

# FOREIGN POLICY: A STUDY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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## ABSTRACT

There has been a tendency among practitioners in the Political Science and Public Administration/Management fields to jealously guard their respective academic domains; and to be often extremely sensitive to a perceived dividing line that separates public policy analysis from foreign policy analysis, arguably to the ultimate detriment of legitimate scientific enquiry.

This article seeks to demonstrate that there is a grey area, with particular reference to foreign (public) policy, that ought to unite, rather than divide, the Political Scientist and the Public Administration Scientist; and that an analysis of foreign policy is a legitimate pursuit of the Public Administration Scientist, whether in regard to the decision making process, the implementation of policy or its perceived usefulness or overall effectiveness.

## INTRODUCTION

The theme of this article is that a state's foreign policy encapsulates a variety and range of public policies that extend beyond national borders into the international domain; and that foreign policy is, in essence, also a form of public policy. In addition, agricultural, transportation, labour and other governmental policies, although generally perceived as domestic public policies, may also individually exhibit a foreign policy component. Consequently, foreign policy, as public policy, can justifiably and effectively also be subjected to public policy analysis by Public Administration scientists.

The approach will be to initially distinguish between *public administration* (the function) and *Public Administration* (the scientific discipline); to elucidate the role of policy analy-

sis within the field of Public Administration and as a tool of public administration and management; to describe and explain the nature and substance of public policy; to demonstrate the relevance of foreign policy within the ambit of public policy; and to show that attendance to the functional needs of society (the role of public administration, and a primary function of public policy) may also include attendance to the foreign policy needs of society.

## POLICY ANALYSIS

**A**s a number of writers have stated, Public Administration includes policy analysis among its functional activities. This is recognition of the distinction between the "old" Public Administration that insisted that administrative questions are not political questions and the "new" Public Administration that has abandoned this notion (Weimer and Vining. 1989: 7; Coetzee. 1991: 39-40). The direct relationship between policy analysis and Public Administration has been explained by Rhodes (1979: 36) who argues that, "... if Public Administration is policy-making then policy analysis is also Public Administration." The dual relationship of policy analysis to administration and politics has been pointed out by Weimer and Vining (1989: 7) who have stated that,

*... although policy analysts must concern themselves with questions of organisational design and administrative feasibility, they seek to influence the choice of programmes by the political process. One focuses exclusively on doing well what has been chosen; the other also considers the choice of what is to be done.*

Not surprisingly, much of the available literature about policy analysis, emanating from researchers and writers in the Public Administration field, tends to concentrate on the analysis of public policy within the domestic environment of the international system. Quade (1989: 374), Dunn (1981: 48), Cloete (1994: 92) and Hanekom (1992: 85) are among those writers and researchers. Nonetheless, Cloete (1994: 58), in describing "functions performed in an administrative executive institution" has included "foreign affairs" as an example of a "line function" or "...functional activity... ." Dye (1995: 2) also includes foreign affairs within the scope of public policy. The focus, though, is usually on questions about domestic policy as opposed to questions about foreign policy, the latter being left almost exclusively to the attention of those who specialise in the Political Science field. In this regard, Richard L. Merritt (1975: 1-11) and Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (1971: 312-344) have provided several examples of the decision making theories of social scientists, drawn from a variety of disciplines, who have conducted research in various aspects of foreign policy analysis. Yet, as Dunn (1981: 36) has argued,

*... these disciplines (economics, sociology, political science and psychology) are often limited in several ways: Complex policy problems do not recognise tradi-*

*tional disciplinary boundaries; general theories are seldom applicable to specific policy contexts; and such theories frequently fail to provide information that permits policy makers to control or manipulate policy processes. ... Policy analysis goes beyond traditional disciplinary concerns with the explanation of empirical regularities by seeking not only to combine and transform the substance and methods of several disciplines, but also to produce policy-relevant information that may be utilised to resolve problems in specific policy settings. ...Policy analysis ...includes policy evaluation as well as policy advocacy.*

Consequently, there are good reasons why an analysis of *foreign policy*, which is also public policy, should be conducted according to some of the analytic procedures and practices that are now well established in the field of Public Administration; a field of study which encompasses the study of both public policy making and public policy analysis. A few researchers have utilised examples from the foreign policy domain in order to facilitate understanding of public policy issues within the domestic environment. Some, like Robin Lee (Cloete, Schlemmer and Van Vuuren. 1991: 8; *vide* Dye. 1995: 2), have made specific references to "foreign policy" when writing about public policy and the political process, when their primary focus was on domestic policy. Therefore, if the relevant policy analysis can benefit thereby, there is every reason why a foreign policy (public policy) analysis may be conducted within the ambit of Public Administration, even when some of the analytic practices and procedures that are utilised, are drawn from the Political Science field. In this regard, Ripley (1985: 5) states that "...political scientists, *among others*, can be good policy analysts precisely because they can enrich their analysis with the insights, theories, and techniques of their home discipline..."

It is essential to be able to understand the relationship and distinction between Public Administration as a discipline, public administration and public policy, and the relationship and distinction between domestic and foreign policy.

## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Coetzee (1991: 42) has distinguished between Public Administration as an academic pursuit and public administration as a profession. Consequently, whereas *Public Administration* (with capital letters) refers to the discipline or branch of instruction in regard to *public administration* (with lower case letters), the latter is the process or function normally assigned to the public administrator, civil servant or public official. One teaches *Public Administration* but one performs or carries out *public administration*. According to Botes and Roux (Botes *et al.* 1997: 257),

*Public Administration is concerned with the study of all the scientific disciplines that have a bearing on the contemporary administrative and managerial practices in the public sector. ...Administrative and managerial practices that are present-*

*ly to be found in public institutions comprise a comprehensive series of activities that require knowledge of virtually all sciences. The subject in which the intrinsic and interdependent aspects of the state institutions are studied exclusively is called Public Administration.*

Clearly, Public Administration is a science that has produced, and continues to produce, knowledge that can be analysed and applied universally in the context of enhancing theories, knowledge and understanding of public administration in the practical and theoretical sense. Botes and Roux (Botes, *et al.* 1997: 260; *vide* Pfiffner and Presthus. 1967: 4-6; *vide* Cloete. 1967: 35-40) have identified four essential qualities that firmly establish the qualifications of Public Administration as a discipline in its own right.

- Public Administration is a science because there exists a corpus of knowledge, which has repeatedly been proven to be valid, can be analysed systematically and contains aspects of universal applicability.
- Public Administration is an academic discipline, which can be dissected in systematic steps of study and research.
- Public Administration is a university subject, which enjoys universal acknowledgement.
- Public Administration finds a field of application in the public administration.

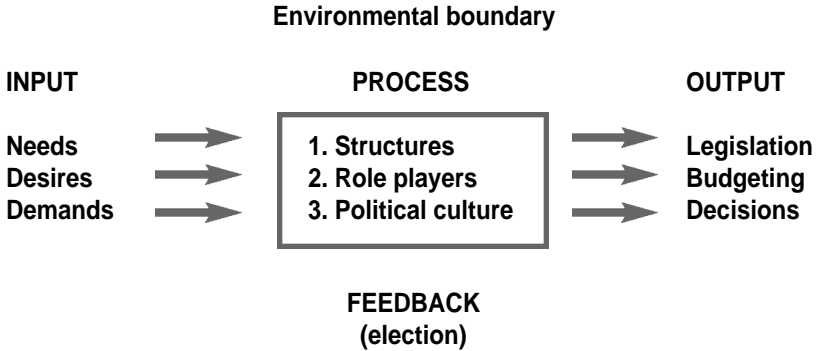
Coetzee also identifies similar aspects or “relevant areas” (1991: 96-98), including Public Administration as an academic discipline, an activity, a subject for teaching at university level, an applied science to be taught at academic level, and an opportunity to educate and train civil servants.

In contrast to Public Administration (the discipline), public administration (the activity) refers to the activities of public officials, also known as civil servants or public servants, on behalf of the public. According to Nicolas Henry (Fox and Meyer. 1995: 105), public administration has three cornerstones: “organisational behaviour and the behaviour of people in organisations; the technology of management; and the public interest concerning individual ethical choices and public affairs.” In more simple terms, public administration is essentially a series of actions carried out by people in public institutions on behalf of other people. It is essentially an activity inspired by the need to apply the policies and deliver the services and outputs of those policies as determined by the executive and approved by the legislature; or, one might argue, as directed by the supreme authority of the state. Where South Africa is concerned the supreme authority is the Constitution.

Drawing on the work of David Easton (Easton. 1957; Easton. 1965), Botes and Roux (Botes, *et al.* 1997: 261; *vide* Anderson. 1997: 26-27; Fesler. 1980: 31) have illustrated

the place of public administration within the domestic environment of the international system (the state) by means of a simplified systems model, as replicated below:

**Figure 1: Simplified Systems Model**



Source: Botes P.S. and N.L. Roux (in Botes P., P.A. Brynard, D.J. Fourie and N.L.Roux. *Public Administration and Management*, 2nd ed. 1996, Pretoria: Kagiso Tertiary, p. 261)

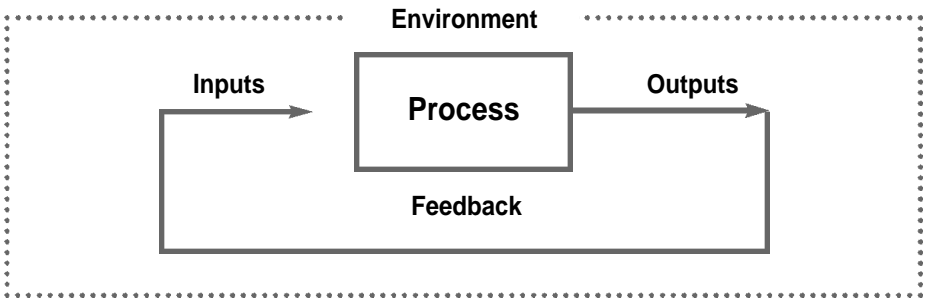
Aristotle argued that the State existed not merely to make life possible but to make life good. This notion was also shared by the founders of the American Republic (Rossiter. 1961: 231) who referred to *the public good*. In terms of this model (figure 1, *supra*), the needs, desires and demands of society (the people) are *inputs* which will make life good if these needs, desires and demands are translated into efficient, effective and just *outputs* in the form of decisions, budgets and laws that will create the prerequisite conditions to "make life good" (*vide* Dye. 1995: 38-39; Hanekom *et al.* 1986: 91).

Examples of needs, desires and demands provided by Botes and Roux (Botes, *et al.* 1997: 262), and referred to by writers such as Weimer and Vining (1989: 4-5), are taken from the domestic environment and not the international or external environment. Therefore, they focus on issues such as the need to fight crime, plan urban development, provide water and electricity, replace gravel roads with asphalt roads and improve traffic control and pest control. However, in the context of foreign policy, the need for the defence and advancement of perceived national interests, the desire for regional stability and world peace, and the demand for greater and more equitable access to world markets, are among the inputs that might need to be translated into outputs in the form of bilateral and multilateral agreements, and other diplomatic arrangements, intended to make life good for the people of a particular state or particular states. In this regard it should be noted that, in some states, for example authoritarian or non-democratic states, outputs

may reflect the dominant inputs (needs, desires and demands) of the leadership or a privileged group, as opposed to the inputs of the citizenry. This situation would be likely to prevail in both the context of domestic policy and foreign policy, where such states are concerned. For example, the advocacy of "group rights" by South Africa's *apartheid* government was seen by many black South Africans as a ruse to preserve white domination.

If it is accepted, as some writers have stated (*vide* Legg and Morrison. 1971: 134), that public policy making involves a process of continuous re-assessment and modification of public policies and political decision making, then, it is argued, an organisational model or organisational models of such a process ought to allow for appropriate monitoring mechanisms. Such models ought to also reflect such a process as being adaptive and self-regulating, at least to the extent that human decision makers are able to introduce and implement actions and decisions that facilitate such adaptation. The dynamic nature of the foreign policy decision making process is particularly well-suited to the use of a systems organisational model. Norbert Wiener's model of an organisation as an adaptive system as elucidated by Shafritz and Ott (Shafritz. 1988: 530) is therefore useful as a core concept model of the foreign policy organisational process.

**Figure 2: Norbert Wiener's Model of an Organisation as an Adaptive System**



Source: Jay M. Shafritz and J. Steven Ott, *Classics of Organization Theory*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Dorsey, 1987), p. 235.

Wiener's model shares essential characteristics (inputs, outputs, feedback) with the Eastonian derivative (Shafritz .1988: 530) adapted by Botes and Roux (see figure 1 *supra*).

Although all public policies of a particular state are derived from the inputs which originate in the domestic environment of that state and are expressed in the form of outputs within the domestic environment of that state, such inputs may be a response to the foreign policy outputs of other sovereign states (e.g. a state may institute a policy to develop its navy or coast guard service in response to another state's policy to enlarge its fish-

ing fleet). Similarly, the domestic policy outputs of a state (e.g. a policy aimed at downsizing its state institutions) can result in responsive domestic policy inputs within the domestic environments of its neighbouring states (e.g. demands for more stringent immigration policies). When this happens, domestic public policy begins to affect the foreign policy relationship of the states concerned. In effect, what Rosenau (1969: 45), a political scientist, terms a *linkage* between systems (in these examples, the domestic systems of the states concerned) takes place.

Many public policies', despite their potential, and from time to time actual, influence on a state's foreign policy relationships are mainly active in that state's domestic environment. Nevertheless, a number of government ministries and departments, and their equivalents at provincial and local spheres of government, are active in the international environment. Where South Africa is concerned, they include foreign affairs, playing the leading role; defence, customs, immigration and trade, playing mainly supporting roles; and tourism, finance, science and technology, transport, agriculture, security, justice, culture and sport, among other state institutions, playing supporting roles from time to time. However, in the case of powerful states with wide-ranging global interests, other categories of public policy, for example military policy, are likely to be closely merged with foreign policy.

In terms of the above models (figures 1 and 2 *supra*) the process whereby inputs are converted into outputs is dependent upon the actions and activities of role players or actors, and the influence and impact of existing structures and the (prevailing) political culture. As Botes and Roux elucidate (Botes *et al.* 1997: 263; vide Hanekom *et al.* 1986: 158-159):

*Although public servants (or civil servants) are not the servants of the political party in office, they must execute the prevailing political culture. In the event of a change of government, the officials must follow the new direction of the succeeding party in office. ... When the role players (public servants, ministers and Parliamentarians) turn their attention to satisfying needs, desires and demands, the political culture will determine the nature of the ultimate legislation, budget and decisions. ... In this way the principal actions of public servants are channelled and directed by the political processes of the state.*

Where organisational structures are concerned, governmental institutions must process the needs, desires and demands (inputs) of society or a particular community into practical solutions or actions that will result in the required policy and service outputs (Fesler. 1980: 30-31). Similarly, Lynn (1980:10) views the output of the (institutional) policy making system, comprising "...actors ... and their interests, and the rules and practices governing the...relationships among actors," as policy. These institutions might include government departments such as the Department of Water Affairs and the Department of Agriculture or their equivalent institutions. By implication, the Department of Foreign

Affairs, as an institution of government, would also be part of this processing mechanism. However, institutions in themselves merely provide the organisational and operational framework for the processing of policy inputs into policy outputs. The actual work is carried out by officials, role players or actors.

Whereas some writers have used examples of role players such as magistrates, passport control officials and state veterinary surgeons it follows that, in regard to foreign policy, role players would include a state's diplomatic and consular representatives serving abroad; its international civil servants, serving in international governmental institutions; its complement of civil servants within the Department or Ministry of Foreign Affairs, particularly those serving in the top and middle management echelon and in the political and consular sections of that Department; and role players in other government departments that may have roles to play in matters affecting or determining foreign policy.

The simplified systems model (figure 2 *supra*), makes allowance for *feedback*, a cybernetic process whereby outputs are fed back into the system as inputs. Although feedback may take place in the form of elections, which is a legitimate way for democratic societies to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the public policies of their respective governments, there are many other ways whereby societies may articulate their views. For example, a revolution or rebellion against a perceived unjust and totalitarian regime would also constitute feedback. Public debate, commissions of inquiry, referenda, letters to newspapers, public demonstrations and public opinion polls are further examples of the feedback mechanism.

## PUBLIC POLICY

**W**hat is particularly important to grasp, in the context of the relationship between public administration and public policy, is that public policy is essentially an institutional output and that the relevant institutions concerned are *government* institutions. Government is also able to win or command wide domestic support for its public policies; it is able to ensure that the domestic impact of its public policies apply universally within the domestic environment; and it is able to employ national measures to ensure universal enforcement of its public policies within the domestic environment over which it has jurisdiction. Thomas R. Dye (1981: 20-21) has stated as follows:

*Political activities generally centre around particular government institutions. ... Public policy is authoritatively determined, implemented, and enforced by governmental institutions. ... The relationship between public policy and governmental institutions is very close. Strictly speaking, a policy does not become a public policy until it is adopted, implemented, and enforced by some governmental institution. ... (G)overnment lends legitimacy to policies. ... (G)overnment policies involve universality. ... Finally, government monopolises coercion in society.*



Public policy is essentially a guide or plan of action initiated and authorised by government and intended to achieve whatever is necessary to *make life good* (see paragraph 3 *supra*). Whereas some writers (*vide* Cloete and Wissink. 2000: 15; Barber. 1983: 59-60; Cloete. 1981: 71-77; Gladden. 1964: 72-74) have identified three levels of public policy (political, executive and administrative), others (Botes *et al.* 1997: 311-313) have identified four practical levels, adding departmental policy to the three categories listed above as well as six characteristics of public policy. The four policy levels comprise political party policy, government policy (executive or cabinet policy), departmental policy and administrative policy. It is at the level of political party policy that party ideology, the party's value system, the *world view* of its leadership, and the party's *raison d'être* first seek to direct discussion and debate and ultimately influence the shape of public policies at all levels.

Where Western democracies are concerned, party political influence is probably most keenly felt shortly before an election, when voters are interested in knowing what policies they are being asked to support. However, after the government has been elected, party influence will often appear to take a back seat to the influence of government. In some authoritarian states, however, party influence can be dominant and practically continuous. For example, Shirk (Lieberthal and Lampton. 1992: 61) describes the formal relationship between the Communist Party and government in the People's Republic of China, as an *angry relationship* in which the Communist Party is the *principal* and the government is the *agent* and where "the party has formal political authority over the government, which does the actual work of administering the country..." Generally, irrespective of the system of government, there is close contact between government and party, the main reason being that government, except in the case of military coups, is usually the party in power. However, as Cloete (1967: 72) points out, executive and other government officials cannot make any substantive contribution at this level of policy making as it is effectively beyond their reach.

The next level of public policy is government policy or cabinet policy; what Cloete (1994: 96) terms "political implementation policy." This is the policy level where "...political idealism must be transformed into workable realities..." (Botes *et al.* 1997: 311); where party political ideas, the party world view and party ideology will become part of practical expressions of policy, including foreign policy, as required by the government of the day. Although senior public servants will be involved in developing this level of policy the overriding decisions will invariably be taken at the political, usually ministerial or cabinet, level, often in close consultation with senior public servants (directors-general, permanent under secretaries or their equivalents) in charge of government departments.

Departmental policy is concerned specifically with the implementation of the relevant government policy. For example, in the case of South Africa, the Department of Foreign Affairs would be required to implement the policy articulated by government in regard

to foreign policy. The departmental policy of the Department of Foreign Affairs would need to be harmonised with Cabinet policy, as articulated by the President, Deputy President, Minister or Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the primary responsibility for ensuring that this is attended to would normally reside with the Director-General of Foreign Affairs. The head of a department, usually a director-general, would formulate policy which is capable of execution, both functionally and administratively, and embody this in the budget. The departmental policy should be a proper reflection of the aims of the department. This type of policy is also known as “administrative executive implementation policy” (Cloete. 1994: 96).

Administrative policy (Botes *et al.* 1997: 311) is regarded as the fourth level of public policy. This level of policy, termed “operational policy” by Cloete (1994: 97), falls squarely into the realm of public administration and therefore has more to do with public policy implementation than with public policy making or public policy analysis that is directed at the effectiveness or usefulness of such policy. Nonetheless, an analysis of the *implementation* of such policy would also be entirely feasible and appropriate.

Apart from the four levels of policy identified *supra*, public policy exhibits particular characteristics that may serve to distinguish it from being a mere collection of goals and administrative actions. In this sense, public policies are said to be authoritative, enforceable, flexible and adaptable, feasible, clear and public. For a policy to be *authoritative* an authorised government institution or representative, such as a head of department, must determine and authorise it. Speculations and opinions are not regarded as being policies, which means that a policy must be defined explicitly and all interested parties must be informed in writing.

Although this characteristic is easily identifiable with public policy in the domestic environment, such as a housing or educational policy, it may require qualification in the case of foreign or military policy, or any kind of public policy requiring a degree of security or secrecy. In fact, in terms of the definition of public policy advanced by Hanekom (1992: 8), public policy needs to be “...decided upon and *made publicly known* by the legislator...” (author’s emphasis). Coetzee (1991: 17) has sought to clarify the essential nature of *public* policy, in part by contrasting it with *private* policy, and concludes that it “...affects...people at large...is open to all, not secret or concealed, and is ... the opposite to private...” There is, nonetheless, much ambiguity in the word “public” when used in the context of public policy and it is therefore important to define its meaning.

Should “public policy” refer to publicised policy? If so, should it refer only to publicised policy? Should “public policy” not mean policy on behalf of or in the interest of the public? Alternatively, should policy not simply refer to the policies of public institutions? Perhaps the best way to resolve the ambiguity is to accept that *public policy is always made by public institutions*, that it is *usually made public* and that it is policy that is *always made on behalf of the public or the state*. This definition would make allowance

for all policies that are made by public institutions (e.g. Department of Foreign Affairs), public policies that are not made public (e.g. secret alliances); public policies that are made in the public interest (i.e. the general population); and public policies that are harmful to the public but considered advantageous to the lawgivers or a select segment of the population (e.g. *apartheid* legislation). From the foregoing, if it is accepted that public policy does not have to be publicised and that interested parties can, therefore, sometimes be excluded from knowledge about the details of specific policies, then it can be accepted that foreign policies also exhibit the authoritative characteristic.

The second characteristic of public policy is that it is enforceable. Thus, those responsible for implementing such public policy would need to be made specifically aware of their responsibility by means of a clear policy directive. Failure to comply could then result in possible charges of misconduct (Cloete. 1994: 232), the implication being that the implementers of the relevant policy, and not the clients or service recipients, should be subject to penalties in the event of non-implementation. In the case of foreign policy this would mean that a country's own public officials and diplomats could be compelled to implement specific foreign policy directives. Thus, foreign governments and foreign diplomats, obviously, cannot be compelled to serve or observe the same directives. Nevertheless, it can be accepted that foreign policies also exhibit the enforceable characteristic, as elucidated *supra*.

The third characteristic of public policy, is that it is flexible and adaptable. In view of the many variable influences that may affect a state's foreign policy, this characteristic appears particularly suited to the concept of an ideal foreign policy. However, it should be borne in mind that the *aim* must be regarded as fixed, while the *policy* (the route adopted to achieve an aim) must still allow for change as circumstances vary. The rigid and inexorable implementation of an unsuitable or obsolete policy is worse than applying no policy at all. The characteristic of flexibility and adaptability is what makes policy analysis possible because this characteristic implies the need to be able to consider alternative policy options when required. The nature of foreign policy is such that it undoubtedly shares, with other public policies, the characteristic of being both flexible and adaptable. Even when foreign policies appear to be inflexible it is axiomatic that, in the long term, some changes will always occur. As William H. Overholt and Marilyn Chou argue (Merritt. 1975: 150),

*...all enduring (foreign policy) doctrines are subject to serious reinterpretation and variation of emphasis as domestic and foreign exigencies change.*

The fourth characteristic of public policy is that it should be feasible. Simply put, this means that public policy must be "...capable of being done, effected or accomplished ..." (Hanks. 1971: 584). It is precisely this characteristic which precludes some crucial aspects of foreign policy from being made public because the very act of publication can make a sensitive policy decision unworkable or unfeasible in practice. Thus, if a policy

decision is not made known to all those who are expected to implement the relevant policy, then effective implementation would be impossible (it is not necessary to know why a policy is being implemented but it is essential to know what the policy entails). The policy would then also be unfeasible.

The fifth essential characteristic of public policy is that it should be clear. If the syntax and semantics of policy directives, instructions, rules, regulations and legislation are unclear or ambiguous, then the policy itself will be unclear or ambiguous. Consequently, the policy concerned may also lack feasibility and enforceability. In the case of foreign policy, or military policy, a lack of clarity could be disastrous and might even precipitate war or defeat in war.

Finally, public policy is public. As has already been pointed out, the term "public" can be ambiguous in the context of public policy if there is no certainty as to whether it refers to the publication (making it known to the public) of policy, public society (whom the policy is intended to affect), or the public sector (the public or governmental *milieu*, as opposed to the private sector, in which public policy is formulated). Botes and Roux (Botes *et al.* 1997: 313) appear to expand slightly on Hanekom's narrower interpretation of the term "public" when they state as follows:

*When a policy concerns the public, it must be publicised as clearly as possible. Most government departments function through a network of district offices situated throughout the country, which ensures that policy be made known as widely as possible (authors' emphasis).*

Nonetheless, the interpretation appears restrictive, particularly in view of the assertion by some writers (Dye. 1981: 20) that (authoritative) public policy must have its origin in a public institution in order to be termed public policy. In this regard it is useful to keep in mind that departments of defence, national security and foreign affairs are all public institutions but their policies are not necessarily always made public. In this regard Reedy (Wilcox and Frank. 1976: 65), writing about American foreign policy, has suggested that, "the ultimate question ... is not secrecy but the extent to which foreign policy should be isolated from public policy issues ..." Of course, the occasional need for secrecy has been acknowledged by Botes and Roux (Botes *et al.* 1997: 313). However, their clear focus on making public policy public as opposed to emphasising the public institutional *milieu* in which it originates, tends to create artificial divisions between those public policies that remain largely confined to the domestic environment and those public policies that deliberately extend into the external, or foreign, environment of the state. Authoritative foreign policy does always originate in the public institutional *milieu* but it is not always made public.

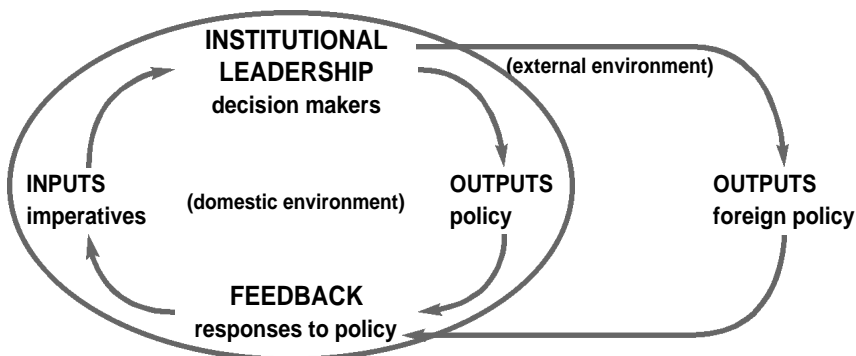
In order to fully understand why public policy, such as foreign policy or military policy, can claim the status of public policy, even when it is not made public, it may be helpful to also think of such policy as comprising a series of decisions taken and choices made,

within a public institution, for and on behalf of the perceived public good (see paragraph 3 *supra*), or community, or national interest. According to Dunn (1981: 46; *vide* Dye. 1995: 7), public policies are made within an “institutional pattern” that he terms a “policy system” which comprises “policy stakeholders” (e.g. policy analysts, citizen’s groups, parties), “public policies” (e.g. law enforcement, economic, welfare) and a “policy environment” (e.g. crime, inflation, unemployment).

The milieu in which public policy takes place is a systemic *milieu*, encompassing societal inputs and imperatives, public institutions, decision makers, public policy outputs and feedback mechanisms. The main decision making components of the systemic public policy *milieu* would always be located in the domestic environment because it is in this environment that virtually all public policy decision making ultimately takes place. However, when public policy is also foreign policy, *relevant decision* making is likely to take place in both the domestic environment and the various external environments of the states concerned.

Societal inputs and imperatives might include the demands of the business community (e.g. reciprocal market access for traders); the main public institution, in the case of foreign policy, would probably be the Ministry or Department of Foreign Affairs, or equivalent institutions; the main decision makers would be likely to come from the state’s top echelon of political power (e.g. the President, Prime Minister or Foreign Minister); policy output would be the relevant public policy itself; and feedback would be the impact of the policy concerned and the impact of such feedback on successive policy inputs. The systemic public policy *milieu* (which also includes foreign policy) can be illustrated as follows:

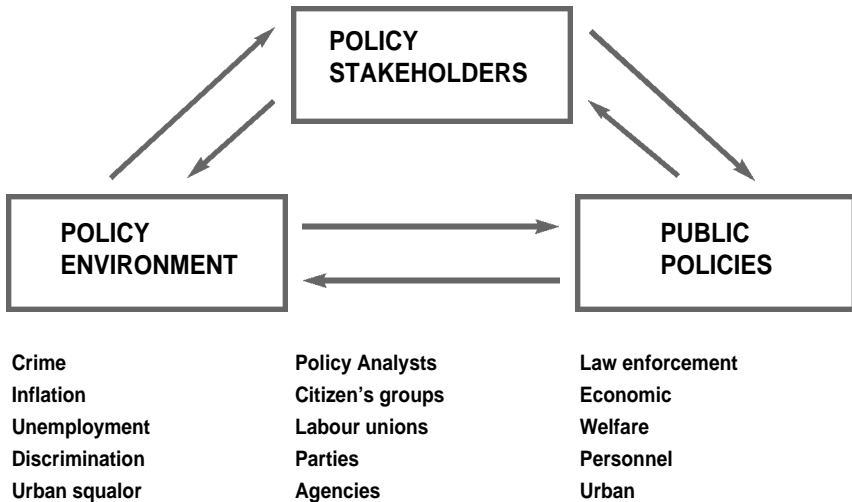
**Figure 3: Systemic public policy milieu**



Source: Original concept based upon ideas advanced by David Easton (Easton. 1957)

Dunn (1981: 46) has illustrated his concept of a policy system by means of the following model which he has adapted from Thomas R. Dye (1978: 9):

**Figure 4: Three elements of a policy system**



*Source: Adapted from Thomas R. Dye, Understanding Public Policy, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1978), p. 9.*

Although Dunn's model (figure 4 *supra*) utilises examples drawn from domestic public policy, as opposed to foreign policy, the concept of a policy system is equally applicable to foreign policy, which is also public policy (see figure 3 *supra*). In regard to foreign policy, stakeholders might include policy analysts, parties, arms manufacturers, business groups and human rights groups; the policy environment might constitute foreign policy issues of a domestic (i.e. internal departmental policies), bilateral, regional, or multilateral nature; and public policy would be likely to fall squarely in the realm of foreign policy, under the operational, policy-formulating and policy-implementing jurisdiction of the Department of Foreign Affairs in the case of South Africa, and the equivalent governmental institution where other states are concerned.

In terms of the policy system concept illustrated by figure 4 *supra*, there is a continual interaction between policy stakeholders, governmental departments and officials responsible for formulating and implementing public policy, and those members of society who are directly affected by, and sometimes responsible for, the policy issue concerned. The three components of this model, the stakeholders, policy environment (policy milieu) and public policies, continually affect, shape and influence one another (Dunn.1981: 47). The systemic public policy milieu, illustrated by figure 2 *supra*, is therefore the envi-

ronment in which public policy, including foreign policy, takes place. It is largely equivalent to the policy system elucidated by figure 3 *supra* and includes the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government which, together, provide the institutional structures in which public policy decision makers normally operate.

## FOREIGN POLICY AS PUBLIC POLICY

**F**oreign policy, as already alluded to, is also an example of public policy. It is policy that can be made public, albeit more restrictively than in the case of public policies active mainly in the domestic environment. It is also policy that emanates from the public institutions of government. In this respect, Plano and Olton (1969: 127) have clarified the institutional origins of foreign policy as follows:

*The foreign office of any state (...an executive agency charged with the formulation and implementation of foreign policy...) is the vehicle through which the bulk of relations with other countries is conducted. Other names for the foreign office include foreign ministry, ministry of foreign affairs, and department of state.*

A major focus of the activity of foreign policy is directed at preserving the security and sovereignty of the state by peaceful means through the practice of diplomacy. While noting that states may have different foreign policy objectives, Plano and Olton (1969: 127) have pointed out that some common foreign policy objectives "...tend to involve such abstract goals as self-preservation, security, national well-being, national prestige, the protection and advancement of ideology, and the pursuit of power." Consequently, foreign policy is policy that can also be assumed to be always motivated by public interest considerations, often defined as national interest. Legg and Morrison (1971: 143) have stated as follows:

*The most fundamental source of foreign policy objectives is perhaps the universally shared desire to insure the survival and territorial integrity of the community and state.*

This would be equally true of the pre-world war two foreign policies of Germany and Japan, and the later foreign policy of *apartheid* South Africa, because foreign policy, like all public policy, is motivated by perceived objective considerations interpreted subjectively by the government of the day; subjectively interpreted objective considerations that also determine national interest. In the case of Germany and Japan, foreign policy failed because it was overwhelmed by military policy, war ensued, and both states were subsequently occupied by victor states. In the case of South Africa, foreign policy succeeded in preserving national sovereignty and national security, and assisted in making a negotiated, peaceful, legally-based transition to democracy possible.

Plano and Olton (1969:127) have referred to foreign policy as, "...a strategy or planned course of action developed by the decision makers of a state *vis-à-vis* other states or international entities aimed at achieving specific goals defined in terms of national interest..." Dunn (1981: 61; *vide* Rose. 1976: 9-10), has defined public policy (and thereby, foreign policy) as a "... long series of more or less related choices, including decisions not to act, made by government bodies and officials." Foreign policy is intended to articulate, defend and promote a state's national interests and national concerns in the international environment. Public policies articulated as foreign policy may include a range and variety of domestic public policies; for example, tourism, environmental, health and transportation policies. Consequently, the foreign policy of a state should also be sensitive to the interests and objectives of other government departments and agencies of that state. There should be close collaboration and consultation between government decision makers, departments and agencies, at all levels from national to local government sphere, to ensure that the foreign policy of the state concerned remains consistent, unambiguous and largely predictable. However, this could be a difficult undertaking in view of the fact that not all aspects of foreign policy are made public, particularly where sensitive security issues are concerned. It should also be kept in mind that foreign policy is not always written down in the form of diplomatic agreements, legislation or policy speeches. Sometimes, foreign policy may be made on the spur of the moment by a verbalised high-level political decision or high profile speech, such as U.S. President George W. Bush's declaration to the states of the international system, on the subject of international terrorism, that "from this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime" (*Address to the Joint Session of Congress*. 20 September 2001).

Foreign policy involves a dynamic process of applying relatively fixed interpretations of national interest to the highly fluctuating situational factors of the international environment to develop a course of action. This is followed by efforts to achieve diplomatic implementation of the policy guidelines. Important steps in the policy process include:

- translating national interest considerations into specific goals and objectives
- determining the international and domestic situational factors related to the policy goals and objectives
- analysing the state's capabilities for achieving the desired results
- developing a plan (or strategy) for utilising the state's capabilities to deal with the variables in pursuit of the goals
- undertaking the requisite actions and



- periodically reviewing and evaluating progress made toward the achievement of the desired results (Plano and Olton.1969: 127).

The above steps are not necessarily sequential, logical or chronological. They are part of a foreign policy process that is continuous and which is likely to have grown out of past policies and related events in much the same way as domestic public policies are affected by feedback and new demands, or inputs, as indicated by figure 4 *supra*. In considering the relationship between foreign policy and public policy it is important to note that although foreign policy is "...often used in a generic sense to encompass all foreign programs carried on by a state, the term 'foreign policy' can be applied more precisely to describe a single situation and the actions of a state to accomplish a limited objective.... ." (Plano and Olton. 1969: 129). Consequently agreements between states and strategies toward individual states or groups of states may be components of a state's foreign policy.

## CONCLUSION

**F**rom the foregoing it is clear that Public Administration is a discipline in its own right which has as its primary focus the study of public administration and research associated with public administration, including the use of policy analysis. It has been shown that all public policy, including foreign policy, is a product of public institutions; that the public policies of states are intended to serve the perceived public interest; and that not all aspects of public policy, for example foreign or military policies, are publicised.

In addition, all public policies of a state are systemic in nature. This is true of both domestic and foreign policies. Policies and modifications to such policies result from inputs in the form of societal demands and needs. Such demands and needs influence policy makers to produce policies in the form of policy outputs which, in turn, may produce feedback through public opinion, elections, or even rebellion, which would be the new societal inputs aimed at producing new outputs in the form of subsequent changes to public policy. It is also clear that public policy includes foreign policy. Therefore, not all public policy outputs and public policy feed back are restricted to the domestic policy environment of the initiator of such policy. In the case of foreign policy, or domestic policies having an effect within the initiating state's external environment, policy outputs may extend beyond that state's domestic environment, with feedback also originating beyond its domestic environment.

Finally, it has been shown that it is the executive branch of government that includes the most important political foreign policy decision makers as well as the most important foreign policy administrators and secondary bureaucratic decision makers. There is therefore ample justification why foreign policy analysis can be conducted within the field of study of Public Administration in terms of academic research criteria that could normally be applied to any other public policy analysis of a state's domestic public policy or

public policies. Knowing that foreign policy is, in fact, a form of public policy, it is therefore possible for Public Administration scientists to also scientifically analyse the public policies that govern the bilateral or multilateral (public and foreign policy) relationships between states.

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