Chapter 2

Understanding the Field of Public Policy in the Context of Public Administration Evolution

Feras Ali Qawasmeh

ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5934-3273

University of Malaya, Palestine

ABSTRACT

Public policy is classified as a major field in public administration. Therefore, to understand the context of public policy as a field, it is essential to explore its root developments in public administration from epistemological and chronological perspectives. This chapter is a review study referring to main scholarly works including books, academic articles, and studies. The chapter first helps researchers and students in comprehending the evolution of public administration in its four main stages including classical public administration, new public administration, new public management, and new public governance. Second, the chapter presents a general overview of the evolution of the public policy field with particular attention paid to the concepts of Harold Lasswell who is seen as the father of public policy. The chapter then discusses different definitions of public policy. Various classifications of public policy are also investigated. The chapter ends with a critical discussion of the stages model (heuristics).

INTRODUCTION

There are various studies which present the general evolutionary framework of the public administration, similarly for the public policy. However, it is necessary to understand the public policy field in the context of public administration evolution (Yildiz, Demircioğlu, & Babaoğlu, 2011). Public policy is seen as a natural scholarly extension to the public administration (Babaoğlu & Kulaç, 2021). Hence, this chapter is aimed at drawing a unified line that starts from comprehending the early stages of establishing public administration field, including the Classical Public Administration, New Public Administration, New Public Management and New Public Governance, to the evolution of the public policy field. Signifi-

cantly, various definitions and classifications of public policy are investigated. The chapter eventually ends with a critical discussion of the Stages Model (Heuristics).

METHODOLOGY

This chapter is a review chapter. It adopts semi-systematic review method which is designed for topics that have been conceptualized differently and studied by various groups of researchers within diverse disciplines (Wong, Greenhalgh, Westhorp, Buckingham, & Pawson, 2013). Unlike the systematic review method which seeks to study every single research related to the topic, the semi-systematic review assumes that reviewing every single article related to the topic is impossible (Snyder, 2019). Therefore, it looks at how research within a selected field has progressed over time or how a topic has developed across research traditions. Generally, the review seeks to understand and identify all potentially relevant research traditions that have implications for the studied topic and to synthesize these using meta-narratives instead of by measuring effect size (Wong et al., 2013).

Moreover, this chapter uses thematic analysis technique to identify, analyse and report patterns in the form of themes (main headings) and sub-themes (sub-headings). This technique helps to map a field of research, synthesize the state of knowledge, and create an agenda for further research or the ability to provide an historical overview or timeline of a specific topic (Ward, House, & Hamer, 2009). The sources referred to are the classical books of the public administration and public policy and the founding studies which were written by the prominent scholars and researchers in the two fields.

EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Age of Enlightenment or the Age of Rationality is perceived as an intellectual movement that emerged in Europe during the 17th and 18th century. It mainly emphasised the reason, individualism and scepticism. It left tremendous legacy on various aspects of life, and substantially inspired the development of other schools' thought in subsequent ages (Gray, 2007). Thus, the emergence of The Progressive Era in United States of America (USA) during the late 19th and the beginning of 20th century was an extension of the rationality notion. Thought, it had a unique evolutionary context in which mainly aimed to purify the government through solving problems caused by industrialization, urbanization, immigration, political corruption and others (Buenker, Burnham, & Crunden, 1976; Leonard, 2009).

In conjunction with Progressive Era context, public administration as a field was developed. It was therefore believed that enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, professionalism, expertise, democracy and accountability in USA would be achieved through the instrumental rationality of modernity (Al-Habil, 2008). In his founding article entitled "What the Tortoise Said to Achilles" Carroll (1895) defined instrumental rationality as taking the necessary means to one's ends. This is embodied in public administration in a way that scholars utilize the scientific methodology to reach its ends.

Classical Public Administration

Woodrow Wilson, who was a prominent Progressive himself, is widely known as the founder of public administration field. His article "The Study of Administration" (1887) marked the inception of this field

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