The Political Instrumentalisation of Policy Analysis

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Summary

In the early stage, Lasswellian policy analysis was overtly value-oriented, stressing that the goal of policy analysis and policy analysts should be to improve the state of human wellbeing, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, the respect for human dignity and individual choice. However, policy analysis has since evolved in many directions. One of them is the instrumentalisation of policy analysis in its broader transnational social and political contexts. This paper will focus on the role of policy analysis in the latest wave of democratisation and the introduction of capitalist economics to post-communist countries, especially those involved in the European integration process.

Keywords: policy analysis, policy analysis and democracy, policy analysis in post-communist countries, contextualisation of policy analysis, instrumentalisation of policy analysis, globalization and policy analysis

Introduction

This year (2011), the academic community in the area of policy analysis celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of the publishing of the book *The Policy Sciences*, edited by Lasswell and Lerner, which is widely regarded as the initial text that established this academic field. In Lasswell’s (1951) pioneering chapter, policy analysis was normatively determined. It was – inter alia – defined as an academic discipline with a duty not only to respect, but also to enhance liberal values, democracy, human well-being and human dignity. In this sense, policy analysis is a child of the post-WWII period, being based on values of liberal democracy as developed in the West.

Policy analysis has evolved in many ways since its establishment. Embedded in various historical and social contexts, it has developed many roles. However, among the questions that persist in the development of policy analysis, there re-

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mains the question of the relationship between policy analysis and democracy. Previously, policy scientists (e.g. Gregg, ed., 1976; Wildavsky, 1985; Amy, 1987; Pal, 1987; Majone, 1989; Ingram and Smith, eds, 1993; Hoppe, 1999) emphasised the various aspects of the relationship between policy analysis and politics. Within this framework, they primarily focused on politics within national borders. More recently, policy analysts have acknowledged the need for policy analysis to adapt to the processes of globalisation while keeping in mind a post-modern re-definition of politics and democracy (see e.g. Parsons, 1995; Hajer, 2003; Fischer, 2003; Pal, 2006). However, the role of policy analysis in the promotion of liberal democracy and the dissemination of liberal capitalism during the last twenty years has been less debated. This paper aims to contribute to filling this gap. We will examine the influence of two recent types of major processes in the development of policy analysis – the latest wave of globalisation¹ and the latest (third) wave of democratisation.² Within this framework, relationships between knowledge, context and participation will be studied in the case of a cluster of European post-communist countries. This paper may therefore be viewed as a contribution to the contextual orientation of policy analysis.³

The main thesis of the paper is that the cluster of post-communist countries involved in the latest wave of democratisation and European integration (these are viewed as part of globalisation processes) have predominantly been managed by Western countries and Western-dominated intergovernmental organisations. In this context, policy analysis has primarily served as a tool for the external (top-down) monitoring and control of the performance and transformation of post-communist countries. In this process, policy analysis has lacked both contextualisation and participatory qualities. In fact, it has predominantly performed a technocratic role, indirectly serving the power of intergovernmental organisations, which are focused on the dissemination of the preferred Western model of capitalism and democracy.

In this paper we will first present a brief overview of the key debates on the relationship between knowledge (technocratic, rational face of policy analysis), poli-

¹ Globalisation is understood as an ever broader, ever deeper and faster mutual interlinking of states and societies. See more e.g. in Shaw, 2000; Held, 2000; Holden, ed., 2000, and Anderson, ed., 2002. For more on political globalisation, see e.g. Ougaard and Higgott, eds, 2002.

² The third wave of democratisation is considered to start with the military coup in Portugal in 1974. Democratisation then spilled over into Greece and Spain. It continued with a new wave of democratisation in many Latin American countries whose military regimes disintegrated in various ways, and it seems to end with the Eastern Europe “regional domino effect” at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. In this paper we will focus on the European post-communist countries.

³ For more on the contextual orientation of policy analysis, see Torgerson, 1985, 1986; Lasswell (e.g.), 1965, 1966, 1970.
tics and participation while taking into account the context of policy analysis. In the following section, we will look at amending the modern definition of policy analysis in the postmodern context of the latest wave of globalisation (here European integration processes are seen as a segment of the broader process of globalisation). This will be followed by presentations of the particularities in the application of policy analysis in the international top-down dissemination of liberal capitalism and liberal democracy (also within the framework of New Public Management) to post-communist countries; this will then be followed by the conclusion.

**Contextuality and the Various Roles of Policy Analysis**

Modern policy analysis (as developed in the framework of modern politics and the modern state) has indeed critically examined its own role in the broader social context. In the debates that emerged early after the academic establishment of policy analysis, relationships among its three main roles/faces were discussed. While knowledge (the rational, technocratic aspect of policy analysis) has been criticised as being too narrow, the stress on the participatory qualities of policy analysis has increasingly been joined by the conscientious development of a sensitivity to the policy analysis context.

It could be said that the early self-reflections of policy analysis included debates about the following three aspects of policy analysis: expert knowledge; the normative/ideological dimensions of policy analysis; and its relationship with other actors in policy processes. In this framework, Torgerson (1986) distinguished three faces of policy analysis. According to Torgerson, the first face is technocratic. It is related to the Enlightenment vision of a rational civilisation. The stress on knowledge taken to the extreme leads towards the dream that politics can be replaced with knowledge. The second face is also embedded in the Enlightenment, but primarily in its utopian prospect of ‘orderly progress of rational civilisation’ (Torgerson, 1987: 37). Within this framework, policy analysis can be abused by political interests. Citing Laurence H. Tribe (1972, 1973), Torgerson (1986: 39) warns: ‘The allegiance to reason suggested by the apparent objectivity turns into an unconscious betrayal: technocratic style and imagery becomes part of political rhetoric; irrational claims and expectations are advanced under the banner of reason’. In this face of policy analysis, politics overwhelms knowledge. The third face of policy analysis may be ‘in the potential for a relationship in which politics and knowledge are no longer deadly antagonists’ (ibid.). In this instance, the technocratic tendency is expected to be overcome not only by a knowledge of society, but also by a knowledge in society – not only by methodological post-positivist direction, but also by its imbedding in a participatory political process that also involves the participation of non-experts who have a stake in a particular policymaking.
Even prior to the last wave of managerialism, and particularly the transferring of business managerial logics into the public sector (New Public Management), Lasswell also warned against marrying the technocratic tendencies of policy analysis with a narrow management focus, which leads toward ‘bureaucratism’ (Lasswell, 1971: 119-120). For Lasswell, ‘bureaucratism’ was (along with the threat of ‘oligarchy’) part of the twin threats to the policy analysis of democracy. In order for policy analysis to be an autonomous activity, two orientations are crucial: contextualisation and participatory orientation.

Contextualisation is not only the development of policy analysis in the policy process, but also the policy analysis of the policy process. This orientation is not only concerned with the broader social impacts of policies. It also involves the continuous grasping of knowledge of a broader framework – ‘total configuration’ (Lasswell, 1965: 19), inter-connecting the details in the policy analysts’ creation of the sense of wholeness (ibid.: 16) and the treatment of the total configuration as a relevant object and the context of analysis. The sensitivity towards the ‘whole’ also implies an awareness of temporality (changing context), which requires a developmental, dynamic focus including the policy analysts’ interest in history. Lasswell (1966: 22) believed that by using the ‘contextual principle’, it is possible to remove ideological blinders.

Participatory orientation has been rather heterogeneous – although it remains under the umbrella of the ‘policy analysis of democracy’. The main focus is on the participation of policy analysis in real-world policy processes and in using techniques involving policy stakeholders in the research process (see e.g. Torgerson, 1985 and 1986; Hoppe, 1999). The latter in fact means that policy stakeholders have a say in searching for optimal policy solutions. Unlike the policy analysis of tyranny (which favours political elites) and unlike impotent policy analysis (which pretends to be value-free and has little to offer in terms of real-life problem-solving), the policy analysis of democracy involves two main streams – liberal and participatory. The liberal stream stressed both rationality and pragmatism. Some authors (e.g. Wildavsky, Diesing) believed that policy analysis needs to be feasible with the predominant constellation of power (e.g. that policy analysis needs to award interests corresponding to their political power). Other authors (e.g. Palumbo and Nachmas) believed that policy analysis should serve power – though taking account of the fact that power is plural! The quality of policy analysis was also perceived (e.g. by Paris and Raynolds) to lie in the ‘cleaning’ of ideologies by their rationalisation – by making the struggle among ideologies more transparent in terms of a struggle among interests. The participatory model counted not only on rationality, but also on democratic participation, consensus and public interest. Some authors (e.g. Pate-man) favoured direct democracy, while others (like Barber) saw policy analysis as a catalyst for democratisation, as a forum of free discourse. Disputes remain about
Lasswell’s orientation, although he spoke in favour of participatory policy analysis. Among the arguments against his participatory orientation is the thesis that his decision seminar was in fact elitist.

The latest wave of globalisation has brought about the need for three re-definitions of policy analysis. Policy analysis has to 1) reflect its changing ‘object of inquiry’; 2) re-define itself in order to be able to theoretically and conceptually grasp the changing (globalising) policy processes; and 3) reflect on its own contextualisation and links with real-world policy processes, taking historical dynamism into account.

Re-defining Policy Analysis in the Context of the Latest Wave of Globalisation

There are two main determinants of the early development of policy analysis. Firstly, policy analysis initially developed in the context of the modern twentieth century state (in Europe it was first of all the nation-state). Its interest in developments in other countries was subordinated to the foreign and defence policy interests of the state elites. Secondly, policy analysis was initially ‘speaking the truth’ to the power of the nation-state. Dunn’s definition of policy analysis (Dunn, 1994: xiii-xiv and 1-2), which was built on Lasswell’s pioneering establishment of the new discipline, stressed that policy analysis is an applied social science discipline which uses multiple methods of inquiry and argument in the process of producing and transforming policy-relevant information for their utilisation in political settings for the purpose of resolving policy problems. Although this method of determining policy analysis seems to favour policy analysis for decision-makers, Dunn did distance himself from such reasoning. In fact he openly questioned: ‘If policy analysis is the production of knowledge for practical purposes, whose purposes are being served?’ (ibid.: 53).

The same question is still relevant, although several political re-configurations have appeared in the context of the latest wave of globalisation. It is true that nation-states continue to be important, and in some aspects increasingly important, actors in coordinating public policies on the transnational (global and regional) policies. However, new actors are intervening and affecting national policies in new ways, as well as impacting on international and supranational (e.g. EU) policymaking. Hajer (2003) described several exemplary cases of these changes. They show that the relationships between non-governmental and state actors have not only become more various, but also that national governments (nation-states) no longer play the exclusive role in policymaking and policy implementation. It is not only the case that international non-governmental organisations can efficiently challenge legally determined national policies and that supranational policies (EU directives) are obligatory for nation-states involved in European integration. Policies in EU member
states may even be pressured to conform to a supranational policy not created in a democratic policymaking process (e.g. by a supranational court). In the (post-modern) circumstances described, a re-definition of policy analysis is also required. Hajer’s (ibid.) new definition of policy analysis responds to the question of how policy analysis should behave in the context of the latest wave of globalisation, while developing its participatory orientation together with its post-positivist methodological orientation. In line with notions of deliberative democracy, Hajer (ibid.: 191) defines deliberative policy analysis as ‘a varied search for understandings of society to facilitate meaningful and legitimate political actions, agreed upon in mutual interaction to improve our collective quality of life’. This definition emphasises the need for employing multiple methods and for taking interactive deliberation as a starting point for policy analysis. According to this understanding, the central commitment of policy analysis is to help extend the ability to discuss policy issues in a meaningful and politically efficacious way. In this manner, policy analysis is expected to help derive ‘what is a meaningful intervention in society’ (ibid.). This conception of policy analysis also considers the question of legitimacy.

The academic re-definition of policy analysis described does not seem to correspond well with real-world practices of policy analysis in an increasingly globalised political context.

Policy Analysis as a Tool in the Dissemination of Liberal Democracy and Liberal Capitalism

One of the characteristics of ever more globalised politics has been the increase in international policy cooperation since the Second World War. The social indicators movement, which began in the USA, is closely associated with this phenomenon and has been spreading. However, this has not been the only mode of policy analysis used in an international context. In fact, policy analysis has been gaining various roles – particularly in the context of the latest wave of democratisation and the world-wide spread of capitalist economics.

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4 EU law as determined by a decision of the European Court of Justice is a case in point. Once the European Court of Justice makes a decision, its ruling becomes obligatory for courts in EU member states.

5 In maximalist terms, policy cooperation is a voluntary act of cooperation where various states are working together towards a common policy goal which can be effectively achieved in practice. However, these kinds of international processes can in practice be seen as continuums. For more on this issue, see Fink-Hafner, ed., 2010.

6 Social indicators amended the previously developed economic indicators and became widely used after the Second World War to measure social conditions and trends within the framework of international organisations. See more in Parsons, 1995: 415-418.
There are at least three types of roles that policy analysis can and does play in these processes: a) an instrument in policy learning; b) external (international) monitoring and control; and c) an intermediate, deliberative role in support of democratic processes. When it comes to deep economic and political transformation (especially during the last twenty years or so), policy analysis has been predominantly used as a tool in international or supranational monitoring and control. Determining the indicators, reporting templates, actual top-down monitoring and control by intergovernmental organisations, as well as (when particular countries are involved in the European integration processes) European Communities/European Union institutions (particularly the European Commission) have become the rule. They have also been closely related to both economic conditionality (the introduction of market economy and the opening of national markets to global markets) and political conditionality (fulfilling the criteria of a liberal kind of democracy as well as the import of business-like approaches and techniques to national public administration).

**Liberal Democracy Promotion and Political Conditionality**

The dissemination of liberal democracy has often been called the ‘promotion of democracy’. This process has occurred from the West to less developed parts of the world. In the process of transition to democracy in post-communist countries in Europe, it has encompassed various programmes of international institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank, as well as the European Union and individual Western countries (e.g. the United States and Germany). They involved both direct support programmes involving some conditionality (programmes granted to governments) and/or indirect democracy support programmes, which in fact helped to build the non-governmental sector in these countries.

The EU has been ‘outsourcing’ reports on a particular country’s progress in fulfilling the EU’s conditions for advancement along the track to European integration. When the European Commission prepares its country reports evaluating the fulfilment of the Copenhagen Criteria and any additional political criteria, it relies on the findings of the most recent reports of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CE), and particularly the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Negative reports from the ICTY concerning a particular country’s failure to cooperate with the court in locating war criminals can be decisive in determining the EU’s policy decisions towards that particular country’s prospects for European integration. In fact, both economic sanctions\(^7\) and political sanctions have been used in case of non-compliance. More

\(^7\) For example, during the 1990s, PHARE aid was provided only to countries which had made progress in their democratic transition. The EU suspended aid to Romania in 1990 after the government violently repressed the post-election demonstrations, to Yugoslavia in 1991 after the
recently, political conditionality has increasingly involved additional particular policy conditionality (Timmins and Jović, 2006; Trauner, 2009a). It has been amended with an additional monitoring period prior to full membership coming into force.8

**The Dissemination of Liberal Capitalism and Economic Conditionality**

The Washington Consensus ideology, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (together with the EBRD and the European Investment Bank) have economically pressured post-communist countries towards liberalisation of their economies and reduction of the state’s involvement in protecting the domestic economy from the effects of internationalisation.

The economic conditions for joining the European integration process have also functioned as a mechanism for the dissemination of liberal-style capitalism. The EU has expected privatisation, a functioning market economy, the opening of national economies to foreign capital, while at the same time it has insisted on postponing the opening of Western labour markets for the workers of new countries. Monitoring and control has been increasingly amended by sanctions against non-compliance. In these processes the European Commission has consulted the evaluations and analyses of the World Bank, the IMF, and the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations.

The more a particular country has been economically and financially troubled, the more it has followed foreign advice quite radically (Mandel, 2005; Bohle and Greskowits, 2007; Martin, 2008; Schimmelfennig, 2009). Moreover, the more a particular country has been economically and financially troubled, the more considerable influence external factors have had on both the domestic economic reforms and the relationships between the domestic political institutions. In fact, the executive branch, being directly pressured by external factors, has tended to gain power at the expense of both the legislative branch and consultation with interest groups – particularly social partners (Bohle and Greskowits, 2007; Fink-Hafner, 2011).

In addition, countries that are increasingly involved in the European integration processes have been monitored, advised and pressured to adopt both domestic

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8 The Accession Treaties with Bulgaria and Romania (2005) included the safeguard clauses, according to which, the Commission gains the right to invoke safeguard measures for up to three years after the accession if serious shortcomings are observed in three areas of the acquis: the economy; the internal market; and justice and home affairs. The activation of the safeguard measures may result in the suspension of EU funds or in export food bans (Trauner, 2009b). Similar measures are expected to be incorporated into the process of Croatia’s EU integration.
economic and social reforms. The preconditions for EU membership involve EU-promoted privatisation and economic rules, which go beyond the scope of the *acquis communautaire* proper (Grabbe, 2003). The preconditions in fact created efficient pressure for a form of neoliberalism in the East. However, the EU’s implanting of an international and transnational dimension of the democratic capitalist model into the domestic politics of the accession states was filtered by domestic factors. Bohle and Greskowits (2007) distinguish three types of capitalism in Central East European societies, varying in the scope of protective state involvement in the process of linking the national economy to the world economy: a neoliberal type in the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania); an embedded neoliberal type in the Visegrád countries (the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary and Poland); and a neo-corporatist type in Slovenia. This is why Slovenia had been able to maintain a rather balanced and socially inclusive development (Bohle and Greskowits, 2007; Stanojević and Krašovec, 2011) at least until the most recent global economic and financial crises.

The analysis of the EU’s policy toward its neighbourhood in fact shows that the promotion of democracy is not ranked as high as its economic and security interests (see e.g. Fink-Hafner and Lajh, 2011). While the EU’s enlargement policy not only promotes liberalisation and privatisation but also democracy, its more recent policy – the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which was introduced by the EU during the 2004 enlargement – primarily promotes the EU’s economic interest of liberalisation in the ENP countries (Schimmelfennig, 2009). In the former Yugoslav region, security interests seem to prevail cyclically – depending on the situation in a particular country in the region.

**New Public Management**

The dilemmas and problems of governance in the newly emerging democracies interfered with some dilemmas and problems of governance in developed Western countries. New Public Management (NPM) first developed in the West in circumstances of increasingly constrained public finances. In fact, it brought about a transfer of managerialism from private to public sector. For policy analysis, this shift in practice meant focusing on the public sector economy and its efficiency and effectiveness in particular. It can be said that NPM is primarily a project supporting the adaptation

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9 Candidate states were also evaluated, inter alia, according to their fulfilment of political criteria (Copenhagen Criteria).

10 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) introduced by the EU during the 2004 enlargement has been targeting neighbouring countries which are not regarded as EU candidate states in the foreseeable future. These include Moldova, but not Russia, which insists on a special separate track of cooperation with the EU.
of public administration to some business-like principles based on economic thinking (particularistic, more or less narrow target oriented, rationalistic cost-efficiency oriented). NPM-compatible policy analysis is focused on particular narrow policy fields and indicators, their monitoring and control. The reporting of post-communist countries seems to be a mode of ‘passive’ policy analysis. In fact, as a rule, it occurs essentially as a response to top-down requests for policy-relevant information, it does not seem to be used for domestic monitoring, evaluation and policymaking, and it does not take into account the context of democratic deliberation.\footnote{For more on the development of policy analysis in post-communist countries, see e.g. Kustec Lipicer, 2008, 2010.}

The supranational imposition of NPM has contributed to the policy analysis practice of taking a rather narrow managerial focus whilst losing sight of the big picture. In practice, dissemination of NPM from the West to the East\footnote{The dissemination took place first of all via the SIGMA programme, which was launched by the OECD in conjunction with the European Commission.} has had two implications for the democratisation process. First, it effectively developed as a form of top-down monitoring and control of management and of national governments, as well as a tool for bringing the pressures of intergovernmental organisations to bear on the national executives of post-communist countries in the process of privatisation and the shaping of national characteristics of capitalism. Second, since NPM has focused on decentralisation and the establishment of special agencies, it has negatively impacted on the modernisation of public administration in post-communist countries. In fact, it made it more difficult to deal with already existing path-dependency problems of the development of modern public administration in circumstances where former communist system traditions of rather decentralised public administration and lack of coordination persist.\footnote{For more on the legacy of the political subordination of public administrations, see e.g. Verheijen, ed., 2001; Peters, Verheijen, Vass, eds, 2005; Verheijen, 2007.} Contrary to top-down expectations, NPM has proved to make democratisation more difficult rather than less so. This is due to the fact that NPM brings about more flexibility in the hiring and firing of civil servants. In circumstances where there is a strong communist legacy of subordination of public administration to political party politics (previously the only party in power), NPM in practice supports the (re)affirmation of this subordination pattern. On the one hand, each ideological change brings about a replacement of several layers of public administration, and not only the top layers. On the other hand (with regard to civil servants’ fear of being downgraded or replaced), it facilitates a situation in which civil servants face difficulties in expressing their autonomous expert opinions/judgments, and rather carefully follow opinions of senior party politicians in a particular ministry. In this way, one of the preconditions of liberal democracy (namely
a competent public administration) has in fact been undermined. This is exactly the opposite of the declared promotion of democracy.

**Conclusions**

The latest wave of democratisation and the spread of liberal capitalist policy analysis has not yet brought about ‘an argumentative turn’ in practical policy analysis, expressed as ‘a looser coupling, sometimes even a decoupling, of policy analysis from its traditional context of decision support for government-initiated public policy programme’ (Hoppe, 1999: 209). Quite the opposite, the transfer of policy analysis activities from the national level to the supranational level has predominantly brought about its coupling with supranational inter-governmental (elites’) politics. Policy analysis has played an important role in the dissemination of liberal capitalism and liberal democracy from the West to the East in a top-down way with rather little to say on the many countries which have transitioned from authoritarian rules during the last twenty years or so. The prevalence of managerial (more or less technical) policy analysis orientation has robbed policy analysis of its sensitivity to both contextualisation and participatory qualities.

The predominant political instrumentalisation of policy analysis as well as the lack of contextualisation have also produced a prevalent top-down pattern of policy analysis blind to problems of legitimacy and broader consequences for democracy-building (cell 2 in Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** The Contextualisation and Political Engagement of Policy Analysis in Circumstances of the Latest Wave of Globalisation and Democratisation

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¹⁴ For more on policy cooperation in general and on the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in particular, see e.g. Fink-Hafner, ed., 2010.
In the context of the latest wave of democratisation and globalisation, some indirect activation of policy analysis evolved. It can be found in external support of contextualised expert knowledge produced by domestic policy analytical units (think-tanks) acting as agents of democratisation (cell 3 in Figure 1). Of course, states remain sovereign actors to some extent, and voluntarily participate in international policy cooperation in situations where policy analysis serves both as an informational tool as well as the basis for soft(er) versions of international pressure to adopt and implement policies in order to support global/regional policy problem-solving.

Ultimately, we can say that, so far, policy analysis has been a rather useful political tool in the dissemination of liberal capitalism. Due to its technocratic/managerial use, it has failed in being a successful tool for the promotion of democracy in post-communist countries. The aspect that remains particularly underdeveloped is the compatibility of policy analysis with deliberative democracy (cell 1 in Figure 1). However, the task of developing such a policy analysis (an autonomous policy analysis) is bound up with the task of building deliberative democracy in a global(ised) context.

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