembly, demonstration, picketing and presentation of petitions as pillars of a

democracy. Institutions that may affect the management of this right includes the Department of Labour, the police force, the courts, unions, civil organisations, other labour unions and so on.

Institutional arrangements (i) provide the basis of policy management functions and (ii) determine the direction and efficiency of policy formulation. Institutional approaches to policy-making regard policy as the output of formal institutions. Public institutions (the state) have the mandate to implement public policy. State institutions usually have specific organisational structures, goals, activities, defined roles, responsibilities and accountabilities and specific boundaries (Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016: 25). When describing institutional arrangements in your discussion, consider including ideas expressed in the article by Koelble and Siddle (2014) about the inability of South African local government (municipalities) to meet constitutional, legal and administrative expectations. Consider what this could mean for policy management according to this approach.

Four capacities are required for effective policy management, namely (i) political leadership and direction, (ii) administrative capacity, (iii) analytical capacity and (iv) coordination capacity (see Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016: 238). Your discussion can link these capacities to the article by Lauridsen (2012) that suggests an analytical approach for developing countries to improve diversification and upgrading.

In considering options for institutional arrangements, note Lauridsen's (2012) idea that policy management must be appropriate to the context of the country in its quest to relate to global policy ideas. Lauridsen (2012) equates a sound institutional environment to contextually defined notions of effectiveness and appropriateness.

According to Lauridsen (2012), institutions matter because they cannot be separated from policies directed at development aims. This means that institutional arrangements determine whether policies are implemented effectively. Key characteristics for successful institutions in this regard includes (i) appropriate decision-making that enables effective implementation of strategic policies and (ii) local, contextual institutional transformation. Koelble and Siddle (2014) add other aspects of the institutional environment that is specific to South Africa. These are institutional administrative capacity, jurisdictional scope, legislative scope, revenue sharing and revenue raising. It is important for you to see these aspects as either possibilities that can strengthen the achievement of sound policy management or as factors that may restrict policy management because they are lacking, under-resourced, duplications of the functions or other institutions, poorly developed or poorly defined, and so on.

Mark allocation

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60% – 74%: You provided an adequate discussion of all the key parts of the question. Your answer displayed evidence of critical engagement with the prescribed reading. Your content showed a logical and integrated development and a balanced, holistic unit (e.g. few repetitive

and unstructured arguments). Using more than just the prescribed resources and ability to show consistent and correct application of referencing techniques and citing sources in the text and the list of references would have earned you marks.

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ASSIGNMENT 05

Assignment question:

The big challenge for governments is to take the most effective action on complex policy problems and to manage policy implementation and review decisively. Discuss this statement in an essay on policy option generation and the setting and assessment of goals and alternatives for policies directed at development.

Prescribed readings:

- Study guide, study units 2 and 4
- Reader 2016: contributions by
 - Enns, Bersaglio and Kepe (2014)
 - Ocampo (2015)

How to approach the question

Before writing your essay, you need to familiarise yourself with the ideas of complex policy problems as discussed on pages 29 and 30 of the study guide. However, the bulk of your essay should outline (i) what the generation of policy options means and (ii) how goals and alternatives are set and assessed. Reflect on the notion that a policy is based on a consideration of different means and goals for the generation of policy options, which can be found on pages 49 to 51 of the study guide.

You may start your discussion by outlining why a decent analysis of the problem that the policy is intended to address is important. This may become very complex as such problems may stem from multiple causes, can change over the analysis period, or perhaps be symptoms of deeper-rooted, structural problems. In addition, policy-makers (and problem analysts) may not share the same understanding of the causes of or solutions to a problem. Consider the possible complex dimensions of an issue such as unemployment, for example. Different people will see the causes and solutions of unemployment differently.

Therefore, the magnitude and extent of the problem should be determined as best as possible with the available information and some kind of consensus should be reached. Your discussion may benefit from the prescribed article by Ocampo (2015) to discuss the problem of

accountability in development policy-making for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Draw from this article the tensions between the global development policy agenda-setting and the needs in poor countries to forge their own plans. Note the hegemonic power position of the United Nations' discourse on development.

In terms of the policy-making process, once the problem is understood well, policy-makers need to formulate a course of action to address it. This is where the generation of options and the setting and assessing of goals and means come into play. Define and clearly differentiate between goals and objectives of policy in your essay.

Because of the complexity of modern problems, different solutions or options exist to address them. To select the best solution is not straightforward, orderly or uncontentious. There are different role-players here, with different levels of powers, different worldviews or ideologies and different vested interests. Draw on the prescribed article by Enns, Bersaglio and Kepe (2014) about the marginalisation of some groups in the processes of policy option generation to give substance to the argument here. Consider the conclusion Enns et al (2014) reach about the post-2015 development agenda of the United Nations. What do they base this conclusion on? Do you agree with their assessment? Give reasons for your answer.

Howlett and Ramesh (2003 as quoted in Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016:50-51) suggest that policy option generation is also constrained by whether small changes to existing policies are envisioned or whether the policy is new or demanding of drastic policy changes. Moreover, Roux (2006 as quoted in Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016:51) tells us that the identification of the problem, the subsequent specification of objectives and the development of options do not follow as linear steps. Instead, these three phases often are iterative and interactive.

In cases where many policy alternatives are created, selecting the best options will be very complex. This is not a purely technical or intellectual task, but also a moral or ethical one. McRae and Whittington (1997 as quoted in Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016:51) provide us with so-called meta-criteria that may assist in the selection of the best options. In particular, they say that criteria should be set that focus on ends (and not means) are only clearly formulated when considering all the concerns of all stakeholders are mutually exclusive.

You can contrast these views with those expressed by Ocampo (2015) about accountability in option generation in developmental policy. You can also mention criteria for comparing (or prioritising) different policy alternatives, namely (i) the administrative ease with which the options can be implemented, (ii) the costs versus benefits of options and (iii) how each option holds up to ideals of effectiveness, equity, legality, political acceptability and social justice (see Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016: 50).

This consideration of policy options, goals and means can be assisted through various ways (see Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016: 51). You may start and end your essay with a consideration of 'complexity'. In other words, this means that you should mention the need for participatory, multi-layered and multi-stakeholder policy option generation and assessment as opposed to top-down approaches. You may also want to refer to South Africa's NDP and the implication that policy alternatives should meet the goals of democratic inclusivity, economic prosperity,

environmental sustainability and social justice. Alternatively, you can mention the arguments by Enns *et al* (2014) that indigenous people marginalised in policy option generation often have particular concerns about education, access to land and other natural resources and environmental, cultural sustainability.

Policy review is the stage in the policy formulation process to determine how successful the public policy has been and how it managed its action. The aim of a policy review is to improve policy outputs and results so that they have meaningful impact. This is because if they are not assessed it will be hard to measure the impact of policy directed at development. Draw on Ocampo's (2015:13) discussion on the need to consider contextual histories and characteristics and on how development policy agenda-setting after 2015 should consider north-south, south-south and non-governmental cooperation. In terms of policy review, Ocampo (2015:13) asks who should take final accountability for progress in terms of attaining the SDGs. For this author, global partnerships for development can take such accountability and review, but should then operate on two principles of accountability, namely:

- ❖ Global cooperative partnerships that offer technical, financial and capacity-building assistance
- ❖ Analysing how aid, finance, investment, migration, technological transfer, trade and taxation impact development

Mark allocation

50% – 59%: Your answer provided a fair and satisfactory discussion of all the key parts of the question. Appropriate examples were used to substantiate your arguments. You showed appropriate use of prescribed material and citation/referencing style.

60% – 74%: You provided an adequate discussion of all the key parts of the question. Your answer displayed evidence of critical engagement with the prescribed reading. Your content showed a logical and integrated development and a balanced, holistic unit (e.g. few repetitive and unstructured arguments). Using more than just the prescribed resources and ability to show consistent and correct application of referencing techniques and citing sources in the text and the list of references would have earned you marks.

75% and above: You provided a comprehensive discussion of all the key parts of the discussion. You demonstrated all of the above, and displayed the ability to present a discussion in a logical and coherent manner. The discussion was also reflective of your own independent thought.

ASSIGNMENT 06

Assignment question

You are contracted as a policy consultant for the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to train a group of newly appointed public officials on policy evaluation. Write an essay in which you do the following:

- a) Define policy evaluation and briefly suggest what it entails.*
- b) Discuss the variables that determine the decision to evaluate and the evaluation design.*
- c) Examine criteria that have been suggested as requirements for effective policy evaluation.*

Prescribed readings:

- Study guide, study unit 5
- Reader 2016: contributions by
 - Mtshali (2000)
 - Naidoo (2013)

How to approach the question:

This question hypothetically places you in the role of training facilitator for a group of public officials regarding the process of policy evaluation. They have limited prior knowledge of the subject. Your objective should be to map out policy evaluation as succinctly as possible and to ensure that your audience understands what policy evaluation entails.

You may start your essay by providing a definition and description of policy evaluation. This description should encapsulate the reasons for undertaking policy evaluation and the associated benefits. This requires you to interrogate the reasons for policy evaluation presented by Cloete (in Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016). To this end you need to consider critically why “measuring progress towards the attainment of policy objectives; learning lessons from particular policies or programmes; testing feasibility assumptions/theories and providing political accountability” (Cloete in Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016: 61) among others are important. While doing this, keep in mind that we study development policy from a predominantly public sector perspective in this module.

After having worked through study unit one of your study guide, it should be clear that the nature of policy in the public sector affects all citizens and has fundamental consequences for the way in which people conduct their lives. The effects of policy could have either positive or negative consequences and this is why it is critical that policies are reviewed (which includes policy evaluation) regularly. At the same time, policies or programmes are generally intended to address particular needs and demands in society. Yet governments have limited resources (human or financial) at their disposal, and can therefore not satisfy the competing demands and needs in society simultaneously. However, where public resources have been utilised in the formulation and implementation of policy, an evaluation will reveal whether the resources used

provided value for money (financial and/or political accountability) or whether such money could have been used to service pressing societal needs.

Next, you should consider the variables that determine the decision to evaluate and the particular evaluation design. Do not merely regurgitate the variables highlighted by Cloete (2006). Instead, interpret and investigate why these variables are important. As previously indicated, development policy should be analysed and understood in a context in which there are limited resources to satisfy societal needs and demands. You need to consider the proposed criteria critically. Question why it is important to be clear about what is to be evaluated, for example. Apply this principle of interrogation to all the criteria that influence the decision to evaluate. Cloete (2006) reiterates that the process of evaluation in itself is an intricate activity and requires significant resources. Factors to keep in mind are wastage of time, financial and human resources, and the effect of evaluations on future policy evaluation among others.

You should provide an evaluation of the requirements prescribed for effective policy evaluation and evaluation constraints. In this part of your discussion, it is essential that you substantiate the different criteria by deploying appropriate practical examples. You need to probe the meaning of the following concepts: relevance, significance, originality, legitimacy, reliability, validity, objectivity, and usability.

For example, if we interrogate the concept of legitimacy, we must ask, "Why is legitimacy important?" The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines "legitimate" as "for which there is a fair and acceptable reason". While Cloete (in Kotze, 2010) indicates that legitimacy in the context of policy evaluation signifies that all stakeholders involved in the policy issue should support the evaluation. In other words, stakeholders should accept that there are fair and acceptable reasons for the evaluation and its findings. Therefore, if a policy analyst has conducted a specific policy evaluation, it is critical for the findings to be accepted by all stakeholders as legitimate, or as fair and valid. This becomes even more important if that evaluation sought to change components or specific parts of the policy. Should role-players with substantial power to change or modify policy, such as politicians, dispute the findings for instance, the proposed changes are at risk of not being implemented. This would constitute a waste of resources.

The same line of reasoning can be applied to any of the criteria suggested for effective policy evaluation. Let us consider reliability and objectivity as additional examples. From this perspective the analyst or evaluator must ensure that the data used in the execution of the evaluation is reliable (that is, that the policy analysis was based on evidence that is accurate and verifiable), as the outcome of the evaluation has the potential to change the attitudes of decision-makers. If the data is inaccurate or compromised, it may have a negative impact on groups targeted by the particular policy, especially if the findings of the evaluation are used for making long-term policy choices or decisions. In terms of objectivity, policy analysts must attempt to conduct the evaluation as impartially, rigorously, fairly and systematically as possible, since the findings are aimed at determining whether the policy is effective or not. Should policy decision-makers detect the slightest appearance of subjectivity (or bias), the credibility of the evaluation might be called into question or be rejected entirely, again constituting wastage of

public resources. Alternatively, it could deprive people from benefitting from the policy in question.

The article by Mtshali (2000) in your reader is particularly useful for answering this assignment, given that it provides an in-depth overview of the importance and methodological complexities of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of programmes or policies. In your analysis, pay attention to some of the M&E lessons to be learnt from Women's Rural Extension Services in South Africa. Here you need to consider factors such as:

- Identifying objectives
- Identifying indicators
- Methods for monitoring and evaluation

Indicators for mark allocation

50% – 59%: Your answer provided a fair and satisfactory discussion of all the key parts of the question. Appropriate examples were used to substantiate your arguments. You showed appropriate use of prescribed material and citation/referencing style.

60% – 74%: You provided an adequate discussion of all the key parts of the question. Your answer displayed evidence of critical engagement with the prescribed reading. Your content showed a logical and integrated development and formed a balanced, holistic unit (e.g. few repetitive and unstructured arguments). Using more than just the prescribed resources and ability to show consistent and correct application of referencing technique and citing sources in the text and in the list of references would have earned you marks in this range.

75% and above: You provided a comprehensive discussion of all of the key parts of the question. You demonstrated all of the above, and displayed the ability to present a discussion in a logical and coherent manner. The discussion should also be reflective of your independent thought.

ASSIGNMENT 07

Assignment question

Critically reflect on the ability of civil society to function as an incubator of alternative ideas for development policy.

Prescribed readings:

- Study guide, study unit 6
- Development Policy and Strategies: a reader, 2016: contribution by:
 - Piper and Nadvi (2010)

How to approach the question

For you to answer this question, it is crucial that you first understand what is meant by civil society and the role of civil society in development (i.e. describing these two notions and explaining how they may be linked). This should assist you in evaluating the role of civil society participation in development policy (i.e. to assess the extent and value of and factors impeding the role of civil society). As with all our feedback, what follows below are some ideas of what you should touch on in an essay of this nature – in other words, this is not a model answer.

After writing a suitable introduction for your essay, you can start the body by providing a brief definition of the concept of civil society. A general overview of the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in development should follow. Your study guide shows that civil society consists of a multitude of groups outside the structures of government with a focus on promoting specific interests (Du Plessis & Kotzé 2016:68). Can you see that this links CSOs with developmental concerns? Some of these concerns could include the natural environment, the political system, particular communities (e.g. the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community), social justice (for example “Reclaim the City” and “Ndifuna Ukwazi” who campaign for affordable housing for low-income families in Cape Town), inequality, the arts or sport, and so forth. Here, you can mention those CSOs you are familiar with as sound examples. The discussion in this study unit links the role of civil society in development to the promotion of good governance in democratic political systems. However, at the same time, some scholars contest this role of civil society. See the example by Perera-Mubarak in your guide on page 69. Do you agree or disagree with this stance?

Note that public participation in policy-making can be enhanced through the decentralisation of state power and the strengthening of civil society. The latter can also be seen as a pro-poor strategy or as an attempt to include vulnerable and marginalised groups in policy-making to bolster democracy and development. Factors such as the general awareness of the value of the contributions by civil society, the availability of institutional mechanisms to facilitate participation, various forms of citizen participation and organisational infrastructure influence the nature of that participation.

Nevertheless, how exactly can civil society influence development policy-making? Civil society can influence the policy process in multiple ways. In terms of the identification of policy issues, CSOs can play an indispensable role in advocating for and communicating policy concerns to government in an attempt to influence the policy agenda or policy content. Different means may be deployed to achieve this objective. Research institutes, as part of civil society, can for example lobby for certain policy ideas based on their research findings to influence the policy agenda. Social movements, on the other hand, may communicate specific policy ideas through means of protest and picketing. This indicates that civil society is able to mobilise communities and promote awareness around specific issues affecting communities. In this way civil society also draws the attention of the government to respond to the grievances and issues identified and experienced by communities. Can you think of other ways in which civil society can influence policy decision-making?

When articulating your value judgment on whether civil society is able to function as incubators of alternative ideas for development policy, you must critically consider the ideas expressed by Piper and Nadvi (2010) in your reader. These authors discuss how the role of civil society has changed in South Africa after 1994. Note issues such as funding and how CSOs were absorbed into government. Piper and Nadvi (2010) introduce the notion of “invited spaces”, which refers to the formal set of institutions designed (constitutionally) to facilitate participation in policy processes at local governmental level. Use this notion to argue the extent to which these spaces allow for the effective participation of civil society groupings in policy-making. You can do so by drawing on the evidence presented by these authors, or by using your own examples. Note important challenges that contour and restrict these created (constitutionally given) spaces, such as institutional design and reform and political power plays. Do you think this stunts the ability of civil society to make meaningful policy contributions?

Another important notion introduced by Piper and Nadvi (2010) is that of “invented spaces”. This refers to CSO participation in decision-making forged outside the conventions of formal participatory structures. Do you think insurgent protest by social movements or CSOs could be a potential means for civil society to act as incubators of alternative policy ideas? Use evidence from the article to support your arguments.

You need to factor all of the above into your essay and bring forth a logically flowing argument that reveals your position on whether civil society is able to function as incubators of alternative ideas for development policy.

Indicators for mark allocation

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60% – 74%: You provided an adequate discussion of all the key parts of the question. Your answer displayed evidence of critical engagement with the prescribed reading. Your content showed a logical and integrated development and a balanced, holistic unit (e.g. few repetitive and unstructured arguments). Using more than just the prescribed resources and ability to show consistent and correct application of referencing techniques and citing sources in the text and the list of references would have earned you marks.

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