

## ARTICLES

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# DEFINING OVERLAPS IN RELATION TO PUBLIC POLICY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

### Abstract

The aim of the paper is to analyse overlaps in relation to public policy and public administration. Since the subject of the field in question requires a great deal of knowledge and data, it is required to avoid inaccuracies and to preserve its scientific space. We have identified several overlaps in this research study. The first key one is the public interest. The second one is characterized by the actors themselves, i.e. by the public policy and the public administration. The other overlap is linked to the structuring of public policies. The number of overlaps between public policy and public administration is not exhausted this way. Based on the new theoretical and practical knowledge of public policy and public administration, we assume that the future times will point to a number of another overlaps.

**Key words:** public policy, public administration, intersections, public interest, actors.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Public policy plays a major role in a society. It goes beyond the specific knowledge of individual disciplines by seeking a holistic understanding of problems in contemporary society and seeking ways to effectively address them in the common life of the state, region, community, or civil society. Public policy links the needs of the society and seeks system solutions. Clarifying individual public policy issues and confirming its identity, as well as the concrete implementation of public policy, helps on one hand to develop this scientific discipline and, on the other hand, contributes to the systematic

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development of a pragmatic dimension of public policy.

Our knowledge of public policy enriched with a number of theoretical and practical knowledge can remain useless if we fail to link it to the realities of a particular country or a political space. We consider public policy to be a dynamic discipline in terms of place, time and space. This space is usually filled with the functioning of public administration, which also represents its practical level. It is a system of administrative bodies, among which relations and ties are created, affecting the everyday life of the inhabitants of a certain precisely defined area.

Besides the practical level, public administration, like public policy, has its theoretical level in the form of independent scientific discipline. However, it is important to emphasize that, despite the fact that there are still doubts or contradictions about its identity, especially in terms of determining its subject, we accept the emergence of public administration as a separate scientific discipline and include it in the social science system.

This discipline, with a set of its methods by the theoretical portfolio, blends with other social science disciplines. The subject of our knowledge will be the overlap of public policy and public administration, without making any difference between the theoretical level and the practical one, since we do not attribute to any significance in this case. The overlaps of public policy and public administration make it possible to identify the problems of contemporary society in order to find the most suitable solutions for their elimination and abolition.

## **2 PUBLIC INTEREST AS AN OVERLAP OF PUBLIC POLICY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

The focus of public policy is the shaping and implementation of policies such as the political process, redistribution of resources and justice in their distribution, the problems of the functioning and linkages of state and local government (Briška et al., 2010), the problems of relations between the centres and regions, shaping and implementation of local policies, as well as analysing the formation and promotion of public interest. Public interest is therefore mainly applied in public service policies and is also an important factor in political decision-making.

Public policy is closely linked to public interests. It is a tool for its identification, its evaluation, and the preference of its choice as a subject of public policy. Public policy chooses methods of addressing and fulfilling public interest.

The definition of public interest is the subject of long-term discussions. There is no definite answer in this regard. There are several specifics when

defining it. refers to an object. It has no timeless validity. What is in one overlap, time period, in a certain culture, public interest, does not necessarily need to be in another. The public interest is specifically perceived and its interpretation can also be perceived differently by a civil society. We will try to define it in such a way as to avoid unilateralism and simplification, and at the same time we need to find a definition that meets the criteria of a science. We assume that the public interest (Briška et al., 2010) is:

1) the interest of a greater number of citizens - the importance of the public interest translated into the arithmetic language means the pressure of a greater number of citizens (more than any population), the sum of the number and the general whole, with the majority believing that it has the right to dictate its will to a minority.

Some authors state that the public interest is:

2) the sum of individual interests - the specificity of this approach depends, first, on the discovery of the difference between personal interests and what is in its interest. It is not about what most individuals are interested in, but what supports each member of the public. On the other hand, this view ignores the fact that society is not only the sum of persons, but also consists of relationships between them and the different subsystems, suggesting that the characteristics of society cannot be reduced to individual characteristics. The expression is lacking a human-centred assumption, and it in no way minimizes the importance of values that depend on a group or company membership. Human interests can be, and they are, usually lower than individual interests. Therefore, in defining the public interest, we focus on the „man“ rather than the “individual”. Yet we want to emphasize the interests of the whole person, including all the social aspects (as a human being). Quite often we see that the public interest is considered to be:

3) common interest - the fundamental mistake of this interpretation seems to be to justify any interest that is common to a community, or a group but may not be of public interest. It may be a partial interest that may be considered public or enforced as such. The third idea identifies a common and public interest without specifying differences between them. Although we do not seek an academic definition, we also find in the literature an interpretation of the public interest being:

4) over-individual interest, with an emphasis on evaluation and giving the impression that the public interest is beyond the reach of the individual and at the same time - that it is something one cannot understand because it is a special kind of public good that consists of something other than a summary of interests which form a society, and that is beyond the reach of an individual.

Finally, the form of public interest is defined as 5) the expression of plurality of collectivized interests, i.e. a public interest designation characterized by:

- first feature - public interest concerns securing and distributing public welfare, which are individually non-assignable, or rather they use their public as a whole or its individual parts (the common object of public interest is public welfare - public welfare, but also other non-economic values, e.g. ideological, cultural, etc.) Thus, the term public interest expresses:

- needs that relate to larger social categories (groups or entire societies)
- the values that society does and aspires to defence against threats to these needs and values

- second feature - public interest is the aspiration of the society and subjects (individuals, groups, organizations, political parties, movements, government, parliament ...) to the values and needs of the society that are considered preferential. These subjective presentations of public interests are largely objectified in a pluralistic system based on negotiation, compromise and consensus. Nevertheless, in the case of democracy or authoritarian systems, inadequate expression of public interest may occur, even interests of individuals or groups may be interpreted as public interests (e.g. by populist policies) in some cases.

- third feature - public interest is regularly composed of these segments: economic, political, cultural, ecological, social, etc. Only in the most general documents, e.g. in the Constitution, in law, in political party programs it is formulated as a whole. It is of a great importance for practical public policy. Public interest segments are subject to special parts of public policy. Thus, the public interest is broken down into a large number of programs. Therefore, particular fine defining of the interpretation of the public interest requires a high degree of coordination, what is a function of public policy.

- fourth feature - public interest is structured in terms of time, place, object and source of origins. There are the following public interests:

- a) short-term

- b) long-term (they are based on the values the society seeks to achieve, they are the result of a deeper analysis)

- c) medium-term = mixed (they are the result of overlap of both)

However, it may happen that the short-term public interest to tackle a social problem becomes chronic, that is to say long-term, because it has not been dealt with in time and is of a strategic interest.

- fifth feature - public interest is the subject of public policy only if it is publicly recognized, i.e. that they get the right preference in public policy. There is a complicated relationship between what is publicly recognized and what remains a latent public interest. Therefore, the analysis of public interests and the conditions for their implementation is of particular importance (sometimes they are not rejected as such, but their solution is delayed due to a lack of resources).
- sixth feature - public interests are not only a matter of public institutions but also of individuals. If citizens are social actors and as such they can express public interests. The categorization of public interests by the areas concerned is also a criterion for dividing individual subordinate types of public policies. While public policy in general determines the overall concept of state, government, parliament, in addressing public affairs, the different types of public policy address a specific area and public interests in them (e.g. school policy, social policy, etc.). These categories are strictly separated.

If a citizen respects the public interest, they have the right and duty to control how the public interest is exercised. Public interest has its source of existence in the individual (private) interest, but it is linked to the provision of the values and needs of the wider whole. Public interest is the social interest of citizens stemming from the private interest of citizens in creating an institution, a set of rules, standards, and state laws that create democratic conditions for the development of a citizen as the bearer of individual interests. Public interest can be realized while maintaining the principles of democracy. In a democratic society, the contradictions between public and private interests are gradually blurred, it is not desirable for democracy that public interests is in the long run contrary to private interests (Dahl, 1995). Public interests must be progressively improved, which means better, more satisfying and pursuing private interest. What matters to the public interest and how it will evolve depends on the civil society and its dynamics. The constant evolution of society and the development of the needs of the people who make up society always bring the originality and uniqueness of the public interest. We consider the public interest as a dynamic, still current phenomenon that addresses the needs of the company with regard to systematicity. Public interest affects not only the individual but also the community or the society as a whole.

In a way, public administration is a set of activities where public affairs are managed in the so-called public interest or rather these matters are a public matter and need to be carried out in the public interest. Public administration means the administration of public affairs as an expression of executive power in the state (Briška et al., 2010). Public administration is thus

a manifestation of the existence of a public interest that is rooted in the private interest and in private administration (Adamcová, 2018; Klimovský, 2008). Public administration is very closely linked to the public sector, because the public sector is where public administration operates. The public sector is limited by the scope of public administration (Pomahač – Vidláková, 2002). The administration can be characterized as a purposeful social activity that aims to achieve a goal with a public or private character (Káňa, 2014). The distinguishing feature of public administration from private administration is the public interest, which is the determinant of the formation of legal norms and rules of cooperation. From this point of view we assume that public administration is a set of institutions and organizational structures that create and implement laws, standards, cooperation, and distinguish state law from private administration. Laws are then used, through public administration, by the citizens and private administration to realize their private interests. A citizen, alone or through their elected representatives, may exercise their preferences. By this procedure, it decides to what extent and quality it gives the public interest over the exercise of part or all of its private interest.

The possibilities for implementing the public interest depend on several specificities. Public interest is the starting point and its implementation is a criterion for the effectiveness of public policy and the objectivity of public administration. It is also a benchmark for defining public policy and public administration activities. Public interest becomes intrusion and thus brings together public policy and public administration. The public interest reflects the possibilities of public policy and public administration. Public administration carries out activities in accordance with the implementation of public policy on the initiative of the public interest.

Public policy is founded and legitimized by the existence of public interests, not only by the creation and expansion but also by recognition. Public needs and interests are promoted by legitimate public authority as the authority elected in democratic elections (Staroňová – Beblavá, 2006). The basic means of recognizing, legitimizing and expressing support are in a democracy election in which citizens give their votes to political parties or persons who submit programs containing preferences for certain public interests, concepts of reinsurance, methods of dealing with them, and related practices. Through elections, citizens are able to perceive preferences of public interests by political parties or individuals. Citizens have the opportunity to decide on the choice and preferences of public interests, which may change at certain intervals. Along with delegating power, elected parties and candidates at each level of government are mandated to direct the society to meet these interests. Dynamic transformations and complex society conditions require permanent recognition and verification of public interests.

### 3 ACTORS AS AN OVERLAP OF PUBLIC POLICY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The overlap between public policy and public administration is closely linked in several respects. Possibilities of implementing public administration in accordance with public policy depend on specific actors.

According to Staroňová - Beblavá (2006) in democratic governance, it is important to constantly communicate and activate other actors, ranging from the public through interest and non-governmental organizations to the business sector, because their views, attitudes, interests and active participation play an important role in a successful public policy implementation. Public policy is transformed from political decisions into highly professional work of analysts, the activities of experts in many departments in public administration, especially the state administration. It means that public policy contains a political and professional aspect. On the one hand, public policy is descriptively analytical and on the other hand it focuses on policy advice and practical use (Veselý - Nekola, 2007). In this context, there was a problem of professional preparation of public policy and public administration employees and at the same time the problem of how to implement public policy (individual policies) through individual structures of public administration.

On the one hand, public policy makes it possible to name the relevant area of activity of the public sector, on the other hand, it counts with specific measures (Staroňová - Beblavá, 2006). Therefore, public policy needs public administration for its implementation. It is mostly situated in the state administration, but also in non-state self-governing institutions (local and regional) and professional, interest or non-profit organizations. The public administration is the management of the public-law obligations, i.e. state and other public corporations (Pomahač - Vidláková, 2002; Pomahač, 2011). From the point of view of the examined issue, they can be described as public policy actors. Public policy actors are present when considering any questions/problems or issues in public policy. Key roles in defining individual and social genesis of public interests as well as in defining public policy and public administration. Even one of many public policy definitions defines its role as researching the sum of activities of public policy actors within a particular entity (state, self-government, or public-law corporation) that directly or indirectly affect the life of a certain subject and citizens. Actors are definitely another overlap between public policy and public administration. Actors influence public policy and public administration. In the interest of good performance in governance, persons working in public administration should also have the highest possible level of skills and training (Kováčik, 2017). Actors are involved in the development of public policy and public administration. It is

political parties which have the greatest role in the formulation, promotion and realization of the public interest. If they win elections, they place their leaders and members in a decisive position in public administration. Public policy actors (Klus, 2008) are specific in their approach and impact, both to the position in which they exist and the way in which they fulfill their role. Actors of public interest are not all citizens, nor state or social interest organizations, or initiative groups or movements, but they can become so if:

- they participate in their assurance and identification,
- or formulate or publicly share their focus and content (public interest presentation)
- whether they participate in decision-making on their recognition in public-political institutions such as government, parliament, regional or municipal councils, etc.
- or participate in their application in public-political life (realization of public interests).

Public interest actors are distinguished from users of public interest. While the actor, as this term suggests, is an active element in the creation and implementation of public interests, the user is involved in their use, saturating their values and needs. This, of course, does not preclude users of the public interest from becoming actors. User participation contributes substantially to its refinement and efficient use. Therefore, it is appropriate that actors formulating and promoting public interests, as well as those who decide their priority solution and the extent of recognition as official state programs, self-governments or non-governmental institutions, enter into social dialogue with existing or potential public interest users. The main actors come into play about the public interest according to their political and social positions, competences, possibilities and also according to their ability to recognize and resolve them.

Their share depends on a set of these assumptions and efforts. Although some of them have a decisive potential from their positions, e.g. parliament or government do not need to use it and other actors will then play this role (or, by their pressure, some actors force public interests to be achieved). As a rule, public interest actors have different options for influencing their genesis, promotion and realization. In the categorization of actors, we point out that it may be public administration as a whole or its individual components. The process itself, from the creation to the realization of the public interest, needs to be imagined as a lively stream of interaction that takes place simultaneously among all actors who have taken part in the process.

In addition to these actors, societal genesis of public interest is influenced



by general and specific factors of society. They are used as a determining or inspiring or restrictive environment, allowing both the hindrance and the will of the actors to promote and realize certain public interests. In many cases, it affects its specificities in terms of expression or implementation. Here are some of the main general and specific factors affecting public interests:

- The geopolitical situation of the state. It is e.g. the situation where the security of the country is threatened and the defense spending is increasing, thereby draining the resources needed to secure other socially important public interests.
- Economic situation and economic development of the country. A low degree of economic development does not allow what is possible in economically developed countries.
- Historical traditions and cultural patterns of behaviour. This factor has a significant impact on what is perceived as a public interest.
- Political regime of state and society.
- Cultural level and quality of life in the country, including living standards. This factor has a strong influence on the nature of the interests that are referred to as public.
- General functional needs of the existence of society and the state. This factor is often forgotten. However, it is contained in the universal values of human society if it is to be maintained and developed as human and cultural. We will find them also in the universal functions of the state, which they have to fulfill in order for them to be in need and submit to it. It affects the public interest related to such a long-term development of society (e.g. family support, border protection, relation to minorities, etc.)

Specific factors appear in different countries and societies, usually based on local cultural and natural conditions. They can significantly modify the selection, but also the presentation and realization of public interests. Public interests and public interest priorities differ from society. The common feature of public interests is hidden in the nature and interpretation of public interests by various public policy actors. The realization of public interests by public policy actors consists in achieving satisfaction and fulfilling the expectations of a civil society.

#### **4 STRUCTURING PUBLIC POLICIES AS AN AREA OF OVERLAPPING WITH PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

The last overlapping between public policy and public administration is determined by the structure of public policies. When looking for ways to

make public administration more effective, it is not possible to circumvent concepts corresponding to different activities and spheres within public policy (Adamcová, 2018). Most generally, this structure can be taken from the vertical and horizontal points of view. The vertical aspect can be characterized as a public administration system. The issue of horizontal sectoral breakdown of public policy is rather a complex problem in the modern conception of the state, which is characterized by the need to know the local specificities of the given area, region or state. One of the key policies within the horizontal structure is public administration policy. The vertical line oscillates around these control lines:

*Vertical state administration line:*

This line is presented and implemented through the state administration. Its subject is the central executive exercised by the government and its authorities. This applies when it is based on laws and local governments and takes place in two areas: the regulation of executive activities by way of statutory standards and the delegation of state power to local self-government (delegated powers). Public policy includes decision-making on distribution and redistribution or allocation of resources (e.g. resource allocation between regions), is characterized by a particular set of measures and the content of the activities of individual components of public administration. At the same time, the essence of public policy can also be understood as managing global-sectoral overlaps, which are realized through inter-organizational relations (public administration is also one of the sectors). The public policy then manifests itself as a mediator of public interests and brings together different interests between industries or sectors and a global society. Thus, global sectoral relations are at the heart of public policy, which determines the development of public policy as a whole in its perspective as well as its individual policies.

*Vertical self-government line:*

The direction of management of this line can be described as a direction from the legislative centre (parliament) through regional self-governing bodies to the lowest level of self-government, i.e. local self-government. The main institution of this type of governance is the Constitution and laws adopted by the Parliament. Most of the legislative conditions are based on this, the determination of competence and the status of individual levels of self-government. Representatives of individual municipalities are very often involved in the preparation, approval and implementation of individual proposals (there is even room for lobbying by local governments).

*Mixed vertical-horizontal line:*

This line relates to self-management of municipalities, towns or regions and to a special component that is made up of an administrative-administrative apparatus. In addition to elected representatives and their institutions, there is a unification of representative power and executive power, while the control function of elected representatives is sovereign. Local government contacts with civil society, citizens, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and, of course, political parties are an important part of the horizontal-vertical relationship in local politics. Local government in this line is being implemented as a combination of representative and direct democracy. The extent to which this can be done distinguishes itself from vertical lines and can also affect the character of the democratic governance line.

In the field of interest of public policy and public administration there are also such topics as creation and implementation of public administration policy, redistribution of resources, problems of functioning and links of state administration, self-government and public corporations, problems of central and local relations, formation and implementation of regional and communal policies.

**CONCLUSION**

The implementation of public policy is a dynamic and multilayered process, which is joined by many actors with many interactions (Potůček, 2005). Public policy making is an interactive process based on the expression of a general goal or a desired state. Most often, it is presented in the form of a governmental program of activities in individual sectors of society or in a particular geographical environment. An integral part of these considerations is the twofold perception of public policy as governmental and wider than state activity, which is linked to the specific activities of the state which exercises public authority in a particular territory. The exercise of public authority constitutes the creation of legislation, the organization and construction of the state as well as the acquisition and redistribution of funds, which is why the state becomes the most important public policy actor. As already indicated in public policy making, the public sector interacts with the civil and private sectors. The involvement of interest groups, public administrations and businesses, their interest in access to public policy making is a natural and integral part of democracy. The interconnection of the public, private and civil sectors is also important for the point of view of the development of society. The public, private and civic sectors shall be in balance and cooperate

in addressing public policies. Interests, exchanges of views and experiences are involved in this process which is beneficial for public policy and public administration. Public policy and public administration influence society and define its future direction.

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