THE POWER DIMENSION OF PUBLIC POLICY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the dimensions of power in public policy, highlighting how power influences the process of policy design, implementation, and evaluation. Through theoretical analysis and literature review, this study shows that power is not only formally distributed through government structures, but also through informal networks, economic influence, and social forces. The dimensions of power include legitimacy, authority, and influence held by various actors, including the government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. The research also identifies that inequality in the distribution of power can lead to inequities in policy-making, affecting the effectiveness and fairness of policy implementation. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of understanding and managing power dynamics to create inclusive and equitable public policies.

Keywords: *(a) Politics, (b) power relations, (c) public policy*

1. INTRODUCTION

Power and public policy are two different but inseparable elements. Referring to the historical roots of scientific philosophy (Liliweri, 2022), power is often the subject of sociology or political science. In contrast, public policy is the material study of public administration (Waldo, 1971; Dahl, 2001; Frederickson, et al., 2018). However, tracing the historical roots of public administration, it was originally derived from political science. In other words, at an early stage, although there is still much debate, public administration science is a biological child of political science (Yang, 2018; Barbier and Tengeh, 2023). Nowadays, both political science and public administration have their material objects, both of which study power as an element, not only of politics but also of public policy. The important question that must be asked is what and why is the discussion of power and public policy raised and discussed? What is the urgency of discussing the relationship between these two aspects? This question is raised because policymakers claim that all public policies have been taken based on objective categories that can be accounted for and are not accompanied by the interests of one or two actors or elements in it. Or, other claims say that all public policies are purely for the common welfare.

Concerning power, Dhakidae (2003) has discussed the relationship between scholars and power in Indonesia in great depth. In 2007, Addicott and Ferlie wrote about power relations in health networks. According to these two researchers, power has spread everywhere, including to the realm of health. Samsuddin, H., Gunawan, C. I., & Sasmito, C. (2019) discussed oligarchic power relations in Batu City Malang in the taxation and policy corruption of PT BWR. In their study, the power that power holders have with business actors. Previously, Rahmani and Karim (2016) raised the issue of power struggles between the government, the private sector, and the community in the implementation of one-way roads in Yogyakarta City. Concerning the

revitalization of Jakarta Bay, Gugat, Abubakar, and Susanti (2022) found that there are power relations between the government, the community, and NGOs in the revitalization of Jakarta Bay. The four studies above tend to show strong facts about the power dimension in every public policy making.

It is understood that there is almost no public policy in any country without power interests there. Thus, discussions about welfare and the public interest are futile without a discussion of power, either as an element of politics or as a legitimate part of public policy itself (Kapilima, 2020). Public policy is the material praxis of political affairs because the material form of political policy is empirical public policy.

This study is based on an important question, is every public policymaking always driven only by the general and public interests or is it more likely to be influenced by individualistic power? Because, in many narratives of policymakers in this country, the phrase 'for and in the interests of many people' is never lacking. Yet, in practice, the objective reality says otherwise. Many individual-based political interests enter there. Therefore, this study aims to examine the various dimensions of power in public policy praxis. The literature review is used as the method of writing.

Perspectives on Power and Public Policy

The study of power, dominance, and power relations in public policy-making has been carried out by many researchers with various foci of study. The following are some studies related to the dimensions of power in public policy-making. Zhang, Waldman, Han, and Li (2015) discuss the relationship between power and leadership characteristics in an organization. The paradoxical behavior of a leader affects the praxis of power in an organization. It is stated that related to power, five factors influence a leader's behavior, which is (1) combining selfishness with the selfishness of others; (2) maintaining distance and closeness; (3) treating people in the same way, but still allowing them to individuate; (4) imposing work requirements, but still allowing flexibility; and (5) keeping control of decisions, but still allowing autonomy.

In ideal conditions, decision-making in all public policies involves multiple parties. Bryson, John M., Crosby, Barbara C., Stone, and Melissa Middleton (2015) examined the theme of collaboration in public services. According to Bryson et al, collaboration is needed in all development programs. However, collaboration has many visible dimensions. This has an impact on the complexity of making decisions. The powerful element is the one that has the dominant influence. The main thesis of this study is to investigate the complexity of cross-sector collaboration and highlight the importance of understanding the various aspects of such collaboration. The problem addressed is the challenge of understanding complex and dynamic cross-sector collaboration. Theories used include various theories from organizational studies, public administration, strategic management, conflict management, collective action, policy studies, planning, environmental management, network theory, and communication. The main method used is comparative case studies, focusing both on variables and on collective action solutions. The fundamental finding is the need for more in-depth and comprehensive research to understand causation in cross-sector collaboration. Strengths of the review include the comprehensive synthesis of various theories and empirical studies and the emphasis on the need for more in-depth and comprehensive research. Weaknesses of the review include the limitations of single-case and variable-focused research, and the lack of research that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Concerning power relations and social assistance, Rachael Addicott & Ewan Ferlie, (2007), cite evidence for some aspects of structuralist and pluralist theories in power relations in cancer management networks in London. That power is diffused within cancer management networks in London. The main thesis of this study is to understand how power operates in cancer management networks in London using pluralist, structuralist, and post-structuralist theoretical approaches. The issue addressed is power distribution among the various parties involved in the cancer management network. The theories used are pluralist, structuralist, and post-structuralist theories. The main method used was a combination of semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observation at meetings. The fundamental finding was that there was evidence for some aspects of structuralist and pluralist theories in power relations in cancer management networks in London. The weakness of this study is that none of the theories fully match the empirical findings presented. The strength of this study is the use of triangulation methods to collect data from multiple sources. The similarity with the study on power relations and social assistance is the focus on the distribution of power among various parties. The difference is the use of pluralist, structuralist, and post-structuralist theories in analyzing power in cancer management networks. Meanwhile, research on power relations with social assistance uses a political economy approach. According to political economy studies, power distribution in several networks influences central policy, resource allocation, and public policy activities and implementation.

Power relations as discussed above are seriously studied by Kapilima. Kapilima (2020) says that power struggles in the public policy formulation process are unavoidable phenomena in a democratic system. This happens because various stakeholders have different goals and agendas. In the case of Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (ETP) formulation process in 2014, empirical studies show that some actors have more influence than others. Government officials and some powerful and prominent Community-Based Organizations (CSOs) seem to have a more dominant voice in this process. The recommendations of these actors are more likely to be accepted and incorporated into policy documents, while the voices of less empowered, less prominent, or ordinary citizens tend not to get the same attention. Factors such as scarcity of resources, persuasion through arguments, different values, and conflicting interests play an important role in determining power and influence in the decision-making process. This suggests that not all stakeholders have equal opportunities to participate effectively in policy formulation.

In another perspective, Osborne, S. P., Radnor, Z., & Strokosch, K. (2016) discussed public management and services. It is known that the success of public service programs is influenced by public management and services. Osborne, S. P., Radnor, Z., & Strokosch, K. examined the conceptualization of co-production and its relationship with co-creation of public value. The method used is a theoretical approach rooted in public management theory and service management. The theory used is the dominating public service logic. The main finding is the need for a more in-depth understanding of co-production in public service delivery. The strength of this study is that it combines public management and service management perspectives. The weakness of this study is the lack of in-depth understanding of co-production in the literature. A similarity with the study on social assistance power relations is the focus on the interaction between service providers and users. The main difference is that this study emphasizes more on the concept of co-production in public service delivery. The major literature gap in this study is

the lack of a thorough understanding of co-production in the public and service management literature.

In this context, according to Laurence E. Lynn, ed. (1999), management has an important impact on public organizations. In the study Modelling the Impact of Public Management: Implications of Structural Context, Laurence E. Lynn, ed, mentions that management has an important impact in public organizations, which is influenced by structure and is often non-linear. The issue addressed is how management influences the performance of public organizations through the creation of organizational structures, protection from environmental influences, and exploitation of opportunities in the environment.

In other studies, it is mentioned that the design of public policy is within the responsibility of government or state authorities. Carpenter, Daniel P., and George A. Krause (2011) state the importance of reputation in public administration. The reputation of public organizations is linked to the legitimacy of the state. The fundamental finding of this study is that organizational reputation is a multifaceted concept that influences the behavior of organizational members and officials. This research combines the concept of reputation with public administration, providing insights into how reputation affects organizational behavior. The weakness lies in the lack of detail on the research methods used. The difference with the study on power relations and social assistance is that this study focuses more on the concept of reputation in public administration, whereas the study on power relations and social assistance highlights more aspects of power and social assistance.

Haruna (2001) suggests a bridge between the state as a policy-making authority and the praxis of policy implementation in the field. In a study of social assistance distribution in Ghana, Haruna found that public administration reform should involve relationship building and bridging the gap between public administrators, citizens, and local communities. The main focus of Haruna's study is the limitations associated with past reforms and the need to broaden the conception of public administration to include relationship-building and gap-bridging. The theory and methods used in this study are not explicitly mentioned in the citations provided. The results of this study suggest that public administration reforms that focus too much on structure and material welfare neglect the fundamental normative public purpose of public administration. The strength of the study is its emphasis on the importance of broadening conceptions of public administration and building authentic relationships with society. Its weakness lies in the lack of detail on the theories used and the research methods applied.

Unfortunately, not all relationships can provide maximal results. Diefenbach's (2009) study shows this. In a study of policy implementation within the framework of New Public Management (NPM), Diefenbach provides a systematic identification of the basic assumptions and core elements of the concept of NPM (New Public Management) and analyses its main implications and consequences for public sector organizations. This study discusses the concept of NPM and its multi-dimensional impact on public sector organizations, particularly focusing on its negative implications. Critical Management Studies and organizational politics theories are used to identify and analyze NPM. The results of this study state that the implementation of NPM does not provide the results promised by its proponents, and even tends to make conditions on the ground worse and give the wrong impression to the public. The lack of results is due to the burden of management and the inability to cooperate between actors. The strength of this study is that it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the NPM concept and its impact,

but the weakness may lie in focusing more on its negative implications without emphasizing the positives or alternatives. When it comes to power relations, the similarities and differences between NPM studies and studies on power relations and social assistance are that both studies involve analyzing the structure and implications of public policies, but the difference is that studies on power relations and social assistance focus more on the interaction between government and society in the context of social assistance, while NPM studies focus more on managerial practices in the public sector.

Another study on the relationship between government and society was conducted by Vigoda (2002). Vigoda conducted a study to broaden the orientation of the Public Administration system towards collaboration, as an alternative to more traditional responsiveness, to increase citizen involvement in the governance process. The problem discussed is the paradox between the focus on customer service in the new public managerialism that can hinder better collaboration between government and citizens. Theories used include discourse theory in postmodern Public Administration. The main methods used are not explained in the citations provided. The fundamental finding is that the government needs to create conditions that favor citizen engagement in collaboration with the government. The strength of this study is that it provides an understanding of the importance of collaboration between government and citizens in Public Administration. The weakness is the focus on the paradox between customer service and collaboration which has not been fully resolved. When linked to the themes of power relations and social assistance, there are similarities and differences. The difference between Vigoda's study and the study on power relations and social aid is that this study emphasizes more on the importance of collaboration between government and citizens in Public Administration, while the study on power relations and social aid focuses more on the distribution of power and social aid in society.

Meanwhile, Cameron (2010) states that increased politicization in public services has contributed to a decline in service delivery. Cameron's study deals with the impact of politicization in public service on the quality of provided services. On the quality of services provided. The theory used in the study was a political-administrative framework, which involved consideration of politicization in the public service and political-administrative relations in developing countries. Cameron used interview methods with some senior government officials, including three current directors-general and a former Minister for Public Service and Administration in data collection. Cameron's findings show that increasing politicization in the public service has contributed to a decline in service delivery. That is, the politicization of the civil service has implications for the decline in the quality of public services. When linked to research on power relations and social assistance, it is recognized that Cameron's study has similarities and differences. The main difference between Cameron's study and studies on power relations and social assistance is the focus on politicization in public services, while studies on power relations and social assistance highlight the relationship between government and society in the context of social assistance.

To relate to public policy, Béland & Cox (2015) mention that ideas have the power to become coalition magnets in public policy, and the interaction between ideas and power through coalition formation is important in the public policy process. Béland & Cox's study discusses the ways and mechanisms by which ideas can be an important factor in forming coalitions in public policy. Béland & Cox use the concepts of both power and ideas in the context of coalition-making. They

use conceptual analysis and case studies of three ideas: sustainability, solidarity, and social inclusion. The fundamental finding is that ideas can be coalition magnets in different policy areas and periods. The strength of Béland & Cox's study is that it provides an understanding of the ideas that influence coalition formation in public policy. Its weaknesses lie in its limited focus on three particular ideas and case studies that do not cover all possible situations. Concerning power relations and social assistance, Béland & Cox's study has similarities and differences. The similarities are that both highlight the importance of non-material factors such as ideas and power in public policy. The significant difference is that this study focuses more on the role of ideas as coalition magnets, while the study on power relations and social assistance emphasizes more on the distribution of power and the implementation of social policies.

Zimmermann P. and Finger M.'s (2005) research analyses power changes in the relationship between local administrations and identified stakeholders as a result of the introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The problem addressed in the study was the lack of conceptualization of the impact of ICTs on power relations between the public sector and stakeholders. The theory used was stakeholder theory. The main method used was a systematic analysis of situations where ICTs played a role in the power relationship between the local administration and identified stakeholders. The main finding is that the introduction of ICTs can shift the balance of power in the stakeholder model, with possible increases or decreases in the relative power positions of the actors. The strength of this study is its systematic approach to analyzing power changes due to the introduction of ICTs. The weakness is the lack of adequate research on the impact of ICTs on power relations between organizations. In the research on power relations and social assistance, Zimmermann and Finger's study has similarities and differences. The similarities are that both focus on analyzing changes in power relations between different entities. The difference is that Zimmermann P. and Finger M.'s study focuses more on the impact of the introduction of ICTs on power relations, while the study on power relations addresses power relations between the public sector and stakeholders.

Moreover, Himmelman (2001) suggests that power transformation within coalitions can affect their ability to achieve goals, with a shift from a collaborative repair approach to collaborative empowerment. Himmelman's study addresses the issue of constraints faced by coalitions in expanding efforts to make changes in power relations that determine how communities can act on priorities and gain access to necessary resources. Theories used include the concepts of collaboration, power, and democracy in the context of coalitions. The main methods used in the study were conceptual and descriptive analyses based on observations of the coalition's evolution from an institutional improvement approach to community empowerment. The results of the study show that power transformation in coalitions requires democratic governance principles and practices, leadership development from the grassroots, and sustainable community organizing. The strength of this study is that it provides an in-depth understanding of the role of coalitions in power transformation and the importance of community empowerment in achieving common goals. The weakness lies in the limited focus on specific examples and the lack of generalization to broader situations. Concerning the study of power relations and social assistance, Himmelman's study has similarities and differences. The similarities lie in the focus on the role of power in interactions between various parties and the importance of power transformation to achieve more sustainable outcomes. The difference lies in the emphasis on the

role of coalitions and collaboration in this study, while studies on social assistance may highlight more direct interventions and government programs.

Still related to power, in 1996, Oswick and Grant (1996) conducted research on personal management in the public sector. The main objective of their study was to investigate the changes taking place in personnel management in the public sector, focusing on roles, relationships, and power within organizations. The issue addressed was the impact of these changes on personnel practitioners in the public sector, particularly in terms of the power and influence of individuals within organizations. Oswick and Grant used the theory of individual power developed by French and Raven, later expanded by Bacharach and Lawler. This theory identifies individual sources of power (sources) and bases of power (bases), such as personal power, expert power, opportunity power, and positional power. The main methods used in this study were interviews and secondary data analysis. The researchers conducted formal feedback sessions with participants to discuss their initial findings. The results of the study indicate a change in roles from specialists to generalists in public sector personnel departments, a change in relationships from professional responsibility to line management, and a change in perceptions from positive to negative associations towards personnel management. The weaknesses of this study lie in the limited generalizability of the findings due to the focus on the public sector in the UK, as well as the limitations in exploring wider perspectives from various stakeholders. Concerning power relations, the similarity between Oswick and Grant's study and studies on power relations and social assistance is that both highlight the importance of the relationship between power, roles, and relationships in the context of human resource management. However, the difference lies in the specific focus on the public sector and its impact on employee relations.

Referring to some of the explanations above, power is an important variable in any public policy-making. In this context, political power can transcend the state. Rose and Miller's study highlights the shift from the traditional welfare state to the neoliberal model of governance, which emphasizes the active citizenship of individuals in pursuit of personal fulfillment over public welfare. This research explores the role of theory and explanation in shaping power relations and governance practices, illustrating how economic and sociological theories influence governance strategies. Its strengths include critical analyses of power dynamics and paradigms of governance paradigms, which offer insights into the reconfiguration of political subjectivity under neoliberalism. Its weakness is the lack of empirical data or case studies to support the theoretical arguments presented in this research. The study of power relations and social assistance, both studies investigate the dynamics of power relations, albeit focusing on different aspects - one study on neoliberal governance and another on social assistance.

Power does not develop only materially. Power originates from certain ideas and concepts. The results of Carstensen & Schmidt's (2016) study show this. It mentions ideational power in discursive institutionalism, focusing on the capacity of actors to influence normative and cognitive beliefs through ideational elements. The study discusses three types of ideational power, namely power through ideas, power over ideas, and power in ideas, highlighting how actors can persuade, impose, or establish hegemony through ideational elements. Ideational power is defined as the capacity to influence the beliefs of others through ideational elements, which include persuasion, coercion, and the establishment of hegemony. This study identifies power through ideas, power over ideas, and power in ideas as the main manifestations of

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ideational power, illustrating how actors can shape the policy-making process through ideational elements.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

In this article, the literature study would typically focus on analyzing existing theoretical frameworks, key concepts, and previous studies related to power dynamics in the context of public policy. This approach involves reviewing scholarly sources such as books, journal articles, and policy reports that explore how power influences policy-making, the role of various stakeholders, and the mechanisms through which power is exerted or challenged in policy contexts. The literature study allows the authors to build a conceptual foundation and situate their research within existing knowledge, providing insight into how power shapes policy agendas, decisions, and outcomes.

The source of data in this literature study includes documents—which may consist of official government publications, policy briefs, legislative documents, and historical records—and secondary data, such as statistical reports, survey findings, and case studies collected and published by research institutions, government agencies, or other academics. This data helps contextualize power relations in public policy within documented cases, while secondary data adds empirical backing from prior research findings and analyses. Together, these sources offer a comprehensive view of power's influence across policy decisions.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The Praxis of Power in the Public Policy

The various scientific studies above provide several points related to the dimensions of power in public policy. Based on the current identification, there are seven dimensions of power related to public policy, including leadership dimensions, collaborative dimensions, dimensions of the distribution of power in organizational management, dimensions of power itself, dimensions of public organizations, dimensions of state reputation and legitimacy, and dimensions of public management and services.

Regarding the leadership dimension (Zhang, Waldman, Han, and Li, 2015), public policy is closely related to one's leadership praxis in organizations. It is stated that the vision of an organization, especially a public organization, is manifested in the vision of the organization's leader. The success of an organization is certainly due to many things. One of them is the vision and leadership praxis of the organization's leader. In a person's leadership of an organization, every policy he makes from an individual position always has public implications. Therefore, the policies made must be free from the leader's self-interest. As in many cases, the practice of power use is extremely hard to discard in one's leadership dimension. If this is not under control, it will have an impact on reducing the quality of organizations and will keep them away from the spirit of accountability as intended.

Meanwhile, one of the criticisms conveyed by many experts on public policy decision-making in recent decades relates to the involvement of individual interests in public policy (Meutia, 2013; Abdal, 2015; Pramono, 2020; Self, 2021). One possible reason for the emergence of this phenomenon is that public policies are closed to many stakeholder inputs and involvement. Therefore, many parties have suggested changes in the pattern of formulation and implementation of public policies, such as public policies on a collaborative base. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2015) suggest this approach to close the opportunity for vested interests to interfere in public policy. Earlier, Vigoda (2002) researched to strengthen the public administration system's orientation towards collaboration as a backup to more traditional responsiveness, to increase the diligence of public servants in the governance process. In Vigona's analysis, collaborative work involving multiple elements in all policy implementation is undoubtedly beneficial. However, as noted by power relations researchers, the success of policy implementation is partly determined by the least intervention of power in the public policy forms and practices.

The two dimensions of power discussed above, in their practice in public organizations, are also influenced by the distribution of power in organizational management. Dimensions of distribution of power in organizational management as described by (Addicott and Ferlie (2007) relate to each actor who plays a role in formulating and implementing policies. In state practice, the elements of public policy formulators and public policy implementers certainly cannot be separated from various kinds of interests. Suppressing individual interests from influencing public policy is the highest peak of value praxis in public policy. The dimension of the distribution of power and the dimension of public organization (Laurence E. Lynn, ed., 1999) are two important elements of the relationship between power and public policy. This is because, in public organizations, the determination of power is the stake of a leader in the leadership perspective as discussed above.

In line with this discussion, the dimensional power (Kapilima, 2020) in itself continues to metamorphose into various forms and models. It requires a bridge between the state and society. Haruna (2001) states that in policy implementation, it is urgent to build a bridge between the state as a policymaker and the community as a public policy implementer. In addition to controlling the work of the two elements, the bridge is expected to be able to achieve efficient, effective, transparent, and accountable public policies.

What is at stake here is the reputation and legitimacy of the state (Carpenter and Krause, 2011). By mentioning the reputation and legitimacy of the state, it is clear that the power dimension is eliminated in the public policy-making process. Hence, public policies that are not accompanied and influenced by the dimension of power, especially personal ones, can make these policies have a positive impact on society. Referring to the historical roots of the development of public administration science, the development of the public administration paradigm from the first to the current democratic paradigm cannot be separated from the dynamics of power in it (Diefenbach, 2009). The reputative and legitimatized dimensions of

power are closely related to the dimensions of public management and services (Osborne, S. P., Radnor, Z., & Strokosch, K., 2016). The relationship between these two dimensions needs to be emphasized because until now, many public policy makers and formulators still find it difficult to distinguish between private and public areas when formulating public policies. In many cases, the determination of power tends to make public policymakers a very authoritative figure.

As described by Cameron (2010), the process of formulating and implementing public policies is characterized by increasing the practice of politicization in public services. The practice of politicization in certain phases has an impact on the decline in service provision. In the context of public policy formulation at the local level, the study of Zimmermann and Finger (2005) needs to be noted. It is also highlighted that to minimize the determination of power interests, public policies need to be synergized with information and communication technologies (ICTs). The use of information and communication technology is expected to be able to remove public policymakers from various kinds of power traps.

4. CONCLUSION

The scientific study above provides several points related to the dimensions of power in public policy. Leadership in public policy plays an important role in determining policy direction, vision, and priorities. Effective leaders can mobilize resources and build support for policy implementation. This includes initiating collaboration between actors in public policy. Collaboration between various actors, including the government, private sector, and civil society, is crucial in the public policy process. This dimension emphasizes the importance of cooperation and partnership in achieving policy objectives.

In the context of public policy, power is not just concentrated in certain individuals or groups, but is spread throughout the management of the organization. Power in public policy includes the ability to influence and direct the policy process. This includes formal authority as well as informal influence owned by certain actors.

On its part, public organizations have structures and mechanisms that support policy implementation. This dimension includes aspects such as bureaucracy, governance, and institutional capacity. Administrative and organizational management including public policy can demonstrate the reputation and legitimacy of the state. State reputation and legitimacy are important factors in public policy. A state with a good reputation and strong legitimacy is better able to gain public support and implement policies effectively. Effective public management and quality service delivery are key to public policy implementation. This dimension emphasizes the importance of efficiency, transparency, and accountability in public management.

These seven dimensions of power demonstrate the complexity and dynamics involved in public policy. A deep understanding of each dimension can help in designing and implementing policies that are more effective and responsive to the needs of society. The dimensions of power can function positively if they are designed transparently according to modern public policy mechanisms. Conversely, the same power can be disastrous when all other authorities are denied

the right to formulate, implement, and evaluate public policies. At that point, power can become a demon that degrades the noble value of the public; turning publicness into non-publicness.

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