Developing Policy Arguments

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3. Developing Policy Arguments

This session advances the participants to study policy arguments by establishing a simple and general framework for their evaluation that is inspired by pragmatic philosophy. A pragmatic framework recognizes that all policy arguments are normative in purpose and that a good policy argument supports its normative claim with factual and value based «good reasons». This session will present concept of good policy argument in three applied stages. The first section provides a perspective, defining policy arguments based on logics. The second section is written at an intermediate level of abstraction, establishing basis criteria for evaluating policy arguments and the final section illustrates the appropriate criteria for analyzing the value of policy arguments.
Structure

- What is a Policy Argument?
- Some basic Philosophers.
- Text 2: Analysing Policy Arguments (Gasper:1996)
- Group Work establishing policy arguments
- Discussion
What is a policy argument?

- A policy argument is an oral or written statement that advocates adopting a policy or justifies the decision to adopt a policy. (Ball:1995)

- Public policy discourse is notably complex, and further has important distinctive features, including the need to incorporate value inputs, considerations of legitimacy, and assessments of the constraints on public action. (Gasper:1996)

- Discourses don‘t rule. They instead generate a communicative power, which will never replace the administrative one, but rather influence it. (Habermas:1990)

- Even when laws have been written down, they ought not always to remain unaltered. (Aristotle)
Who formulates Policy Arguments?

- Everyone! Everyday! Every single discussion, every single decision we take is basically a policy argument, oftentimes with oneself.

- Public Policy Arguments are about exercising power, people who do it professionally on a national level are:
  - Politicians
  - Bureaucrats
  - Civil Society Representatives
  - Lobbyists
  - (Academics)
  - …
  - Political Foundations from Germany
Formulating Policy Arguments 1

- Formulating Policy Arguments is first step to Policy Making
- Before implementation, Policy Arguments are evaluated by multiple stakeholders:
  - Opposition
  - Bureaucracy
  - Media
  - General Public
  - Academia
  - Practice
  - ...
- Policy Arguments should be developed in a way that they are generally acceptable
Formulating Policy Arguments 2

- In order to formulate a successful policy argument, one should anticipate possible counter-arguments while formulating them.

- In order to anticipate possible counter-arguments, one should be aware of certain philosophical and theoretical approaches, which can serve as a tool to evaluate, subsequently formulate policy arguments thereby circumventing causes of failure.

- Evaluating policy arguments as part of discourse analysis is almost as old as philosophy, and has always formed the basis of logical and critical thinking and reasoning.
Evaluating Policy Arguments

- Real life Policy Arguments are Complex
- Include a wide set of sub-arguments
- The bigger the issue, the higher the number of stakeholders to be included, the higher the number of arguments to be factored in

- Theories as a tool help us to make Policy Arguments Accessible
- Comparable
- Simplifiable
- Understandable
Some Basic Philosophers of Discourse (Analysis)

- **Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) Greek Philosopher**
  - Syllogism as deductive art of reasoning (consisting of major and minor premises)
    - Major Premise: The Constitution states that all Presidents of Pakistan have to be Muslim [Art 41 (2)]
    - Minor Premise: Mamnoon Hussain is the President of Pakistan
    - Syllogism: Mamnoon Hussain is a Muslim

- **Jürgen Habermas (*1929) German Philosopher**
  - Ethical Argumentation based on Kantian categorical imperative
  - An Argument will only be valid, if an affected audience could agree, at least in principle.

- **Stephen Toulmin (1922-2009) British Philosopher**
  - Practical Arguments – A good argument needs good justification
  - Introduction of a scheme for evaluating policy arguments
Text 1: A Pragmatic Framework for the Evaluation of Policy Arguments (Ball:1995)

- « Standards of quality » for policy arguments
  - Persuasive
  - Practical
  - Action claim as conclusion

- Step 1: Logic and Purpose of Policy Arguments
  - Policy Arguments are Normative in Purpose
  - Policy Arguments are Pragmatic in Nature

- Step 2: Basic Structure of Policy Arguments
  - Factual Component
  - Value Component
  - Political Feasibility Component
Step 3: Evaluating the Valuative Component of Policy Arguments

- Addressing specific political values (equality, fairness, efficiency, freedom, autonomy, community and participation, authority, tolerance, and order)
- Applying case ethics

Completeness
- All important values involved with the policy covered? Awareness of historic factors

Relevance
- Appropriate values addressed?
- Really «good» reasons, which will persuade the public?

Coherence/Consonance
- Do arguments contradict each other?
Text 1: A Pragmatic Framework for the Evaluation of Policy Arguments (Ball:1995)

More questions to be asked:
- Are these the values of the majority?

Conclusion: Policy argument should include:
- Normative Claim
- Empirical Component
- Feasibility Component
- Valuative Component
Text 2: Analysing Policy Arguments (Gasper: 1996)

“[...] practical argument analysis has two phases:
- Firstly, specifying the content and structure of a real, untidy position, and only *Role of Theory!*
- Secondly assessing them.”

“One cannot analyse complex policy positions or debates in the way one can dissect a single page of poem, one must be selective.”

Argument Assessment based on:
- Clarity
- Consistency (logically and with accepted facts)
- Scope (range of consistency)
- Simplicity (including absence of special pleading)
- Applicability and refutability
- Comparison with other relevant arguments

Toulmin Scheme for assessing policy arguments includes six factors:

- Information
- Claim
- Warrant
- Backing
- Rebuttal
- Qualifier
Based on:

- Authority
- Insight, judgement and intuition (Cause, Motivation)
- Established analytical methods
- Standard general propositions (Generalization)
- Pragmatic comparisons with other cases (Classification & Analogies)
- Ethics
Excursus:
Text 2: Analysing Policy Arguments (Gasper:1996)

- Apart from actual policy analysis, applicability of scheme to: Development policies.
- Application of Logical Framework Approach (Logframe) as planning tool for numerous international organisations in the development sector
  - USAID
  - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
  - Hanns Seidel Foundation
  - …
Excursus
LogFrame Approach

- Multidimensional Approach for Planning and Evaluating Applied Policy Projects

Diagram:
- Higher Principle
- Project Objective
- Expected Output
- Input
- Quantitative & Qualitative indicators
- Sources of Verification
- Risk Perceptions
- Actual Project relevance
- Abstraction level
**Excursus**

**LogFrame in HSF Approach (Example)**

- **Higher Principle:**
  - Strengthening of Democratic Structures

- **Project Objective:**
  - Strengthening of Federal Structures through academic activities

- **Expected Outputs:**
  - Social Scientists are actively working on federal issues

- **Input**
  - XX academic conferences are organized, YY workshops are organized, ZZ publications printed

- **Quantitative Indicator:**
  - XX Social Scientists have participated in YY Activities

- **Qualitative Indicator:**
  - Through Publications on the issue, politicians grow increasingly aware of their rights in a devolved system

- **Risk Perceptions**
  - The GoP does not role back the 18th Amendment (positive assumption)
### Excursus

**LogFrame « vs. » Toulmin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toulmin: Practical Argument Analysis</th>
<th>LogFrame Approach</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claim</td>
<td>Higher Principle (or Project Objective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant</td>
<td>Qualitative Indicator</td>
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Application of same identifiers
Please note

- The application of theories as a tool is helpful but will necessarily always simplify.
- Theories will never depict the complete reality, but they help in understanding underlying factors and seeing the « bigger » picture.
- Ball rightfully points out to « the real danger that, once people have learnt an approach, they will insist on ‘finding’ examples of its categories in every argument, and only in those categories. »
- The solution lies in knowing multiple theories, and applying the one which is applicable.
- Never lose sight of the actual reality in favor of theoritizing.
Thank you!

For more information on the work of Hanns Seidel Foundation please consult our

- Webpage @ www.hss.de/pak

Or our

- Facebook profile @ www.fb.com/HSFIslamabad