

Chapter 5

Application of Maqasid al-Shariah-Based Public Policy Framework in SDGs Policies: Poverty Eradication (SDG 1) as a Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Public policy scholars have warned that the conventional public policy (CPP) framework is not effective enough to address the post-pandemic problems as it has blatantly failed the litmus test of time. The CPP framework has been criticised on various grounds and blamed for the problems of unsustainability and overarching poverty that plague humanity. The objective of this chapter is to explain a quadric public policy framework (PPI) that has recently been proposed as an efficient alternative public policy framework. The explanation is limited to only one out of the four components of the framework, called the Maqasid al-Shariah component, also known as public interest theory. The findings show that the PPI framework can link policymakers from different sectors and provide a platform for a whole-of-government approach to achieving the SDGs, especially poverty alleviation and eradication.

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals are a set of 17 interconnected and interdependent goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015, to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. According to Sachs, et al. (2019), these goals focus on time-bound targets for the five Ps: prosperity, people, planet, peace, and partnership. A closer look at the Sustainable Development

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Goals reveals that most of the goals are social security parameters that are *condiciones sine quibus non* in the public policy of any country. Although governments, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs) and relevant humanitarian agencies have recognized social security as a fundamental human right, countries around the world still face challenges in designing effective policies that guarantee the social security for their citizens. This is evident in the recent report of the International Labor Organization (ILO) for the period 2020-2022, which laments that about 4.1 billion people around the world are still wholly unprotected by any form of social security (Batchabi, 2022). Unfortunately, the Coronavirus outbreak in late year 2019 aggravated and exacerbated the hitherto reeling social security measures and posed more daunting challenges to policymakers. According to the World Bank Group development report, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered the most encompassing economic crisis in almost a century, poverty rates have soared, public debt has reached unprecedented levels, and inequality has widened both across and within countries. The socio-economic effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the report continues, has been rated to be more devastating than the two world wars, the Great Depression of the 1930s, the emerging economy debt crises of the 1980s, and the 2007–09 global financial crisis (World Bank, 2022). Consequently, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the actualization of SDGs more challenging, and the pressing need for a ‘saviour policy’ can never be overemphasized.

The Knowledge Gap

Although there is a pressing need for effective policy, conventional policymakers have very few useful levers to deal with the post-pandemic recession, as many of their tried-and-true approaches have clearly failed the litmus test of time (Jacobs, 2020). Scholars of public policy have warned that the conventional public policy framework (CPP) cannot solve the post-pandemic problems (Abdelgafar, 2021; Johal, et al, 2022; Nicklin, 2019; Sewerin, et al, 2022). They criticize and accuse the CPP of inefficiency and blame its ideological foundation for the woes of unsustainability and overarching poverty that plague humanity (Abdelgafar, 2021). Hence, they call for an alternative public policy framework that is more efficient and inclusive (Abdelgafar, 2021; Johal, et al, 2022; Sewerin, et al, 2022).

For instance, Basma Abdelgafar, a professor of public policy at the International Peace College, in South Africa, criticized the conventional public policy framework as being propelled by a deep neoliberal ideology (Abdelgafar, 2021) which is anathema to equal sustainability (Langridge, 2013). Therefore, “sustainable development and improving quality of life demands a wholly new approach to understanding, formulating and implementing public policy. Policies that are unjust, serving only particular interests must be dismantled not marginally softened” (Abdelgafar, 2021; p. 10). She warns that “if nothing serious is done to reform global policy regimes that reproduce inequalities, the pandemic like other crises, will represent nothing more than a massive transfer of global wealth to big business including pharmaceuticals, technology and food retail giants, as Naomi Klein has argued was the case in past crises” (Abdelgafar, 2021; p. 4).

A recent report coordinated by Johal Anthony, a professor of public policy at the University of Toronto, posits that “policy tools and processes that delivered results in the 1950s and 1960s are no longer fit for purpose in the face of changing public expectations, ever more complex and interconnected challenges, and the advent of new technologies” (Johal, et al, 2022). This is in total agreement with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)’s report that asserts that “many of the policies which have been implemented across the OECD, not just over the last decade but over the last forty years

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