



Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach

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Abstract

The book defines and illustrates phases of policy analysis, describe elements of integrated policy analysis, distinguish four strategies of policy analysis, contrast reconstructed logic and logic-in-use, describe the structure of a policy argument and its elements and interpret scorecards, spreadsheets, influence diagrams, decision trees, and argument maps.

Keywords: Public policy; Government; Policy analysis; Public organizations; Land reform policy.

1. Introduction

The book "*Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach*" brought out in the open the truth about the government and public organizations when it comes to providing services to the people. The book is of paramount importance as it managed to define and illustrate stages of policy analysis through the use of explained diagrams. It also captured the issues of public policy activities by describing the structure of a policy arguments and its elements. It may also be important to note that the book, "*Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach*" is a pillar of information in public administration as a number of countries including, India, Italy and China just to mention but only a few, are using the book in training policy analysts in their governments. Through his book, Professor William Dunn was actually able to focus on the public policy issues, as he clearly maintained on the technical aspects of policy analysis the ins and outs of giving problems and solutions aimed advice to the governments.

The book played an important role in providing students and governments with a detailed comprehensive methodology of public policy analysis, due to the fact it managed to prove that policy analysis is nothing more but an applied social science tool that is made to solve real problems on the ground that will be being facing public and nonprofit organizations. The book, "*Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach*" targets the governments worldwide, for example the Chinese and American government who used the book in crafting policies in their countries. It also targets public policy students and other students from a variety of academic backgrounds, who continuously cite the book. The book signifies a number of elements in the study of public policy mainly focusing on the fact that, it bring in students because it encourage and give them a room to critically analyze the arguments of policy practitioners, economists, political scientists and political philosophers just but to mention only a few. William N. Dunn, has wrote a number of books in public policy that includes, "*Values, Ethnic and the Practice of Public Policy Analysis and Toward a critical Administrative theory*" and "*Values, Ethnics, and the Practice of Policy Analysis*, just to mention just but only a few. Among the books wrote by William N. Dunn, the book, "*Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach*" is more important and critical in public policy because it describe the structure of a policy arguments and its elements, understand the role of argument mapping in critical thinking and it is being used by government in policy implementations, for example China. The book has seven chapters and these were arranged in a way that it explains main and important issues in the book. The chapters were arranged chronologically and as follows:

- The process of policy analysis
- Policy analysis in the policy making process
- Structuring policy problems
- Forecasting expected policy outcomes
- Prescribing preferred policies
- Evaluating policy performance
- Developing policy arguments
- Communicating policy analysis

The book under review is recommended for professionals working in the fields of public policy evaluation and public policy administration and can also be used for academic functions in colleges and universities by students in public policy disciplines. Zimbabwe since 1980 crafted several policies including, Reconciliation Policy in 1980, Land reform Policy in 2000 and the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation

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(ZIMASSET) in 2013-2018 which did not bring the desired results. Dunn (1981), noted policy analysis as a process of multidisciplinary inquiry aiming at the creation, critical assessment and communication of policy which is relevant information owing to the books in-depth literature on public policy analysis. Policy makers in Zimbabwe can utilize the book so that they can produce policies that will help transform the fortunes of the country politically and economically.

2. Strength of the Book

The book “*Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach*”, written by William N. Dunn in 1981, clearly outlines the methodology of public policy analysis which Kaplan (1964), noted that, helps to understand not only the products of policy inquiry but also processes employed to create these products. In this regard policy makers they will be able to produce good policies through this book, which is written in a clear and concise language which is easy to comprehend and it is a cutting edge to other public policy textbooks. The author logically and clearly explains the phases of policy making process that is agenda sitting, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, assessment, adaptation policy succession and policy termination. In achieving the above objectives, William N. Dunn uses examples and illustrations which makes it easy to understand especially for public policy students and other who wish to acquire information on public policy making enterprise. In presentation the book puts bibliography for the sources consulted at the end of each covered chapter, which is different from other authors who put the reference at the end of the whole book. The advantages of referencing at the end of each chapter is that the reader will quickly refer to issues which need clarity easily (Teitelbaum, 1998). Again, the other strengths of the book are that, the author gives case studies, review questions so that the readers will quickly grasp public policy concept and the summary that is given at the end of every chapter, also makes the reader to conclude every chapter with important remarks (Walford, 1986).

3. Weaknesses

Despite the above noted strengths the book is too long, with 451 pages which makes it boring and cumbersome to read especially to policymakers who have loads of work to do. It would have been commendable for William N. Dunn to crystallize the book to slightly above a hundred pages. The book is also Euro centric and its application works in advanced democracies for example in America, Britain and other western democratic countries (Rossmann and Shanahan, 2012). The author used examples predominantly borrowing American examples and as such the book lacks a global appeal (Drewry, 1974). This makes it difficult to apply the book in local context for example Zimbabwe, where policies are usually instituted along party lines and are patrimonial in nature. Ritzer and Dean (2015), posited that for many years’ policies in developing countries like Zimbabwean policies have been superficial and lacking in substance as they have been clouded with politics and implementation bottle necks, this politicization of public policies that led to the formulation of some overambitious policies just to own political capital coupled with excessive bureaucratic procedures.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, the strength of the book, “*Public Policy Analysis: An Integrated Approach*”, outweighs its weakness as give in the book review above. In his book, William N. Dunn managed to define and illustrate phases of policy analysis, describe elements of integrated policy analysis, distinguish four strategies of policy analysis, contrast reconstructed logic and logic in use, distinguish prospective and retrospective policy analysis, describe the structure of a policy argument and its element and interpret scorecards, spreadsheets, influence diagrams, decision trees, and argument maps. The book is important as it is being used by a number of academic students and a number of countries have adopted some of the concepts in the book in crafting policies in their countries.

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