PHD

PROGRAMME: PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

APP 903: PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS

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ORIGINS OF POLICY – EDWARD C PAGE

The key issues relevant to the origins of public policy from Edward C. Page's "The Origins of Policy" (Chapter 10 of the *Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*)

1.   The role of agendas in policy making:

Justification: Policies in Kenya often arise from political agendas set by the government in power, heavily influenced by both internal and external pressures. Understanding how issues are prioritized can help explain the fluctuation in policy focus.

Applicability: The **Big Four Agenda** (2017-2022) under President Uhuru Kenyatta, focusing on manufacturing, affordable housing, universal healthcare, and food security, demonstrates how political leadership sets policy agendas. These priorities were influenced by Kenya's Vision 2030 and the pressing needs of the time, such as addressing unemployment and housing shortages.

2.   Influence of bureaucratic practices:

Justification: Policies in Kenya are frequently shaped by the existing bureaucracy, with ministries and departments exerting influence over policy outcomes. Understanding the bureaucratic role is critical to grasp how policies are practically implemented.

Applicability: Kenya's **public health policy**, especially the decentralization of healthcare after the 2010 Constitution, reflects bureaucratic influences. Despite the constitutional mandate, various county health systems have interpreted and implemented healthcare services differently, based on local bureaucratic capacities and norms.

3.   Diverse origins of policy:

Justification: Kenyan policies often originate from a combination of colonial legacies, professional norms, and traditional practices. Recognizing these origins helps us understand the layered complexity of Kenyan policy decisions.

Applicability: For instance, the National Land Policy (2009) was heavily influenced by colonial land tenure systems, the Mau Mau uprising, and post- independence

struggles for land reform. Understanding these origins allows policymakers to better address the historical grievances related to land ownership and distribution.

4.   Executive dominance in policy formation:

Justification: Like many presidential systems, Kenya's executive plays a significant role in setting policy agendas and directing their implementation. Recognizing this dominance is crucial for understanding how policies are formed and enacted, sometimes bypassing other branches of government.

Applicability: Kenya's 2020 COVID-19 response illustrates this executive dominance. Policies like curfews, lockdowns, and public health directives were implemented primarily through executive orders, bypassing the usual legislative processes. The President and Cabinet played a central role in formulating and enforcing pandemic-related policies.

5.   Unintended consequences of policies:

Justification: Policies often have unintended outcomes, which can sometimes result in public backlash or necessitate revisions. This highlights the importance of continually assessing and adapting policies.

Applicability: The **Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC)** introduced in 2017 faced significant challenges and unintended consequences, such as lack of preparedness among teachers and inadequate infrastructure. These issues have sparked public debate and calls for review, showing how policies can have unexpected impacts that require further adjustment.

In Kenya, these five key issues help explain the complex and evolving nature of public policy, driven by historical legacies, political agendas, bureaucratic systems, and executive influence. Understanding these factors aids in crafting more effective, responsive policies that consider both intended goals and potential unintended outcomes.

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DISTRIBUTIVE AND REDISTRIBUTIVE POLICY

The key issues relevant to the Distributive and Redistributive Policy – Tom Sefton (2006) (Chapter 30 of the *Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*)

1. Income Inequality

Justification: The issue of income inequality is at the core of redistributive policies. Reducing inequality ensures that economic resources are shared more equitably, fostering social cohesion. Policies targeting income inequality aim to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, ensuring that all citizens have access to basic needs.

Applicability: In Kenya, **cash transfer programs** such as the **Inua Jamii** initiative aim to reduce poverty among the elderly and vulnerable. These programs redistribute resources to lower-income groups, helping reduce income inequality and improve living standards in disadvantaged areas. The targeting of these programs demonstrates Kenya's commitment to addressing deep-rooted inequalities.

2. Progressive Taxation

Justification: Progressive taxation ensures that individuals with higher incomes contribute a greater share to the public coffers, enabling the government to fund redistributive programs. This is key to reducing wealth disparities and ensuring that social welfare programs are adequately supported.

Applicability: Kenya's **Income Tax Act** follows a progressive model where wealthier individuals are taxed at a higher rate. This revenue helps fund key public services such as **free primary education** and **universal healthcare**, which directly benefit lower-income populations. By collecting higher taxes from the wealthiest citizens, the government can allocate resources to those in need.

3. Targeted Welfare Programs

Justification: Redistributive policies often involve targeted interventions aimed at the most vulnerable in society, such as the elderly, orphans, or people with disabilities. Targeting ensures that limited resources are used efficiently and reach the people who need them the most.

Applicability: In Kenya, the **Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Cash Transfer** program is an example of a targeted welfare policy. It provides financial support to families caring for orphans and vulnerable children, helping to alleviate poverty and improve their well-being. This policy ensures that resources are directed where they have the greatest impact, supporting families who are often at risk of falling further into poverty.

4. Geographical Redistribution

Justification: Geographical disparities in resource distribution create inequalities between different regions. Redistributive policies aim to bridge the gap between wealthier urban areas and poorer rural regions by ensuring that resources like infrastructure and public services are distributed more equitably.

Applicability: Kenya's **Equalization Fund**, established by the 2010 Constitution, seeks to address regional inequalities by providing extra funding to marginalized

counties. This initiative ensures that areas with historical disadvantages receive additional support for infrastructure development, healthcare, and education. By addressing regional disparities, the fund promotes equitable development across the country.

5. Public Perception and Social Support

Justification: Public perception plays a crucial role in the success of redistributive policies. If the public perceives such policies as unfair or inefficient, there is likely to be resistance, making implementation difficult. Social support is needed to ensure that redistributive efforts gain widespread acceptance.

Applicability: In Kenya, the introduction of **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** as part of the **Big Four Agenda** faced initial skepticism, especially around how it would be funded. However, as the program rolled out and people experienced its benefits—such as access to healthcare in rural areas—public perception improved, fostering broader support for the initiative. This highlights how managing public expectations and building trust is crucial for redistributive policies to succeed.

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QUALITATIVE-INTERPRETIVE METHODS IN POLICY RESEARCH

The key issues relevant to the Qualitative-Interpretive Methods in Policy Research (Dvora Yanow) (Chapter 27 of the *Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*)

1. Interpretation of Meanings:

The central focus of interpretive policy analysis is on understanding the meanings that policy participants construct and attach to policy actions and processes. Policies are not merely tools for achieving objectives; they are expressions of human meaning.
Justification: This issue is critical because understanding how participants perceive and interpret policy processes reveals the underlying assumptions that shape decision-making and policy outcomes. By examining these meanings, analysts can better grasp the root causes of policy disputes.
Applicability in Kenya: For example, in Kenya's education policy, how teachers interpret directives regarding competency-based education influences the implementation success. Misunderstandings of policy objectives can lead to varied applications in classrooms. Studies on interpretive analysis would highlight how different stakeholders (teachers, policymakers) give divergent meanings to the same policy, explaining differences in outcomes across regions .

2. Narrative Analysis:

Policies are often communicated and justified through stories rather than pure data or logic. Narrative analysis focuses on how stories shape the framing of policy problems and solutions.
Justification: This is vital because narratives can significantly influence the public's and policymakers' understanding of an issue. The framing of problems affects which solutions are considered appropriate.
Applicability in Kenya: In the context of Kenya's "Big Four Agenda," narratives around housing, manufacturing, and healthcare have shaped public opinion and resource allocation. For instance, the narrative of "affordable housing for all" positions the housing crisis as a national priority, influencing funding and attention to urban planning .

3. Discourse Analysis:

This issue involves examining the larger systems of meaning—discourses—within which policy narratives are embedded. Discourses shape how policy actors define problems, identify solutions, and establish authority in policy discussions.
Justification: Discourses are powerful because they establish what is considered "normal" or "acceptable" in policy debates. Understanding these systems reveals how power and influence operate through language and communication.
Applicability in Kenya: In Kenya, the discourse around corruption has deeply influenced governance reforms. The dominant narrative of "fighting corruption" shapes policy discussions, but also limits alternatives to governance reforms. Through discourse analysis, analysts can examine how such dominant narratives might suppress other views, such as focusing on systemic inefficiencies .

4.   Framing of Policy Problems:

How policy problems are framed by participants significantly impacts the choice of solutions. The same facts can lead to different policy approaches based on how they are framed.

Justification: Problem framing determines the perceived urgency and nature of the solutions considered. If a problem is framed as a crisis, more radical solutions might be adopted than if it were framed as a manageable challenge.

Applicability in Kenya: During Kenya's healthcare reforms, the framing of the healthcare crisis as a national emergency by the government influenced the rapid scaling-up of universal healthcare pilots. Alternative framings might have led to more gradual reforms. The interpretive approach would explore how different regions and healthcare stakeholders framed the issue differently .

5.   Cultural Context and Policy Interpretation:

Cultural variables often affect how policies are interpreted and implemented. What works in one cultural context may not necessarily succeed in another, making cultural sensitivity in policy design essential.

Justification: Recognizing the role of culture is crucial because it helps policy makers and analysts understand why certain policies fail or succeed in different contexts. Ignoring cultural differences may lead to policy failure, even with the best technical design.

Applicability in Kenya: For example, in the fight against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), policies have often clashed with cultural beliefs. Successful policies in Kenya have involved working within local cultural contexts, engaging elders, and incorporating cultural understanding into the policy process .

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Argumentation, Rhetoric, and Narratives (Frank Fischer, Herbert Gottweis, and Michael van Eeten) – Handbook of Public Policy Analysis.

1. Deliberative democracy and public participation.

Justification: Deliberative democracy values public engagement in policymaking, suggesting that democratic legitimacy emerges from inclusive and participatory processes. This approach ensures that policies are responsive to citizens' needs and reflects their perspectives.

Applicability: In Kenya, public participation has been institutionalized in forums for budget allocation at the county level, enabling citizen involvement in setting priorities. This aligns with the ideals of deliberative democracy, reinforcing accountability in governance (see page 674, paragraphs 2-3).

2. Accountability and the role of dialogue in policy-making.

Justification: Accountability is fundamental to responsive governance, ensuring that public officials engage in transparent dialogue to address concerns beyond electoral cycles.

Applicability: Kenya's National Anti-Corruption Campaign Steering Committee fosters public accountability by encouraging discussions on corruption and governance issues. This exemplifies the deliberative approach by involving citizens in oversight roles (see page 679, paragraph 2).

3. Addressing democratic deficits.

Justification: Democratic deficits arise when citizens lack influence over policies affecting them. A deliberative approach aims to mitigate this by ensuring inclusive participation, especially for marginalized communities.

Applicability: In Kenya, policy dialogues around the Mau Forest Complex involve local communities in environmental decision-making. These consultations demonstrate efforts to address democratic deficits by integrating community input into environmental policies (see page 673, paragraph 3).

4. Framing of policy problems.

Justification: The framing of issues affects how policies are perceived and what solutions are considered viable. Deliberative analysis suggests framing that encompasses diverse perspectives to avoid narrow definitions.

Applicability: In Kenya, water resource management is increasingly framed to include ecological and social perspectives, particularly in the Tana River Delta, where policies balance agricultural and environmental needs. This broad framing has led to more comprehensive policy responses (see page 174, paragraph 2).

5. Technocratic policy analysis vs. participatory approaches.

Justification: While technocratic analysis relies heavily on expert input, participatory approaches aim to incorporate citizens' views. A balance ensures that policies are both informed by data and aligned with public needs.

Applicability: During Kenya's COVID-19 response, health policies were informed by scientific expertise but adjusted based on community feedback, fostering public trust and cultural relevance in policy guidelines (see page 200, paragraph 3).

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ADVOCACY COALITION FRAMEWORKS

1.   Policy Subsystems as Analytical Units:

ACF considers policy subsystems as key analytical units, defined by a specific domain where actors, institutions, and coalitions interact over time to address policy issues.

Justification: Subsystems enable a focused analysis of the dynamic interactions between coalitions, reducing the complexity of policymaking into manageable units.

Applicability: In Kenya, the education policy subsystem includes coalitions advocating for or against the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), navigating issues like teacher training, curriculum design, and implementation challenges within county and national education departments.

2.   Belief Systems and Coalition Dynamics:

Belief systems are the glue binding coalitions, categorized into deep core values (ideologies), policy core beliefs (strategic goals), and secondary aspects (implementation details).

Justification: This framework explains coalition stability and how coalitions adapt to policy debates while maintaining core values.

Applicability: The GMO debate in Kenya showcases belief systems at play. Coalitions opposing GMO imports hold deep core beliefs about health and food sovereignty, while proponents emphasize technological advancement and economic benefits. These belief systems shape their advocacy and strategies.

3. **Role of External Shocks in Policy Change**:

External shocks, such as economic crises or disasters, can disrupt existing coalitions, creating opportunities for significant policy changes.

Justification: Shocks force coalitions to re-evaluate entrenched beliefs, leading to potential shifts in policy subsystems.

Applicability: The COVID-19 pandemic acted as an external shock, spurring Kenya to adopt new health policies, such as expanding telemedicine, increasing healthcare funding, and rethinking Universal Health Coverage (UHC) strategies.

4. **Inter-coalition Learning and Forums**:

Forums serve as spaces where coalitions with competing ideologies can exchange knowledge and develop mutual understanding, fostering incremental policy learning.

Justification: These platforms help reduce polarization and encourage collaboration, even in ideologically fragmented contexts.

Applicability : Kenya's National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) emerged from forums involving government agencies, civil society, and international organizations, promoting collective strategies for mitigation and adaptation.

5. **Policy-Oriented Learning**:

Policy-oriented learning refers to evidence-based evolution in coalition strategies and policies, especially in secondary aspects, while retaining core beliefs.

Justification: It ensures that policies adapt to emerging challenges without losing ideological coherence.

Applicability : The revision of Kenya's UHC policy demonstrates policy-oriented learning. Lessons from pilot projects, such as the implementation challenges in different counties, were used to refine the approach and improve healthcare delivery.

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MANAGING POLICY NETWORKS

1.   Managing the Mix of Governing Structures:

In policy networks, service delivery often involves a mix of bureaucracies, markets, and networks. Understanding when and how these structures function optimally is key.

Justification: This mix matters because no single governing structure is universally effective; the interplay determines success in service delivery

Applicability : In Kenya, the Huduma Centres integrate public (bureaucratic) and private (market) actors to provide government services. Effective management of this mix has enhanced service delivery through public-private collaboration.

2.   Diffusion of Accountability:

In networks, authority is dispersed among multiple actors, creating challenges in pinpointing accountability. This is referred to as the "problem of many hands."

Justification: Diffusion can weaken central control and lead to buck-passing, but can also act as checks and balances when managed properly.

Applicability : In Kenya's devolved healthcare system, counties manage healthcare delivery, but national-level actors remain involved in policymaking. Clear accountability frameworks are essential to avoid overlaps and gaps.

3.   Enhancing Coordination:

Networks often struggle with coordination due to the diversity of actors and competing interests. Effective coordination is crucial to achieving policy objectives.

Justification: Coordination ensures synergy among actors, enabling coherent action despite organizational differences.

Applicability : Coordination challenges in Kenya's Big Four Agenda (e.g., housing and manufacturing) have required inter-ministerial committees to align the efforts of public, private, and civil society stakeholders.

4.   Devising New Tools:

Managing networks requires innovative tools tailored to indirect governance, fostering collaboration while maintaining oversight.

Justification: New tools enable adaptive management in the complex, decentralized contexts typical of policy networks.

Applicability : The introduction of eCitizen, a digital platform for public services, is an example of leveraging technology to streamline collaboration across government departments.

5.   Addressing Institutional Voids:

Institutional voids arise where there are no generally accepted rules for policymaking and implementation. Managing these voids is essential for policy success.

Justification: Institutional voids hinder coherent action, requiring actors to establish shared norms and frameworks to fill the gaps.

Applicability : The management of climate change adaptation networks in Kenya involves bridging institutional voids between local communities and international organizations to create actionable strategies.

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