

# Rapid & Participatory Policy Analysis (RAPA)



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COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP (CDP)

# Rapid & Participatory Policy Analysis (RAPA)

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A practical tool to analyze any policy at any time

Jahangir Hasan Masum

# Rapid & Participatory Policy Analysis (RAPA)

There is no RIGHT or WRONG policy but always JUST policy



1

## WHY THIS TOOLKIT?

Because we activists need

**A practical tool to analyze any policy  
at any time by any activists for any  
policy advocacy**

Human society progresses through its policies and decisions. Shaping public policy is a complex and multifaceted process that involves the interplay of numerous individuals and interest groups. Policy analysis can be used to educate the public and the policy makers, thereby improving the public policy process. The main purpose of the Rapid & Participatory Policy Analysis (RAPA) Toolkit is to provide a practical tool to analyze any policy at any time by any activists for any policy advocacy. The objective of the toolkit is not generating intellectual debate, rather to assist activists or interested people to quickly understand about the formation & impact of public policy decisions. Although Bureaucratic system plays a key role in the public policy process, the toolkit has not provided much attention about it to keep the policy analysis as simple as possible.

Rapid & Participatory Policy Analysis (RAPA) aims to provide a simple framework for policy analysis, procedures, and exploring general theories about the way policy is

made as well as practical guidelines for institutional assessment. RAPA is a diagnostic tool to understand and identify stages of policy development structure, mechanisms & processes. Before using this diagnostic, we need to have conceptual understandings about important policy terms & languages.

1. How do governments work, laws get passed, and administrative rules get initiated?
2. How do professionals within organizations function in providing analysis and advice to decision makers, be they elected or appointed officials?
3. How can the process of analysis involve various constituencies and public and private groups?
4. How will decision makers make their decisions? On the basis of what information will they act? To whom will they listen: lobbyists, constituents, policy advisers?

### **What is Public Policy?**

Public Policy is a goal oriented strategic framework or principle (a written document with a particular set of objectives) to guide the government decisions, actions and strategies to address public issues as well as to provide doable benefits to the society in general. Public policy drives the government actions, decisions or justifications to address particular needs or problems within the targeted society. A Public Policy is usually administered through legislation, regulations and administrative practices of the government. Public policy is a decision already made, not an intention or promise.

2

### **What is evidence-based Public Policy?**

The evidence-based public policy is a policy which incorporated people's expectations, the best theory and data available during the policy development for achieving projected social goals.

### **What are different forms of Public Participation in public policy-making?**

People have significant knowledge and experience that can add meaningful contribution to the public policy process. Public participation in the policy-making process contributes to building public trust, raising quality of democracy and strengthening civic capacity (OECD 2001<sup>1</sup>). Public participation can take various forms and it can include a range of activities: from information exchange, to public consultation,

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<sup>1</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2001) Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy Making, OECD, Paris

engagement/dialogue, shared decisions and shared jurisdiction in decision making (Smith 2002<sup>2</sup>).

### What is policy analysis?

Policy analysis is a systematic analysis & evaluation of any or all components of the existing or forthcoming policies. It provides baseline information, points out major linkages between decisions and outcomes, and provides a starting point for consideration of more sustainable policy options for improving public welfare. According to Nagel<sup>3</sup>, Public policy analysis can be defined as determining which of various alternative public or governmental policies will most achieve a given set of goals in light of the relations between the policies and the goals. Policy analysis in most cases cannot be prescriptive.

### Why policy analysis?

A carefully done policy analysis can produce provide policy makers on the following about appropriate knowledge & information to make a better policy:

1. Policy problem (The most critical step of the policy analysis process)
2. Policy future (The possible consequences of the policy actions)
3. Policy action (The positive & negative consequences of the policy implementation)
4. Policy outcome (An observed consequence of a policy action)
5. Policy performance (The evaluation of a policy outcome)

3

### What is Policy process?

Process is a sequence of actions which categorically leading towards a finishing point. The policy process is consisting of three primary components: policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation. The policy process includes the formal activities of policy formulation and implementation of the policy life cycle. Policy initiation can come from any part within the official system and outside the official system, i.e. from the unofficial actors. In modern times, governments all over are moving to a more

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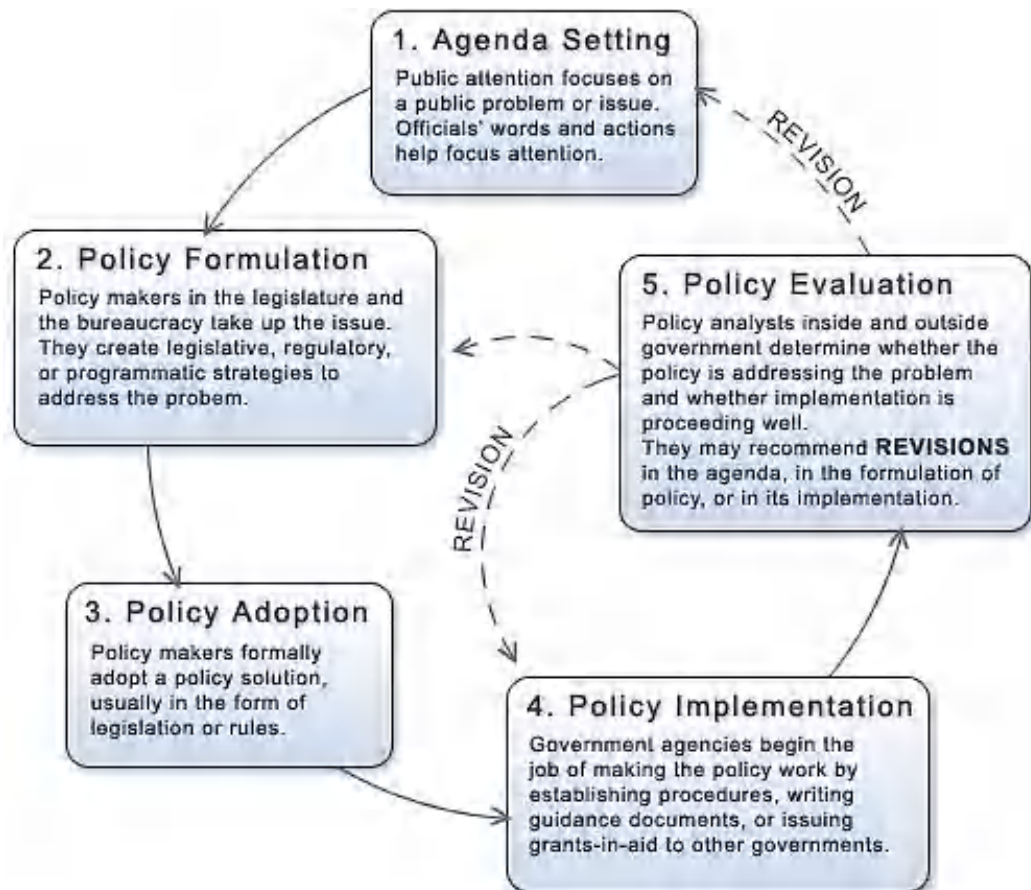
<sup>2</sup> Smith, B. (2002) Public Policy and Public Participation, prepared for the Atlantic Regional Office of the Population and Public Health Branch, Health Canada, Halifax.

<sup>3</sup> Nagel, S. (Ed.). (1990). Policy Theory and Policy Evaluation: Concepts, Knowledge, Causes, and Norms. New York: Greenwood.

inclusive, collaborative, deliberative policy-making process (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003<sup>4</sup>).

Policy process generally uses the following steps:

- 1) Identification of a problem and demand for government action (Policy Initiation/Agenda setting).
- 2) Formulation of policy proposals by various parties (Policy Formulation).
- 3) Selection and enactment of policy (Policy Legitimation/Policy Adoption).
- 4) Implementation of the chosen policy (Policy Implementation).
- 5) Evaluation of policy (Policy Evaluation).



## What is Policy Formulation?

Policy formulation is the development of justifiable, doable and acceptable courses of action for addressing the public demands. There are at least two steps in any policy formulation; the comprehensive & well-articulated policy analysis and the policy authorization through a political process, such as legislation or regulation.

<sup>4</sup> Hajer, A.M. and H. Wagenaar (2003) *Deliberative Policy Analysis: Understanding Governance in the Network Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.



The conceptual analysis of Policy Formulation helps to understand the influence of different perspectives during policy formulation process.

### What is Policy Legitimation?

Policy Legitimation is a political process to ensure parliamentary approval of the policy.

### What is policy implementation?

The policy implementation is a process enabling policy objectives and strategies to become operational plans. The policy may be implemented by a single government representative or body or by multiple actors.

### What is Policy Cycle?

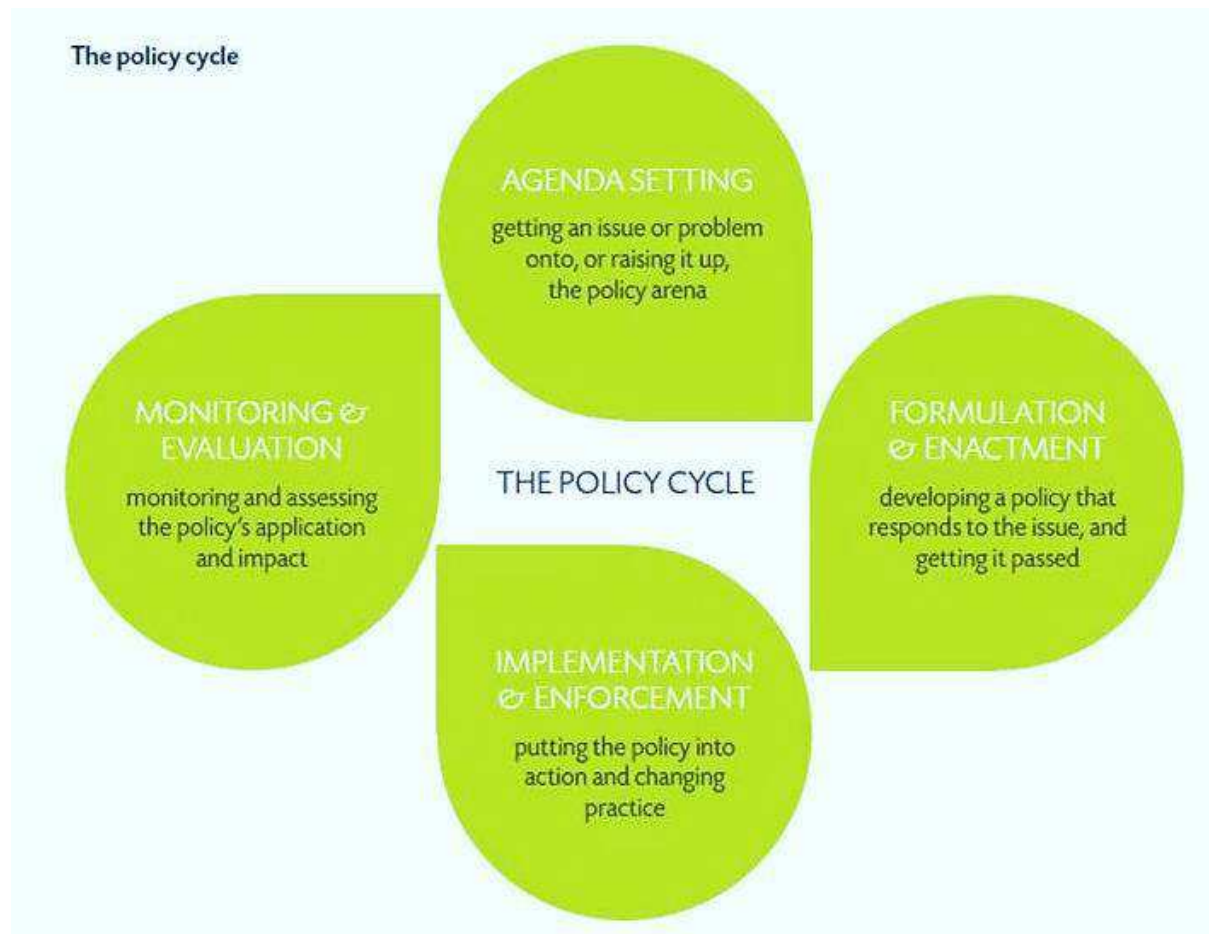
The policy cycle consists of three interconnected stages of policymaking: the decision-making and policy formulation stage, the implementation stage, and the monitoring, evaluation and reform stage. For example, the Australian Policy Cycle<sup>5</sup> suggests eight clear and identifiable steps of policy processes to help understand and structure policy development.

5

### How people can influence policy cycle?

1. People's struggle to define issues as problems worthy of attention on government agendas;
2. People's analyses of the problems
3. People's participation for devising and selecting policy alternatives
4. People action for implementing policy;
5. People's evaluation of the policy

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Bridgman, P. & Davis, G., 2004, *The Australian Policy Handbook*, Allen & Unwin, Diagram from [www.agimo.gov.au/resources/ppt/2002/020822r/020822r02.htm](http://www.agimo.gov.au/resources/ppt/2002/020822r/020822r02.htm)



### What factors & actors influence the policy process or policy cycle?

The policy process encompasses hundreds of government officials and people outside of government with different beliefs and interests interact, and their interactions. In many ways, political behavior among individuals, groups, and coalitions in the policy cycle shapes or defines the public policy. Lobby groups, political parties, single issue coalitions, industrial councils, unions and pressure groups play a very active role in this, mainly because their vast size through social support which allows them to contest issues.

Actors	Stakeholders
Executive Legislative Judiciary	Political Parties Interest Groups (those interests are directly affected) Advocacy groups Professional groups Think tanks and research organizations Academics Issue networks (a combination of the above) Public Media

### What are the Key prerequisites for good policy development?

- 1) Effective institutions
- 2) Effective people
- 3) Good systems
- 4) Vision and leadership
- 5) Policy as a small component of an overall picture



### Why Policy update or review is required?

Policies should express society's needs and values. The values of society are continuously changing, and policies being the representation of society's preferences and ideals, must change with them. If a policy is seen as practically ineffective, there is no legitimate reason to keep it. Many policy documents do not specify how the goals, objectives and strategies outlined therein are to be implemented.

7

### How political misuse of policy can happen?

In general, the purpose of government is to add value to the lives of the people it serves, and through good policy making, this can be achieved. However, many governments around election time try to make policies that the voters will consider looked favorable, and thus may help the government to be re-elected.

### What is policy coherence?

Policy Coherence is the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving the agreed policy objectives. Policy coherence ensures that policy objectives are avoiding negative consequences to ensure 'development-proofing' policy interventions across all domestic policies.

## What are the general approaches & Tactics of Policy Analysis?

All the policy analysis approaches can be categorized into three general approaches; the analycentric, the policy process, and the meta-policy approach<sup>6</sup>.

Approach	Focus	Scope	Problem Interpretation Framework	Main Purpose
The analycentric approach	individual problems and their solutions	micro-scale	technical	To identify the most effective and efficient solution in technical and economic terms
The policy process approach	political processes and involved stakeholders	meso-scale	political	To identify the role and influence of stakeholders within the policy process
The Policy Systems & Context approach	political, economic and socio-cultural factors & context influencing policy process	macro-scale	structural (system or institution)	To identify the contextual structural factors influencing the policy process

Policy Analysis Tactics			
Analytical Approach	Purpose	User	Methods
Academic Social Science Research	<b>Development of theories &amp; models</b> for understanding society	<b>Academic</b> community	Empirical methodology, often quantitative
Applied Policy Research	<b>Evaluating impacts</b> of changes in variable that can be altered by public and/ or private programmes	<b>Decision makers</b> in the policy area	Formal research methodology applied to policy-relevant questions
Social Planning	<b>Devising ways</b> to address social problems and to achieve desirable future for public welfare	<b>Public Interest Community</b> (activists, civil society or social movements)	Survey research, public forums, expert and /or citizen panels, public consultations
Policy Management Planning	<b>Defining and clarifying</b> goals; explicating alternatives for achieving those goals; evaluating outcome of attempt to achieve those goals	<b>Bureaucrats, government officials,</b> funding agencies, interested citizens	Databases, management techniques (Program Evaluation and Review Technique, flow charting, decision analysis),
Journalistic Analysis	<b>Drawing public attention</b> on social welfare problems	<b>General public</b>	Existing documents, expert sources (professionals, scholars, people affected by the problem)
Practitioner Policy Analysis	<b>Understanding</b> the policy context within which an individual social workers functions	The <b>practitioners</b> doing the analysis	Existing literature, government and other documents available on the Internet, expert sources
Citizen Policy Analysis	<b>Clarifying issues for participation</b> as an involved citizen in a democracy (action oriented)	The citizen involve in the analysis of <b>elected officials</b> that citizen wishes to influence	Existing literature, elected and appointed officials
Modified from Weimer, D. L., & Vining, A. R. (2005). Policy analysis: concepts and practice (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall.			

<sup>6</sup> Bührs, Ton; Bartlett, Robert V. (1993). Environmental Policy in New Zealand. The Politics of Clean and Green. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-558284-5

## What Is Policy-focused Gender Analysis?

Gender refers to the social identities of women and men, which are learned and supported by social systems, cultural beliefs & attitudes and changeable over time. Gender also refers to the relations between women and men, the differing expectations and values placed upon their identities, roles and relations, and the consequent differences in experience and outcomes for women and men.

The aim of gender analysis is to redress inequalities and inequities. Policy-focused Gender Analysis is a core component of policy analysis that identifies how public policy addresses gender equity & gender equality objectives incorporating women's needs and interests as well as the differential impact of policy over women and men. Gender equality aims for women and men enjoying the same status; the same opportunities are available for women and men to realise their full human rights and potential.<sup>7</sup>

Gender sensitive policy aims to address the socially constructed differences between women and men, their roles, relations, needs and interests, and issues arising out of these differences.

## What the activists who are new to policy analysis should do?

9

Policy is a living document, so you can start analysis anytime to transform a good policy into better policy. It is better to make a bad start than to make no start. Practicing on sample problems and case examples is a better way to start.

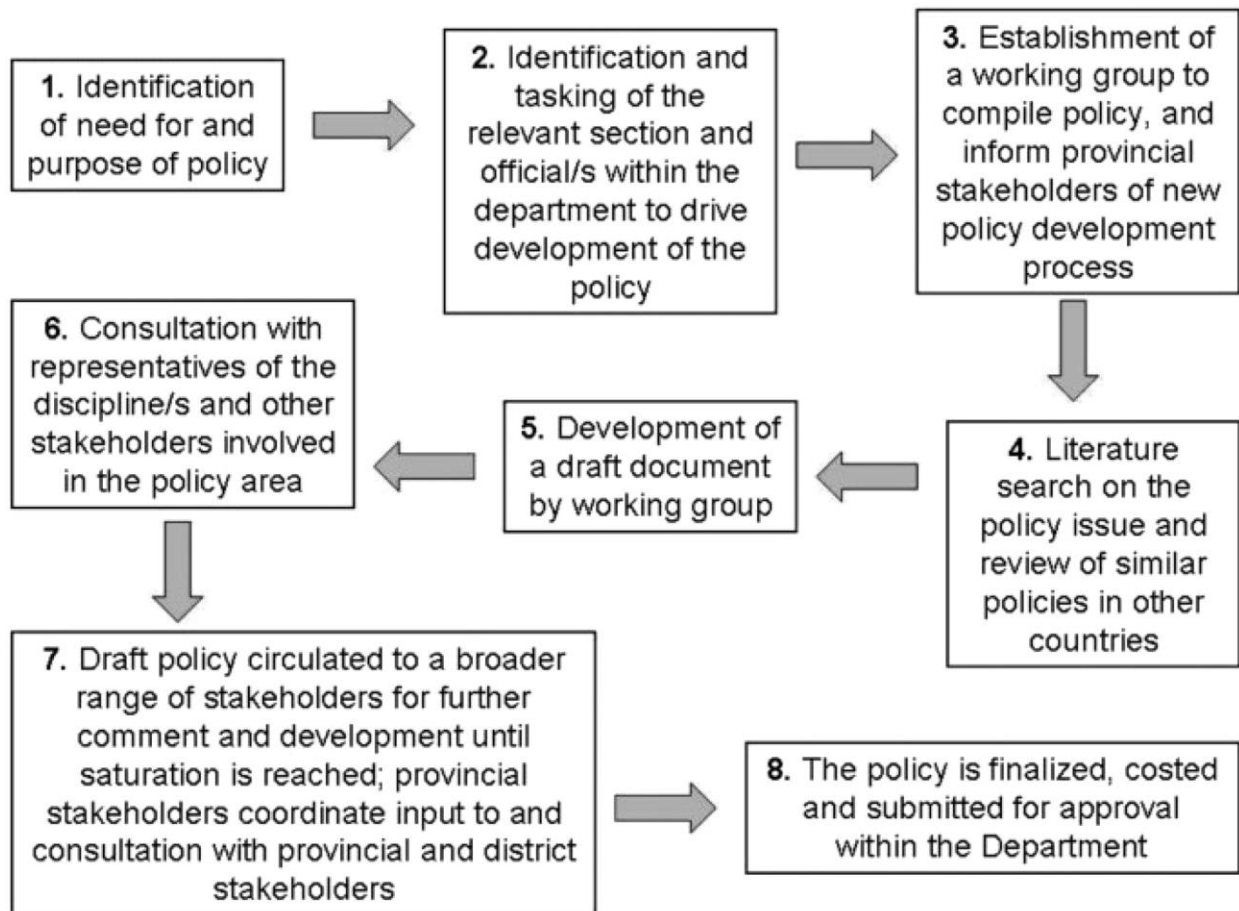
Quality of policy analysis depends upon availability of time and resources: the more, the better. However, satisfactory analysis requires virtually unlimited time, so it is better to go for effective, quick & practical analysis. Because no policy analysis is correct, coherent, and comprehensive, even if resources and time were unlimited. It is very effective if an activist strictly follows a self-imposed timeline to accomplish the analysis within the time allotted. Policy activists are practicing analysts who always have little time and insufficient resources.

Policy activists usually highlight policy problems and may offer alternative policy choices depending on the quality of analysis. Poor policy analysis would simply recommend action. But good policy analysis will offer independent conclusion with critical policy

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<sup>7</sup> Status of Women Canada, *Gender-based analysis: A guide for policy-making*, [www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/gbaguide/gbaguide\\_e.html#2\\_1](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/gbaguide/gbaguide_e.html#2_1)

choices. Please do not jump into conclusions quickly, rather keep an open but critical mind as long as possible. The quantification of the policy problem might help to pinpoint the problem or to draw attention quickly. It is very important to link the problem with the context in a very logical way.



## What is RAPA-10 Guidelines?

Based on the policy research & analysis experiences, Rapid & Participatory Policy Analysis (RAPA) proposes 10 guidelines which could be helpful for new policy activists.

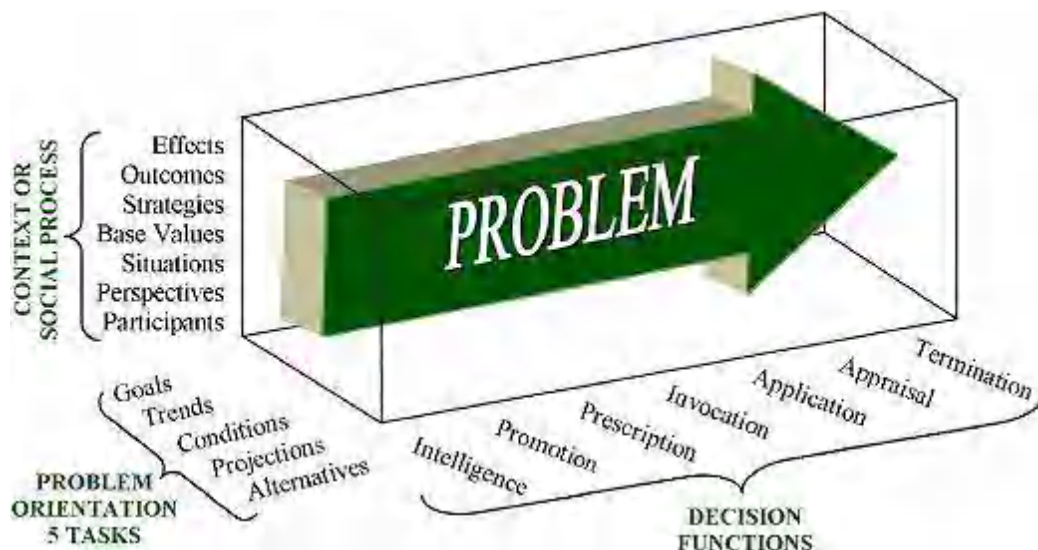
1. Develop the habit of looking at key policy objectives & problems quickly
2. Use Problem Identification Approach to Analyzing Policy
3. Use more than one analysis method whenever possible. If the method is unclear, then do not use it.
4. Use verified independent & multiple sources for information.
5. Devise your own problem definition & alternative solutions
6. Learn to Deal with Uncertainty because uncertainty is present in nearly every public policy problem.
7. Capture the Problem with Numbers to make a baseline for the using other methods to clarify it.
8. Be skeptical of existing analysis, beliefs and established facts around the public policy
9. Follow lawyers approach to develop a case from any perspective with limited prior substantive knowledge of the problem area.
10. Make the Analysis Simple and present detailed information in a format that decision makers find understandable and persuasive.

## What is needed to be a RAPA Expert?

1. Understanding of terms & legislative language of the different aspects of policy
2. Effective use of evidence & critical information in documentations & public speaking
3. Understanding & linking political factors into policy analysis.
4. Efficient & quick collection of policy-relevant data both from verified sources
5. Quantitative & qualitative data analysis skills.
6. Writing papers for policy audience to generate policy consultation
7. Comments or feed back on policy papers or policy meeting & seminars
8. Conversations on policy issues with specific policy agencies.

## STEP BY STEP FRAMEWORK OF THE RAPID AND PARTICIPATORY POLICY ANALYSIS (RAPA)

The public policy has a profound influence on the socio-economic development of any country. Policy analysis is a process which starts from identifying & defining the problem. In general, the policy analysis produces prescriptive type of information and recommends future action.



12

Rapid & Participatory Policy Analysis (RAPA) is a simple tactic for analyzing public policies to understand about the institutional and political dimensions of policy problems, policy framework and implementation. RAPA can also be used as a Policy process research tool since it facilitates the study of interactions among people and public policy. RAPA focuses on the particular policy problem and aims to inform public decision makers well enough so they don't get caught in major errors. RAPA intends to facilitate an enlightened discussion of public policy to adopt better policy.

RAPA produces policy relevant information, evaluates policy congruency with its public welfare goals and recommends action for further betterment of public policies.

RAPA as a diagnostic will look at how public policies are being formulated and how inclusive is the process of identifying policy issues. It will also check whether knowledge needs are acknowledged; whether policy decisions used the appropriate information available, and whether public policies are consistently implemented, and/or evaluated.

## DEFINING THE PURPOSE & SCOPE OF THE POLICY ANALYSIS

PURPOSE & SCOPE OF THE POLICY ANALYSIS		
1)	What are the objectives of this particular policy analysis (key focuses of the analysis)?	
2)	How this policy analysis will be used?	
3)	What policy or set of policies are required for analysis?	

## SELECTING POLICY OF SET OF POLICIES FOR ANALYSIS

IDENTIFICATION OF THE POLICY SELECTED FOR ANALYSIS		
1.	What is the name of policy selected for analysis?	
2.	When the policy was approved for implementation?	
3.	When the policy implementation started?	
4.	Why this policy is selected for analysis?	
5.	Is there any previous version of the policy?	
6.	If yes, then what are the reasons for new version?	
7.	What is the source of Information	Link of government websites with access date

If set of policies are required for analysis, the following table can be used

IDENTIFICATION OF THE SET OF POLICIES SELECTED FOR ANALYSIS						
SL	<i>policy selected for analysis</i>	<i>Reason for selecting</i>	<i>Date of Policy approval</i>	<i>Starting Date of Policy Implementation</i>	<i>Status of the policy (New or Revised)</i>	<i>Source/s of information</i>
1.						
2.						

## COLLECTING INFORMATION & POLICY DOCUMENTS FOR ANALYSIS

### A. IDENTIFY & COLLECT RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS

SL	Relevant policy documents	Why it is relevant?	Source/s of information
1.	Approved Policy		
2.	Policy Formulation strategies		
3.	Policy Implementation Guidelines		
4.	Rules, Laws or Orders		

## B. COLLECT INFORMATION ABOUT RELEVANT INSTITUTIONS LINKED WITH THE POLICY TO BE ANALYZED

SL	Name of the Institutions linked with the policy	How the Institution is linked with the policy? (executing agency, monitoring agency etc)	Source/s of information
1.			
2.			
3.			

## C. COLLECTION OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

SL	Other relevant documents	Why it is relevant?	Source/s of information
1.	National Plan of Action		
2.	Policy papers		
3.			

## RAPID REVIEW OF POLICY OF SET OF POLICIES SELECTED FOR ANALYSIS

Rapid Review Questions	Name of the policy	Name of the policy
1) What are the objectives of the policy?		
2) What kind of social or public problem this policy aims to address?		
3) How this policy defines the problem and for whom is it a problem?		
4) What is the context of the policy (i.e. how does this specific policy fit with other policies seeking to manage the problem)?		
5) What types of provisions, allocations & benefits created by this policy & how (strategies, methods of delivery, financing options) they will be delivered?		
6) Who are the major stakeholders regarding this particular policy?		
7) How the policy targeted stakeholders were involved in the policy formulation?		
8) Who will be benefitted more by the policy?		
9) To what extent does the current policy incorporate the lessons from the past?		

14

## ANALYSIS OF THE POLICY CONTENT

SL	Policy under analysis	goals & objectives of the policy under analysis	appropriateness of the policy language with contents	Linkage with International Legal Regime





## THE POLICY REVISION & APPROVAL OF THE REVISED POLICY

SL	Name of the revised policy	Actors		Role of actors		Date of Revised Policy approval
		Policy Revision	Revised Policy Approval	Policy Revision	Revised Policy Approval	

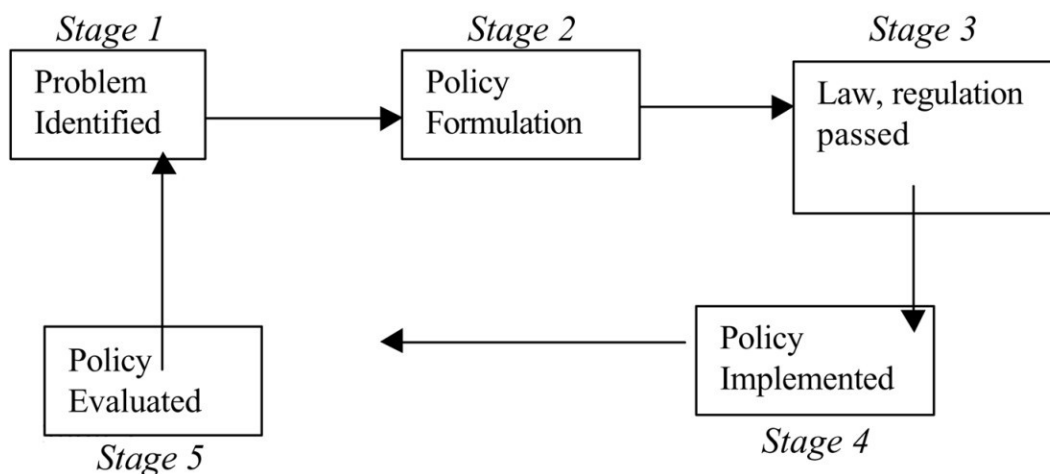
<b>HISTORICAL ANALYSIS</b>	<b>I.</b> Is there any previous version of the policy? <b>II.</b> If yes, then what are the reasons for new version? <b>III.</b> And differences between these two policies? <b>IV.</b> What policies and programs were developed to deal with the problem in the past? <b>V.</b> What people, or groups of people, promoted the policy in the past? <b>VI.</b> What people, or groups of people, opposed the policy in the past?
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### Facing problems/challenges and process of addressing that:

SL	Problems/challenges	Process of addressing
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

17

Is the influence of the problem on current, related policy areas explained? Are the potential consequences of the problem developed?



## Policy Analysis Paper Guidelines

*A policy paper is a very effective way of disseminating policy recommendations, or findings of the policy analysis. Avoid jargon as much as possible and if you use abbreviations note their meanings.*

**Heading:** Attention-grabbing opening statement to draw the audience attention into the paper.

**Introduction:** Well-articulated statement of policy position regarding the issue under analysis.

**Persuasive, Provocative Rational Content:** Small paragraphs with persuasive argument using the appropriate combination of rational description & opinion (self-identification of possibilities within the context, evaluation of the importance both at present and the future context using hard evidence and sound reasoning), emotional motivation (persuasion to feel the urge to do something for human rights & social justice) & ethical provocation (to provoke human solidarity for public welfare, social benefits). the following appeals:

**Demystifying the Counter Arguments:** Review the existing arguments or perspective analyses made by the others that differ from your own analysis. Then provide a convincing response to demonstrate why those opposing viewpoints or perspectives are wrong or incompetent.

**Unmasking Obstructing factors & actors for rational policy recommendations:** One of the key focuses of the policy paper is to provide choices for policy recommendation. Therefore, it is very imperative to identify stumbling blocks (Obstructing factors & actors) that may hinder or prevent the realization of your recommended plan. Convincingly articulate how existing factors & actors could limit your policy recommendation.

**Conclusion:** Concise & straightforward realistic expectations directed towards the audience to act (what, why, when, where & how).

## Policy Analysis Case Studies

### What is case study?

Researchers do case study like the way an artist does the painting.

A case study is a methodology for holistic, in-depth and ethical description of a real situation using single or multiple sources of data, theories, and methodologies. Case studies are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data. Most case studies are written in such a way that the reader can feel situation with an urge to act or made a decision on it. The case studies can provide a voice to the powerless and voiceless.

## What are different types of case study?

1. **Exploratory:** Explanatory case studies may be used for doing causal investigations.
2. **Explanatory:** Exploratory cases are sometimes considered as a introduction to social research.
3. **Descriptive:** Descriptive cases require a descriptive theory to be developed before starting the project.
4. **Intrinsic** - when the researcher has an interest in the case;
5. **Instrumental** - when the case is used to understand more than what is obvious to the observer;
6. **Collective** - when a group of cases is studied

## Why do we need a case study model?

1. To explain complex causal links in real-life interventions
2. To describe the real-life context in which the intervention has occurred
3. To describe the intervention itself
4. To explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear set of outcomes

## What are the key components of a Case study project?

19

**An overview of the case study project** - this will include project objectives, case study issues, and presentations about the topic under study

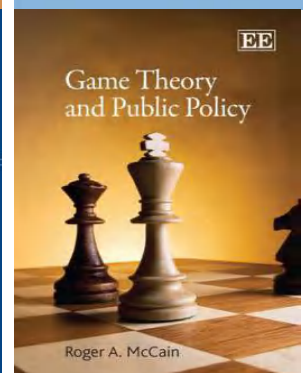
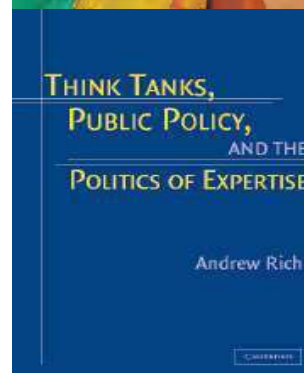
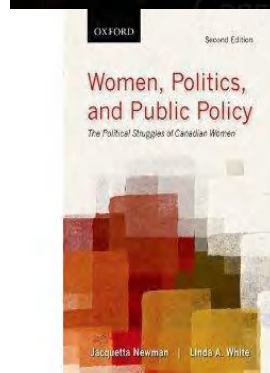
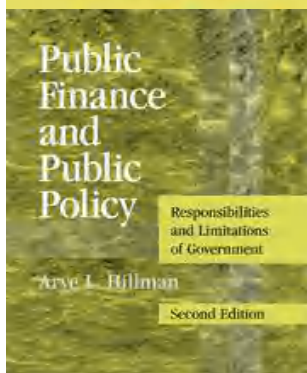
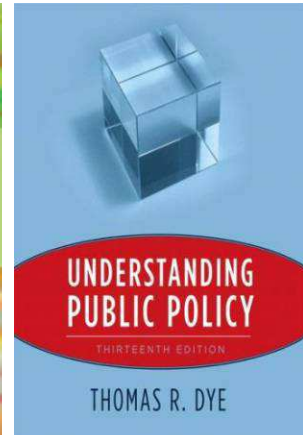
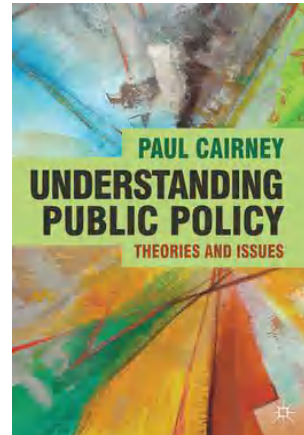
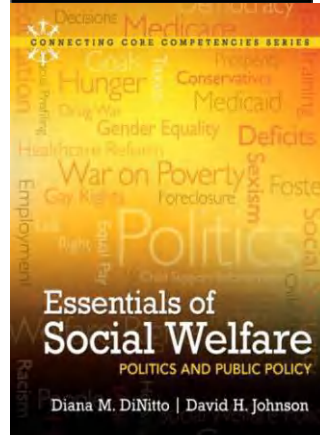
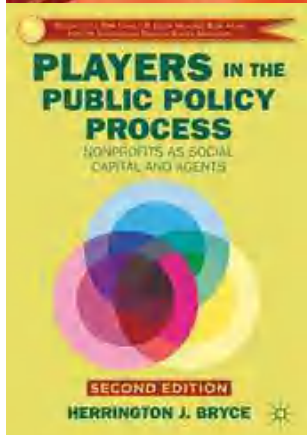
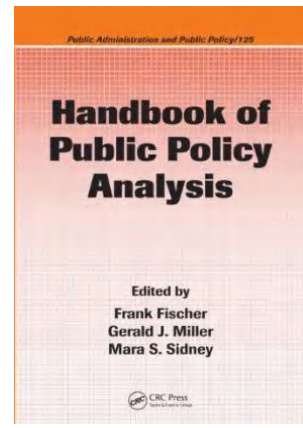
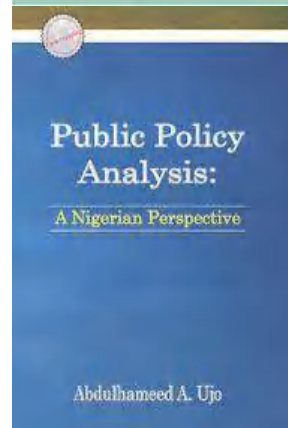
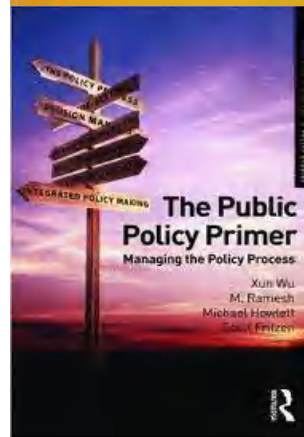
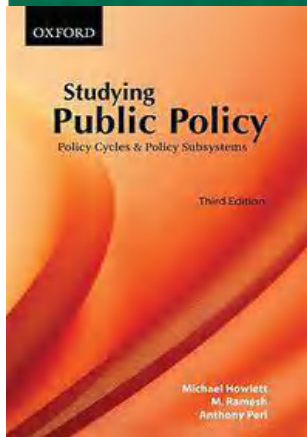
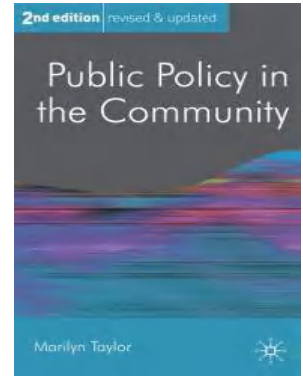
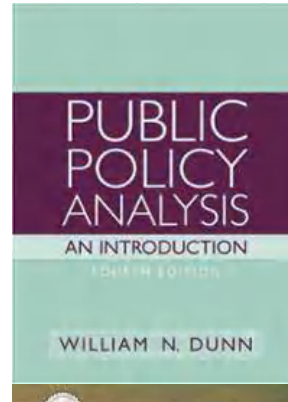
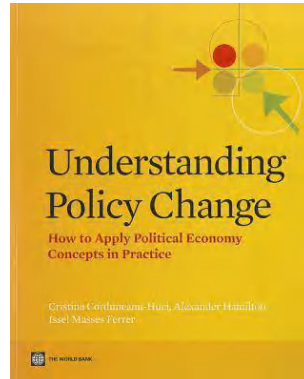
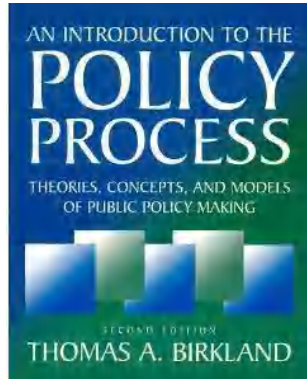
**Data Sources of Case study:** No single source has a complete advantage over the others; rather, they might be complementary and could be used in tandem. Thus a case study should use as many sources as are relevant to the study.

- documentation,
- archival records,
- interviews,
- direct observation,
- participant observation, and
- physical artifacts

## Tools of case study

1. **Data collection procedures** - reminders about procedures, credentials for access to data sources, location of those sources
2. **Case study questions** - the questions that the investigator must keep in mind during data collection
3. **Criteria for interpreting the findings**

## SUGGESTED READING

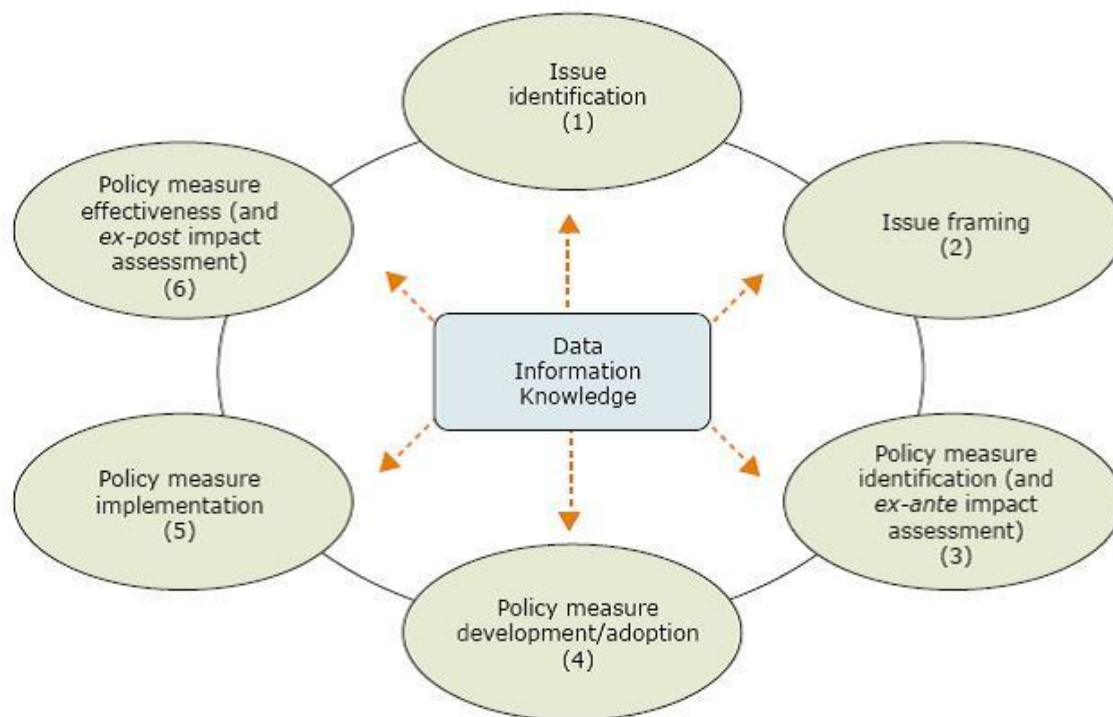


## EXAMPLES

How to pick problems from daily life and use numbers to draw attention?



Main stages in the policy cycle, supported by data, information and knowledge



# Rapid & Participatory Policy Analysis (RAPA)



**CDP**  
Promoting Peace & Progress