

**Theoretical approaches explaining the impact of
internal environmental factors on public policy-making.**

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Abstract:

This study seeks to analyze the theoretical approaches that explain the impact of internal environmental factors on public policy-making, by deconstructing the structural, institutional, political, and social dimensions that constitute the internal environment of the state. These factors are not merely circumstantial determinants but represent a structural framework that guides the decision-making process and shapes policy priorities. The significance of these theoretical approaches lies in clarifying how elites and institutions interact with internal conditions, and in uncovering the dynamics of power and balances that influence policy effectiveness. By adopting a descriptive-analytical method, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between the internal environment and public policies, and to highlight how these factors can be leveraged to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public policy.

Keywords: Internal environment; Public policy-making; Elites; Theoretical approaches.

Jel Classification Codes: XN1, XN2.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Public policies represent the fundamental mechanism by which the state translates its strategic and developmental orientations into tangible and executable programs. This process is profoundly influenced by a set of determinants that arise from within the political system itself. The most significant of these include the nature of the political system, the composition of political and administrative elites, prevailing bureaucratic norms, the dominant political culture, and the distribution of power within state institutions. Collectively, these elements play a decisive role in establishing public policy priorities, guiding decision-making processes, and determining the degree of effectiveness in policy implementation. The relevance of examining these internal dimensions becomes particularly evident in countries characterized by institutional fragility and complex structural constraints, as understanding the interaction among these components is essential for explaining variations in policy performance and outcomes. In light of the foregoing, the following research problem emerges: **To what extent do internal environment factors influence the public policymaking process, and what theoretical and conceptual approaches clarify and explain this relationship?**

Accordingly, the study hypotheses are as follows:

- 1- Internal environment factors represent a pivotal and determining element in the public policymaking process and influence its directions and effectiveness.
- 2- The nature and impact of these factors differ according to the institutional and political structures of each country.
- 3- The level of maturity of political and administrative institutions is linked to the ability of the internal environment to guide public policies towards achieving developmental and strategic objectives.

The study aims to achieve several main objectives, including:

- 1- Defining the fundamental concepts related to internal environment factors and public policymaking.
- 2- Analyzing the structural and institutional components that form the internal environment and their impact on decision-making.
- 3- Reviewing the most prominent theoretical approaches addressing the relationship between the internal environment and public policymaking.
- 4- Providing an analytical framework to better understand the dynamics of policymaking under internal environmental variables

In order to analyze the research problem, this study adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology, which, on the one hand, seeks to deconstruct and interpret the fundamental concepts related to the subject of the research, and, on the other hand, to analyze the theories and approaches that explain the relationship between internal environment factors and public policymaking. This analysis is based on a review of the relevant theoretical literature. Accordingly, and in connection with the stated research problem and hypotheses, and within the

adopted methodological framework, the study is structured according to a research plan that aims to provide an integrated analysis of the impact of internal environment factors on the public policymaking process from a conceptual and theoretical perspective, and is organized as follows:

- 1- The Conceptual Framework of the Policymaking Process and Internal Environment Factors.
- 2- Theoretical Approaches Explaining the Influence of the Internal Environment on Public Policy-Making.

2. The Conceptual Framework of the Policymaking Process and Internal Environment Factors.

Understanding the internal environmental factors constitutes a fundamental framework for analyzing the process of public policy-making, given their direct impact on the direction of political decision-making within the state. Policies are not formulated in a vacuum; rather, they emerge within specific institutional and structural contexts. The internal environment serves as the actual incubator in which the state's will is shaped and through which its agendas are formulated. Accordingly, this topic seeks to offer a theoretical and conceptual approach that clarifies the relationship between the internal environment and public policy, drawing on contemporary literature that addresses this interaction.

2.1. Conceptual framework for public policy making.

The complexity of public policy-making necessitates a clear conceptual framework to elucidate its nature and context. This framework encompasses the definition of public policy and its significance, as well as the concept of the internal environment as a set of factors and institutions that influence decision-making. Understanding this framework is essential for analyzing how the internal environment shapes policy orientations and implementation mechanisms.

2.1.1. The emergence and evolution of the concept of public policy in the political literature:

A. The Emergence and Development of Public Policy: In this subsection, we address the emergence and evolution of public policy across various civilizations, with a particular focus on the political, social, and economic factors that contributed to its formation. Public policies have evolved throughout different historical periods as follows:

✓ **Babylonian Civilization:** King **Hammurabi** established the first organized tax system and created the famous Code of Hammurabi, which regulated relations between rulers and the ruled in areas such as commerce, punishments, and individual rights. He also contributed to building a central administrative and military system to ensure the stability of the state (Mar'i & Mubarak, 2020, pp. 8–9) .

✓ **Pharaonic Civilization:** The Pharaohs employed a centralized administrative system that controlled agricultural lands and imposed taxes on crops. Laws such as those of **Senusret** and

Horemheb aimed to enhance internal stability and combat corruption through judicial and administrative reforms. (Zitouni, n.d.) .

✓ **Chinese Civilization:** The Chinese developed a civil service system based on merit rather than inheritance. During the **Han** Dynasty, the imperial examination system was established to employ officials based on competence, contributing to the development of an efficient and corruption-free government (Hamidani, n.d., p. 22).

✓ **Greek Civilization:** In Greek city-states, especially Athens, democratic concepts were developed, influenced by the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. Public policy aimed at achieving justice and social harmony, with a clear focus on the separation of powers and public participation in political life (Mujahid, 1999, p. 38) .

✓ **Roman Civilization:** Rome established an advanced model for implementing public policies through its legal system and territorial organization. The Senate played a crucial role in shaping public policy, while citizens participated in decision-making through popular assemblies, creating a form of political participation within the republican system. (Mar'i & Mubarak, 2020, p. 9).

✓ **Islamic Civilization:** Public policies in Islamic civilization were based on principles of justice, equality, and consultation (**Shura**). These policies emphasized citizen participation, governmental oversight, and tax laws to ensure economic stability. Thinkers like **Al-Farabi** and **Ibn Khaldun** contributed to the development of these policies, focusing on governance, social justice, and the balance between power and individual freedoms⁶. (Sobh, 2011, p. 52) .

We present that these ancient civilizations established important administrative and governmental models that have influenced the development of modern public policies.

With the evolution of political thought in the twentieth century, credit for shaping the field of public policy is attributed to the American political scientist **Harold Lasswell** in the **1950s**, particularly through his book **The Policy Sciences**. This field further developed in the late **1960s** with the rise of the behavioral school, which emphasized the importance of analyzing the outputs of political systems, especially public policies.

Interest in this field increased during the **1980s** as the United States faced escalating societal challenges such as inflation, unemployment, government spending, Middle East crises, and international trade issues—prompting the search for effective tools to address these problems.

Up until the **1970s**, the state was considered the primary actor in public policymaking. Even studies that examined the role of political parties or interest groups approached them mainly in terms of their influence on state policy decisions, rather than as independent actors. However, this perception shifted with the decline of the traditional role of the state and the emergence of new actors such as **multinational corporations**, **international organizations**, and **civil society**.

Public policy also became influenced by the transformations brought about by **globalization**, as new global issues emerged on the public policy agenda, such as environmental concerns, privatization, fiscal management, human rights, and governance methods. This gave rise to the

concept of **global public policies** (Agari, 2019, pp. 21–22) .

In parallel, interest grew in topics that had previously received limited attention—such as **policy evaluation, policy failure, and policy implementation studies**. The methodology of policy analysis evolved as well, integrating both **quantitative and qualitative methods**, and shifting toward **preventive approaches** rather than solely remedial ones. Greater emphasis was placed on **evaluating alternatives**, and on concepts like **public satisfaction, procedural justice, and citizen participation**.

With the emergence of what is known as **Policy Networks**, public policy began to be viewed as the product of both formal and informal interactions among a variety of actors at local and global levels, including civil society. This perspective helped expand democratic participation and integrate previously marginalized groups into the policymaking process (El-Menoufi, 2004, p. 23) .

B. Public Policy: Concept and structure:

✓ The Concept of Public Policy:

Public policy is a multidimensional field that has been defined in various ways depending on different intellectual schools and perspectives. **Harold Lasswell** defined it as “Who gets what, when, and how,” emphasizing the distribution of resources and values through the exercise of power and influence, thereby linking public policy to the dynamics of power and societal benefits. In contrast (Al-Fahdawi, 2001, p. 32) , **Thomas Dye** offered a simpler definition, stating that it is “whatever governments choose to do or not to do,” highlighting that government action or inaction constitutes policy (Al-Hussein, 2002, p. 9). **Carl Friedrich** focused on the programmatic dimension, defining public policy as “a proposed course of action within a specific environment aimed at overcoming obstacles and achieving specific goals,” thus presenting it as a deliberate plan to address problems (Al-Khazraji, 2013, p. 27). **Guy Peters**, on the other hand, viewed it as “a specific pattern of actions taken collectively by society or its representatives to address issues of public concern,” emphasizing its participatory nature and alignment with the public interest. From a systemic perspective (Al-Mughirbi, 2001, p. 85), **Gabriel Almond** considered public policy to be “the outcome of a systematic interaction of inputs (demands and support) and outputs (decisions and policies),” reflecting its role in expressing the strategic, organizational, and symbolic capacity of the political system (Almond, 1996, p. 252) .

In the Arab context, **Najwa Ibrahim Mahmoud** defined it as “a means to achieve the goals and objectives of the political system, reflecting the balance of power and the ideological values of both the ruling elite and opposition forces,” highlighting its political and ideological dimension (Mahmoud, 2001, p. 12) . **Khairy Abdel Qawy** offered a procedural perspective, describing it as “the political and non-political processes undertaken by the government to define a problem, identify solution alternatives, and select the most appropriate one as the basis for a binding public policy,” stressing the analytical and decision-making nature of policy formulation. Lastly (Abdel

Qawi, 1989, p. 97) , **Fahmi Khalifa Al-Fahdawi** provided a comprehensive definition, viewing public policy as “an active,

adaptive, and responsive system that interacts with its environment and related variables through governmental institutions, aiming to solve current and future societal problems through structured goals, programs, and behaviors,” thus underscoring its functional integration and institutional flexibility (Al-Fahdawi, 2001, p. 38) .

These definitions reflect the diversity of approaches to public policy—some focusing on governmental action, others on institutional interactions or the distribution of power—demonstrating the richness and evolution of this field across time and intellectual traditions.

✓ **Structure of Public Policy:**

- **Political Demands:** Political demands constitute a fundamental element in the public policymaking cycle, reflecting the aspirations and needs of citizens, interest groups, and civil society toward public authority. These demands encompass diverse areas such as education, health, social justice, and economic opportunities, and are typically expressed through parties, unions, media, and social movements. They play a key role in shaping policy priorities and the government’s agenda, while

effective responses to them serve as indicators of the political system’s legitimacy, openness, and engagement with society within a participatory democratic framework.

- **Policy Decisions:** Policy decisions constitute an institutional response to societal demands, made by official authorities after evaluating alternatives and selecting the most suitable course of action to address public issues. These decisions reflect the state’s overarching directions across various domains, determine the nature of government intervention, the allocation of resources, and the implementation timeline. They aim to achieve the public interest and must be rational, realistic, and aligned with strategic objectives, while remaining subject to continuous assessment and accountability.

-**Policy Outputs:** Policy outputs refer to the direct and tangible results of implementing public policy decisions, including laws, programs, and services delivered by government institutions. These outputs serve as concrete indicators of the government’s commitment to its policies and are used as benchmarks to measure governmental performance. Analyzing these outputs helps uncover gaps between planning and execution, and evaluates how well institutions respond to defined goals, thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public policy processes.

-**Policy Impact:** Policy impact represents the final phase in the public policy cycle, where the actual societal effects of the policy are assessed after implementation. This includes both positive and negative changes, such as improved service delivery or unintended adverse consequences. Evaluating policy impact relies on both quantitative and qualitative tools to assess goal attainment, resource efficiency, and the satisfaction of targeted beneficiaries. Such evaluations are essential for ensuring the sustainability of public policies and directing them toward maximum effectiveness, justice, and accountability (Al-Fahdawi, 2001, pp. 41–42).

2.1.2. Patterns of Public Policy and the Role of Key Actors in Their Formulation Within the Internal Political Environment.

A. Types of Public Policies:

Public policies vary according to the nature of the issues, the extent of state intervention, and the complexity of the internal environment in which they are formulated. This diversity requires a precise distinction between different policy types and a clear understanding of the defining characteristics of each. Such differentiation not only enriches the theoretical analysis of public policy but also deepens comprehension of how institutions, elites, and internal environments interact in shaping decisions that directly affect citizens' lives. Public policies can be classified into several main types:

✓ **Regulatory Policies:** Aim to establish rules and standards to guide the behavior of individuals and institutions, ensuring order and protecting the public interest, while reflecting the balance of power within the state's internal environment.

✓ **Distributive Policies:** Focus on allocating resources or benefits to specific societal segments without imposing direct costs on others, shaped through institutional agendas, political bargaining, and societal demands.

✓ **Redistributive Policies:** Involve the deliberate transfer of resources or opportunities between social groups to promote equity and reduce poverty, often politically sensitive due to the clear distinction between beneficiaries and those bearing the costs, and influenced by ideology, institutional capacity, and societal pressures.

✓ **Constituent Policies:** Concern the structural and procedural foundations of government, shaping institutional frameworks, governance rules, and authority distribution, thereby influencing the formulation and implementation of all other policies and reflecting the state's capacity to adapt to political change and implement reforms.

✓ **Symbolic Policies:** Aim to express values, reinforce national identity, and demonstrate political commitment, with limited immediate material impact, but play a key role in shaping public perception, legitimizing authority, and fostering social cohesion.

✓ **Extractive Policies:** Represent state strategies for resource mobilization, primarily through taxes and fees, to finance public services, reflecting the state's legitimacy and capacity in economic and social interventions, with their success dependent on transparency, accountability, and public trust (Hussein, 2021, p. 119).

B. Influential Actors in the Public Policy Process:

✓ **Formal Actors Influencing Public Policy-Making:** Official actors constitute the fundamental pillar in the public policy-making process, as they undertake legislative, executive, and administrative functions in accordance with the legal and constitutional framework of the state. These actors include the three branches of government: the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary, in addition to administrative institutions and bureaucratic bodies. They play a direct

role in setting policy priorities, formulating, implementing, and evaluating policies. Moreover, they interact with other actors—both formal and informal—within a complex system of institutional balances. The primary official actors can be identified as follows:

-The Executive Authority: This is the central actor in public policy-making, possessing the power to formulate plans and implement governmental programs. It includes the head of state, the head of government, and various ministries. The executive initiates policies based on governmental agendas and prevailing national and international conditions, and oversees coordination and execution across sectors.

- The Legislative Authority: The legislature plays a vital role in shaping public policy through debating legislative proposals, approving executive policy plans, and exercising oversight over government performance. It also holds the power to propose alternative policies that reflect the aspirations of citizens and the orientations of represented political parties, thus reinforcing participatory governance.

- The Judicial Authority: Although a neutral institution, the judiciary influences public policy by exercising constitutional oversight over laws and policy frameworks. Courts may annul or amend policies that conflict with legal principles or fundamental rights, thereby serving as a mechanism for ensuring legitimacy and constitutional compliance.

- Regulatory and Advisory Bodies: These include institutions such as audit courts, general inspectorates, and economic and social councils. They contribute to monitoring policy implementation and offer recommendations regarding policy efficiency and effectiveness. By providing decision-makers with objective analyses and data, these bodies help refine performance and correct potential implementation deviation (Al-Kubaisi, 2008, pp. 94–95).

✓ **Informal Actors Influencing Public Policy-Making:** Unofficial actors play a vital role in public policy-making despite lacking formal authority. Through lobbying, mobilization, media influence, and public opinion shaping, they impact policy directions and advocate for various social interests. These actors include political parties, civil society, the media, and elites, contributing to policy formulation both directly and indirectly.

- Political Parties: Political parties are among the most prominent informal actors in the public policy-making process. They play a central role in articulating the interests of various social groups and conveying them to decision-making circles. Through participation in elections, parties seek to gain power or influence those in power, which enables them to shape public debates and formulate policies that align with their ideological orientations and political agendas (Al-Hamdani, 2004, p. 303).

- Interest and Pressure Groups: Interest and pressure groups serve as informal yet influential mechanisms in shaping public policies, whether through legal means or by exerting economic and social influence. Their strength lies in their high level of organization, ability to mobilize support, and provision of expertise and information to policymakers. These capacities grant them a significant role in steering policies in specific sectors such as health, education, or the economy (Lacheheb, 2001, p. 61) .

- Media Outlets: Media outlets exert substantial influence in shaping public opinion and guiding the policy agenda. Through coverage and analysis, they help spotlight specific issues, compelling policymakers to respond. Additionally, the media plays a critical role in holding officials

accountable and monitoring the implementation of policies, thereby enhancing transparency and exerting pressure for policy adjustments when necessary (Boutouil, 2010, p. 36) .

- **Public Opinion:** Public opinion represents an informal yet deeply impactful force in the public policy-making process, especially in political systems that value civic engagement. Its importance lies in the extent to which governments respond to the aspirations of citizens and submit to pressure stemming from popular sentiment, which at times leads to the modification or redirection of adopted policies (Aheddadene, 2007, p. 4) .

- **Civil society:** Civil society contributes to public policy-making by representing citizens' interests and conveying their demands to decision-makers, thereby enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of policies. Its organizations play a monitoring and advisory role, offering alternative proposals and helping to identify problems and formulate solutions. Additionally, civil society exercises peaceful pressure and mobilizes public opinion to promote reforms, making it an active partner in the political process (Ben Slimane, 2018, pp. 115–116).

The diversity of public policy types and the range of actors involved in their formulation are key to understanding the state's political and administrative processes. Policies vary in form and purpose—regulatory, distributive, symbolic, and more—reflecting the state's multifaceted goals. Both formal institutions and informal actors, such as civil society and the media, interact within complex governance dynamics. Grasping this interplay is essential for analyzing public policy and understanding the evolving nature of governance.

2.2. The Concept of the Internal Environment and Its Representations in Political Literature.

The internal environment is a key concept in public policy analysis, as it shapes decision-making and policy priorities within the state. It encompasses internal political and administrative factors such as institutions, elites, bureaucracy, party dynamics, and socioeconomic conditions. Political literature offers varied interpretations of this concept, viewing it either as a framework for actor interaction or as a source of power dynamics. Understanding the internal environment is thus essential for analyzing how it influences public policy formation.

2.2.1. Defining the Internal Environment: A Conceptual and Analytical Approach.

A. Defining the internal environment:

The internal environment is one of the pivotal concepts in public policy analysis, due to its direct impact on the decision-making process and the direction of policies within the national context. It refers to “**the set of factors and components originating within the political or administrative system that affect its operations, determine its priorities, and define the limits of its capacity to interact with changing realities.**” This environment includes a complex array of intertwined elements such as political structure, administrative frameworks, local economic conditions, and social and cultural data, all of which interact to form the internal climate in which policies are constructed and governmental choices are determined.

This concept has garnered special attention from public policy and administration theorists, each from their analytical perspective. **David Easton** considered the internal environment as “**the primary source of inputs that influence the political system’s operation, including demands, pressures, and support, which ultimately reflect on the outputs of public policy.**” (Easton, 1965, pp. 17–18) Meanwhile, **James Anderson** views the internal environment as “**the principal determinant of public policy directions, encompassing local political forces, institutional structures, internal economic conditions, and social customs and traditions,**” (Anderson, 2003, pp. 3–4) making it a true reflection of the constraints and opportunities available to decision-makers.

From an administrative perspective, **Fredrickson and Faulkner** argue that the internal environment represents “**the organizational, political, and social conditions that originate within the state and affect the efficiency of administrative performance and its responsiveness to public demands.**” (Frederickson, Smith, Larimer, & Licari, 2011, pp. 24–26) This definition broadens the view of the internal environment to include institutional and administrative capacities, not merely the political aspect. Similarly, **Douglass North**, from the viewpoint of institutional economics, emphasizes the institutional dimension in explaining the internal environment’s impact, affirming that “**the internal environment is constructed through formal institutions (such as laws and organizational structures) and informal ones (such as customs and cultural norms), which generate incentives or impose constraints on actors’ behavior, including policy makers**” (North, 1990, pp. 3–6) .

The internal environment is inherently dynamic, shaped by shifts in power, societal demands, and institutional development. Differences in this environment—across political, economic, and administrative contexts—explain variations in policy approaches among states. Analyzing it provides not just a descriptive lens, but also a predictive and interpretive tool to

understand policy constraints and opportunities. Thus, a thorough analysis of the internal environment is essential for assessing the success or failure of public policies in achieving their goals.

B. Elements of the Internal Environment Influencing Public Policy-Making :

The internal environment for public policy formulation consists of an interrelated set of factors that dominate political action and decision-making, where policy cannot be separated from the context in which it operates. From this standpoint, political, economic, institutional, and social factors are central elements that shape the features and orientations of public policy, as they reflect the power balances within the political system.

✓ **Political Factors:** constitute a fundamental pillar, as the political system and its distribution of power determine interaction among actors and influence the legitimacy and coherence of the decision-making process. A well-balanced system that respects checks and balances is essential for producing effective and structured policies.

✓ **Economic Factors:** also play a decisive role by defining state priorities and its capacity for intervention. Economic stability, fiscal strength, and income diversification condition the margin of political manoeuvre and affect the implementation of sectoral programs. Moreover, economic instruments—such as budgeting and taxation—serve not only efficiency and redistribution goals but also reinforce political stability and regime legitimacy.

✓ **Institutional Factors:** shape how decisions are made and implemented. The effectiveness, transparency, and independence of political and administrative institutions contribute to the credibility and consistency of public policies. Strong institutions enhance state-society relations, whereas weak institutions undermine legitimacy and lead to policy fragmentation.

✓ **Social Factors:** reflect internal societal dynamics and influence policy through demographic trends, education, political culture, and the growing role of social actors—such as parties, unions, and civil society organizations—in articulating demands and shaping public opinion. These factors serve as key drivers of political adaptation and change..

✓ **Legal Factors :** provide the normative framework governing institutional interactions and decision-making. By defining the limits of authority and upholding constitutional principles, the legal environment supports transparency, accountability, and the legitimacy of policy outputs (Al-Dajeh, 2020, pp. 140–146) .

✓ **Administrative factors:** Administrative factors are vital in shaping and executing public policies, as they reflect the state's organizational and executive capabilities. Public administration acts as the tool that turns political decisions into actions. The success of policies depends on the quality of administrative performance, clarity in management, and coordination across levels. A well-functioning bureaucracy can support policy effectiveness, while a rigid one can hinder it. Thus, enhancing the administrative environment, promoting a service-oriented culture, and ensuring autonomy from political pressures are key to crafting responsive and effective public policies (Factors That Influence Public Policy, n.d.) .

2.2.2. The Impact of the Internal Environment on the Effectiveness of Public Policies:

The internal environment is a key determinant in shaping public policy at the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. It encompasses the institutional, political, and administrative frameworks where governmental decisions are made and actors interact. Analyzing this environment helps uncover the structural and functional dynamics that influence decision-making and state responsiveness to development and governance challenges. The effectiveness of public policy depends on institutional interactions, resource availability, administrative efficiency, and the stability of legal and social systems. Thus, understanding the internal environment is essential for realistically assessing policy effectiveness beyond abstract theory.

A. The Importance of the Internal Environment in Guiding Public Policy:

The internal environment plays a fundamental role in public policy by defining the institutional and organizational framework within which governmental decisions are made. It shapes the distribution of powers among legislative, executive, and oversight bodies and establishes the structural context that guides policy formulation. A key function of the internal

environment is to ensure coordination and coherence among governmental actors; effective policy-making depends on the ability of institutions to avoid overlap and conflict, and to work in an integrated manner (Mahmud, 2017, p. 136).

In addition, the internal environment reflects the state's capacity to allocate and use resources strategically. Policy success depends not only on resource availability but also on the institutional ability to plan and deploy those resources in line with national priorities. It also serves as a diagnostic tool, revealing structural and functional deficiencies—such as weak accountability, poor governance, or bureaucratic inefficiency—that may hamper policy effectiveness (Anderson, 2009, p. 47).

Moreover, the internal environment indicates a political system's adaptability to change. Resilient and flexible institutions enable the state to adjust its policies in response to evolving domestic and international conditions. It also underpins effective implementation and continuous policy evaluation, since without capable administrative mechanisms and monitoring systems, public policies risk failing to translate into practice. Ultimately, a well-functioning internal environment strengthens political legitimacy and public trust by ensuring credible performance and adherence to principles of transparency and accountability, which are essential for social cohesion and the consolidation of the state's strategic objectives (Hamad, 2021, pp. 100–126).

B. The Impact of Internal Environmental Factors on Public Policy-Making:

The internal environment is a vital factor shaping public policy at all stages—planning, implementation, and evaluation. It encompasses the institutional, political, and administrative frameworks through which decisions are made and actors interact. Analyzing it reveals the structural and functional dynamics influencing policymaking and the state's ability to address development needs and governance challenges. The success of public policies depends on institutional interactions, resource availability, administrative efficiency, and legal and social stability. Therefore, understanding the internal environment is essential for realistically assessing policy effectiveness beyond theoretical models.

✓ **The Political Structure:** The political structure plays a fundamental role in shaping public policy orientations by determining the distribution of power, the nature of the political regime, and the legitimacy of governing institutions. The presence of a pluralistic, participatory structure enhances policy responsiveness, while centralized or authoritarian configurations may restrict the openness of policy-making and marginalize societal demands.

✓ **Institutional Stability:** Institutional stability refers to the consistency, credibility, and continuity of state institutions in carrying out their functions. Stable institutions provide a reliable foundation for policy implementation, ensure the predictability of administrative actions, and foster public confidence in governance. Conversely, institutional volatility can lead to erratic policy behavior and weakened policy outcomes (Harrouch, 2021, p. 945).

✓ **Administrative Efficiency:** The effectiveness of the bureaucratic apparatus is a central factor in the success or failure of public policies. Administrative efficiency involves the professionalization of civil service, the rationalization of procedures, and the ability to implement

decisions competently and within appropriate timelines. Weak or politicized administrations often lead to policy paralysis and a loss of trust in public action.

✓ **The Legal Environment:** A coherent and transparent legal framework provides the normative and procedural basis for policy-making and enforcement. The rule of law, legal certainty, and the independence of the judiciary ensure that policies are not only legitimate but also enforceable and protected from arbitrary political interference. Legal fragility, on the other hand, undermines the credibility and sustainability of public policies.

✓ **Economic Resources:** The availability and distribution of economic resources determine the state's capacity to finance and sustain public policy initiatives. Sound fiscal management, effective resource mobilization, and strategic allocation are essential to ensuring that policies are not only ambitious but also realistic and executable. Economic constraints often limit policy scope and reduce their societal impact.

✓ **The Social Climate:** Social cohesion, levels of trust, and the nature of state-society relations significantly affect how policies are received and implemented. A supportive social environment can facilitate community participation and reduce resistance to reforms, whereas societal fragmentation or mistrust can result in policy rejection, apathy, or open contestation.

✓ **Internal Dynamics:** Internal political and administrative dynamics—such as elite competition, bureaucratic interests, and inter-agency coordination—have a direct impact on the coherence and adaptability of public policies. These dynamics can either enhance policy synergy or lead to fragmentation, institutional rivalries, and policy incoherence (Al-Dajeh, 2020, p. 155).

2. Theoretical Approaches Explaining the Influence of the Internal Environment on Public Policy-Making.

Theoretical approaches are key tools for analyzing how the internal environment affects public policy-making. They help identify structural, institutional, and contextual factors that shape public action within political and administrative systems. These approaches are essential for understanding state dynamics, including power relations, institutional performance, bureaucratic behavior, political culture, and social context. They also explain differences in policy outcomes across states based on variations in internal environments. Therefore, examining these frameworks is crucial for understanding policymaking dynamics and evaluating how internal factors facilitate or hinder public objectives.

3.1. Structural and Institutional Approaches :

The structural and institutional approaches are essential theoretical tools for analyzing public policy-making. The structural approach emphasizes the influence of macro-level factors such as the economic system and social balances in shaping political decisions, while the institutional approach highlights the role of formal rules and organizational frameworks in guiding policy processes. Together, these perspectives offer a deeper understanding of the interaction between structural and institutional contexts. This interplay helps explain the nature

and outcomes of public policies.

3.1.1. Structural Approaches:

A. Structural-Functional Theory: The structural-functional theory stands as one of the most influential structural approaches in political analysis, aiming to explain political phenomena through the relationship between a system's institutional framework and the vital functions it performs. Originating in positivist sociology through the works of Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton—who viewed society as an integrated system whose components ensure stability and equilibrium—the theory was later adapted to political science by Gabriel Almond, especially for the comparative analysis of political systems in developing countries. Within this framework, political systems are understood through their structural units and the essential functions performed by each unit within the broader structure of the state.

Central to this theory are the concepts of structure and function. Structure refers to stable formal and informal institutions such as parliaments, governments, judicial bodies, and party systems which constitute the foundations of the political system. Function refers to the various roles performed by these structures to ensure the continuity of the system, maintain societal cohesion, and achieve political and administrative objectives. Almond argued that all political systems, regardless of their complexity, must perform core functions such as political socialization, elite recruitment, interest articulation and aggregation, policy-making, policy implementation, and policy adjudication and oversight. (Muhanna, n.d., pp. 100–102)

In addition, the theory views the political system as an interactive entity shaped by cultural, economic, legal, and social structures that play a decisive role in public policy-making. Weaknesses in these structural components, such as inadequate representation of interests, can lead to ineffective policies. Consequently, the extent of harmony or conflict among structural elements directly affects policy outcomes and helps explain the success or failure of public decisions. Although structural-functionalism has faced criticism for focusing too heavily on stability and predefined roles while overlooking conflict, transformation, and the agency of political actors, it remains a valuable analytical framework. In particular, it provides important insights into the relationship between institutional performance and governance structures and elucidates how public policies contribute to systemic stability, especially in unstable or transitional contexts.

B. Dependency Theory: Dependency theory, which emerged in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s, offers a structuralist critique of classical development approaches such as modernization theory. It asserts that underdevelopment in the Global South is not a temporary phase caused by internal deficiencies, but rather the result of structural dependency on industrialized countries within an unequal global system. For theorists such as André Gunder Frank, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and Samir Amin, developing countries have been incorporated into the global capitalist system in a way that perpetuates their subordinate position,

distorts their internal structures, and prevents the development of autonomous growth processes.

This dependency extends beyond economic exchange to include production systems, state structures, and the political behavior of local elites who are aligned with external interests. Consequently, the domestic environment in many Southern countries reflects entrenched dependency patterns, where public policy is often shaped—either directly or indirectly—by external actors and institutions, including international financial organizations. Local elites frequently act as intermediaries, reinforcing dependency rather than challenging it. (Belhaj, n.d., p. 79)

Accordingly, dependency theory attributes policy failures in developing countries to internal environments shaped by structural dependency, in which national decision-making is constrained and oriented towards external demands instead of domestic needs. Although criticized for structural determinism and insufficient attention to local agency, the theory remains relevant for understanding how global power relations continue to influence domestic policymaking, especially through contemporary forms of dependency such as debt, technology, and cultural influence.

3.1.2. Institutional Approaches .

A. New Institutionalism: New Institutionalism is a prominent contemporary approach that reestablishes institutions as central explanatory factors in political and administrative analysis. It emerged in response to behavioral and economic theories that reduced political dynamics to individual preferences and interests. In contrast, new institutionalism emphasizes that institutions—understood as formal and informal rules, organizational procedures, and cultural symbols—shape actors' behavior, structure interactions, and constrain available policy choices.

This approach is characterized by its theoretical diversity and flexibility. Among its key variants is **Historical Institutionalism**, which highlights the importance of historical context and path dependence, arguing that early political choices create self-reinforcing patterns that limit future options and reflect underlying power configurations. **Rational Choice Institutionalism** views institutions as frameworks that reduce uncertainty and incentivize coordinated action, assuming that rational actors pursue their interests within institutional constraints. **Sociological Institutionalism** underscores the cultural and normative dimensions of institutions, contending that they embody shared values and meanings that shape identities and guide behavior through legitimacy rather than material incentives.

New Institutionalism thus provides advanced analytical tools for understanding how institutional frameworks influence public policy. It shows that policy outcomes are strongly affected by the strength, adaptability, and legitimacy of institutions, and explains cross-national variations in political and administrative performance through institutional arrangements and patterns of interaction. Rather than merely describing institutions, it examines their emergence, evolution, and impact on decision-making, making it essential for analysing how internal environments shape public policy.(Belhaj, n.d., p. 80) .

B. Institutional Game Theory: Institutional Game Theory is a prominent contemporary analytical approach that combines insights from institutional theory and rational choice to deepen the understanding of political behavior within institutional settings. It emerged in response to the increasing complexity of modern political systems, the proliferation of actors, and the growing incidence of conflicting interests—developments that require analytical tools capable of explaining decision-making within complex institutional structures.

The theory assumes that actors within political institutions—such as individuals, interest groups, bureaucracies, and political parties—act as rational players who develop strategies and make decisions according to the rules of the institutional game. Institutions are therefore understood not merely as formal structures, but as systems of formal and informal rules that regulate behavior, define acceptable actions, and govern interaction and negotiation among actors.

Institutional Game Theory focuses on how these actors deploy strategies to pursue their interests, conceptualizing political relations as “games” with different goals, benefits, losses, and strategic calculations, depending on factors such as the type of game, the number of players, levels of information, and the capacity to form alliances. Consequently, phenomena such as legislative deadlock, shifting alliances, or policy failures can be seen as logical outcomes of interactions within evolving institutional games (Al-Fahdawi, 2014, p. 155) .

While its strength lies in explaining actors’ behavior in light of both strategic interests and institutional constraints—thus allowing for a dynamic understanding of political change and power restructuring—it has been criticized for overemphasizing rationality and overlooking cultural and historical factors, as well as for its limitations in contexts characterized by institutional instability. Nevertheless, it remains an influential framework for analyzing the complexity of political decision-making in environments marked by institutional interdependence and intersecting interests.

3.2. Behavioral and Contextual Approaches.

This section of the study highlights **behavioral and contextual approaches** as modern analytical trends in public policy studies. These approaches focus on how psychological, social, and contextual factors influence actors’ behavior, moving beyond the traditional notion of perfect rationality. They also emphasize the role of cultural values, perceptions, and the broader political and institutional context in shaping decisions and policy variations across countries or over time. Consequently, these approaches provide flexible tools for understanding the complexities of political behavior and institutional dynamics.

3.2.1. The Behavioral Approach.

A. Rational Choice Theory: Rational Choice Theory is one of the most influential analytical frameworks in political science. It rests on the fundamental assumption that individuals behave rationally, seeking to maximize their interests and secure the highest possible benefit at the lowest

possible cost. Political actors—including individuals, parties, and interest groups—are assumed to possess well-defined preferences, logically ranked, and to choose strategies that generate optimal outcomes within the constraints of institutional and contextual conditions. Thus, political decisions are viewed as deliberate, utility-driven choices rather than random or purely ideological actions.

The theory is characterized by several foundational assumptions: complete rationality of actors, clarity and consistent ordering of preferences, calculability of costs and benefits, and the relative stability of choices over time. It also assumes that political outcomes are the result of strategic calculations aimed at maximizing utility given available resources and constraints.(Al-Fahdawi, 2014, p. 136) .

Several key scholars have contributed to the development of Rational Choice Theory. Kenneth Arrow, through his Impossibility Theorem, highlighted the difficulties of aggregating individual preferences into coherent collective decisions, especially in democratic systems.

Anthony Downs, in **An Economic Theory of Democracy**, offered a utility-based interpretation of voter and party behavior, arguing that voting reflects a calculated comparison of expected returns. Mancur Olson extended this framework to collective action, showing that individuals are unlikely to contribute to public goods without appropriate incentives, which gave rise to the concept of the “free rider” problem. (Hussein, 2018, p. 8).

From this perspective, politics is understood as a strategic arena in which rational actors pursue their objectives within structural and institutional constraints. The theory is particularly valuable for analyzing public policy-making, as it illuminates the bargaining processes, alliances, and cost-benefit calculations that guide the behavior of governments, parliaments, and international actors. While critics—especially from structural and historical approaches—argue that the theory overemphasizes economic rationality and overlooks cultural, normative, and symbolic dimensions of political behavior, Rational Choice Theory remains a powerful analytical tool, particularly when combined with broader approaches that incorporate structural and institutional factors.

B. Systems Theory: Systems Theory is regarded as one of the most influential analytical frameworks in comparative politics and public policy analysis. It is based on the premise that political systems operate as integrated entities that interact continuously with their internal and external environments through dynamic and reciprocal processes. Developed in the mid-twentieth century, this theory provided a comprehensive framework for understanding how political systems function as coherent units of analysis.

David Easton is considered one of its principal founders, introducing a model that views political systems as receiving **inputs**—such as public demands and political support—and transforming them into **outputs** in the form of policies and decisions. The stability and endurance of the system, according to Easton, depend on its ability to respond to these inputs and regenerate support through a feedback mechanism.

Gabriel Almond further refined the theory by emphasizing its structural-functional dimensions. He argued that all political systems, irrespective of their ideology or institutional form, perform a set of core functions, including political recruitment, political socialization, interest articulation

and aggregation, policy-making, and policy implementation. This functional lens enabled comparative analysis across different political systems based on a shared set of criteria,

strengthening the explanatory power of systems theory in accounting for institutional and behavioral variation.(Al-Rifai, 2021, p. 33) .

Systems theory provides a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding public policy by emphasizing the interdependence between the political system and its internal and external environments. It distinguishes between internal factors—such as institutions, political culture, leadership elites, and available resources—and external influences, including regional and international dynamics. The theory argues that changes in any of these factors may generate pressures that lead to crises or compel policy adjustments, highlighting the political system’s dynamic and adaptive nature.

In this regard, systems theory adopts a holistic and integrative perspective, viewing the political system as an interconnected whole. It places strong emphasis on environmental interaction and stresses the reciprocal relationship between the system and its surroundings. Based on a cyclical input–output model, it views public policies as responses to societal demands and support, which are continuously evaluated through a feedback mechanism that ensures policy adaptation to evolving conditions. The theory also underscores the importance of systemic stability, achieved through equilibrium among the various components, assigns specific functional roles to each part of the system, and maintains theoretical neutrality, which enables its application across a wide range of political contexts.(Hussein, 2018, p. 8) .

Although systems theory offers substantial theoretical advantages through its holistic, functional, and adaptive framework, it has also been the subject of considerable criticism. Structuralist and critical perspectives contend that it oversimplifies political complexity by relying on mechanistic models that overlook cultural and historical dimensions. Moreover, critics argue that the theory tends to be descriptive and pays insufficient attention to power relations and conflict.

Nevertheless, systems theory continues to serve as a valuable analytical tool—particularly when complemented by structural and cultural approaches. It provides a functionalist lens for understanding how political systems transform societal inputs into policy outputs, sustain political stability, and adapt institutionally to shifting environmental conditions.

3.2.2. The Contextual Approach.

A. Cultural and Social Analysis: The Theory of Cultural and Social Analysis offers a non-traditional perspective for understanding public policy and political behavior by emphasizing the role of symbolic elements, cultural norms, and shared social meanings. It views culture as an active force that shapes political decision-making and policy formation through collective imaginaries and representations that influence how citizens perceive the state, authority, and their own role within the political system. Key contributors to this approach include Clifford Geertz, who conceptualized culture as a system of meanings and stressed the need for context-sensitive policy analysis; Margaret Archer, who linked cultural structures with social agency in dynamic

interaction; and Pierre Bourdieu, whose notions of habitus and symbolic capital explain the cultural reproduction of authority and power. (Al-Fahdawi, 2014, p. 169) .

The theory adopts an interpretive lens that rejects economic and institutional determinism, focusing instead on cultural diversity and symbolic meanings as core drivers of political action. It considers power to be culturally constructed and reproduced through discourse, symbols, and collective imaginaries. The approach is characterized by its emphasis on cultural meanings and representations, its interpretive and contextual orientation, its rejection of material and institutional reductionism, its attention to symbolic pluralism, and its focus on the dynamic interaction between actors and cultural structures. It also reconceptualizes power and legitimacy as symbolic constructs rooted in shared cultural practices and social acceptance. (Al-Obeidi, 2019, p. 164) .

Despite its richness, the theory has been criticized for tending toward relativism and lacking methodological precision, as well as for underestimating material and structural factors in favor of cultural explanations. Nonetheless, it remains a valuable and multidimensional framework for analyzing political behavior and public policy in contemporary contexts.

B. Governance Theory: Governance Theory has become one of the most influential contemporary frameworks in political science, particularly since the 1990s, as a response to the structural transformation of the state and its gradual retreat from traditional interventionist roles.

Developed in the context of globalization, increasing policy complexity, and the rise of non-state actors, the theory views the state as one actor among many within a multi-actor network—including civil society, the private sector, international organizations, and local institutions—engaged collectively in public management.

Departing from the traditional government model, governance theory promotes a participatory and network-based approach, whereby decision-making and resource management are carried out through negotiation, partnership, and coordination rather than centralized bureaucratic control. R.A.W. Rhodes played a decisive role in formulating this framework, arguing that governance represents a shift from hierarchical state authority to dispersed and negotiated forms of power among various actors. (Al-Fahdawi, 2014, p. 141) .

The theory is characterized by several key features: the multiplicity of actors involved in decision-making; a focus on coordination and cooperation instead of control; flexibility and decentralization through mechanisms such as delegation and public-private partnerships; a results-oriented evaluation of public policy; the interconnectedness of local and global dynamics; and a redefinition of power as distributed and negotiated within policy networks.

Politically, governance theory reflects a fundamental transformation of the state into a complex field of interdependencies, where addressing contemporary challenges requires collaboration with other actors possessing expertise, resources, or legitimacy. However, the approach has faced several criticisms, including conceptual ambiguity, potential weakening of the state, concerns about democratic legitimacy due to the involvement of unelected actors, neoliberal biases favoring privatization and market mechanisms, and practical difficulties in policy implementation resulting from conflicting interests among multiple actors. (Haj, 2025, pp.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In light of the study's findings, it becomes clear that internal environmental factors constitute a central pillar in public policy-making. The political structure and the distribution of power determine the general orientations of the state and the extent to which it can respond to societal demands, while institutional stability and administrative efficiency contribute to the continuity of decisions and the effectiveness of implementation. Economic resources, in turn, represent a decisive element in shaping policy priorities, as the success of policies depends on the state's ability to manage and allocate those resources rationally. Moreover, social dimensions play a vital role in strengthening the legitimacy and societal acceptance of policies, particularly in contexts marked by rising awareness and demands for participation. The legal framework also acts as a regulating factor for institutional relations through clear and binding rules that serve as a basis for transparency and accountability. The study further shows that policy coherence is largely shaped by internal interactions and coordination between political and administrative actors, as participatory action contributes to avoiding duplication and conflicting interests. Consequently, the study concludes that any successful analysis or design of public policies must be based on an integrated understanding of political, economic, institutional, social, and legal factors, as they constitute essential determinants that directly influence the reality and outcomes of public policy.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it becomes clear that the internal environment constitutes one of the most decisive determinants in the process of public policy-making, as it imposes both constraints and opportunities stemming from the nature of the political system, the structure of institutions, the efficiency of the administrative apparatus, and the available economic and social resources. The internal interactions among actors—whether cooperative or conflicting—play a crucial role in setting priorities and guiding decisions. Analyzing the internal environment highlights the importance of understanding national dynamics and local contexts prior to adopting any reform or political intervention. Neglecting these internal determinants may lead to policy failure or deviation from intended goals. Therefore, adopting a comprehensive approach that takes into account the components of the internal environment is essential for formulating effective, realistic, and sustainable policies.

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