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Public Policy Analysis: Comparative Study of Iraq and Lithuania

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*“Symbolic policies are adopted by government decision makers
for several reasons” (Gerston, 2010, p. 60)*

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Abstract. *In the 2nd edition of his book, Analyzing Public Policy, Peter John wrote: “the surprise is that, bar the large expansion of interest in interpreting policy analysis, there have been relatively few innovations in the theory of public policy since 1998, or at least not as many as there were in the early 1990s.” In fact, public policy is a field, which is quite complex, since the framework is formed from different, actors, politics and government instruments. Remarkably, public policy has gained an important role in advanced countries, while in the developing world it mostly depends on the global practice of public policy. The models and players that shape the development of public policy depend on the theories of public policy making. As the new directions of public policy changes, policy making is accompanied by different factors. This paper aims at analyzing the role of the government in public policy making by considering the cases of Iraq and Lithuania. This study aims at answering this question “To what extent the Iraqi government is successful in conducting public policy making?” and draws a comparison with the Lithuanian government’s public policy approach.*

Keywords: *Public Policy, Iraq, Lithuania, European Union*

Raktažodžiai. *Viešojo politika, Irakas, Lietuva, Europos Sąjunga.*

Introduction

Each country in this comparative study has its own peculiarity, thus comparing them brings fruitful results for the readers. “The might of a nation comes from the competitiveness of its government, in terms of decision-making, good governance,

rule of law, education, economic system, policy formulation etc. On 3 October 1932 Iraq became an independent state.” (BBC, 2015). Whereas, Lithuania got independence from “Czarist Russia on February 16, 1918, and was annexed to the Soviet Union in 1940, then in 1999 once again became independent.” Regarding the economy, Lithuania as a Baltic country is poor in natural resources, “the country is poor in minerals and raw materials concerning, the country is dependent on Russia for energy consumption.” (Istvan, 2010, p. 65). Though, having no natural resources like oil and gas, do not mean lagging behind other countries for development and growth. In fact, the Lithuanian government had development priorities as a national strategy for growth and as Lithuania became a member state of the European Union, “EU commission and Lithuanian government agreed to set policy priorities for ensuring economic growth and financial sustainability.” Apparently, since 1990 “Lithuania has made significant progress in stabilizing the economy and in implementing structural reforms.”

Public Policy Analysis

In essence, policy making is known as a rough and complex process; so neither social scientist, nor politicians and public administrators yet known enough about the social world to avoid repeated error in predicting the consequences of policy moves. (Lindblom, 1959). Moreover, policy sciences were framed as being problem oriented, which means addressing public policy issues and posing recommendations for their relief. (Lasswell 1956). While, Dewey (2008) described public policy as “the public and its problems.” Additionally, in defining public policy Thomas Dye’s words were found to be interesting in addressing public policy as “what governments’ do, why they do it, and what difference it makes.”(1987, p. 2). Likewise, Peters (1993) regards public policy as “sum of government activities, whether acting directly or through agents, as it has an influence on the lives of citizens.” (p. 2). Gerston has defined public policy issues “as the passengers that move off and on the wheels of government, to building the linkage between the passengers and the wheel, there is a correlation between policy makers and policy receivers.” (2015, p. 7). “Public institutions are the vehicles through which public policies are formulated and carried out.”(Gerston, 2015, p. 10). Though, institutions are considered to be the main factors in implementing the policies, yet Meier (1979) claimed that public policy is no longer so simple that legislative decrees are self-implementing, the complexities of modern public policy demand functions that can only be performed by large scale formal organizations. (p. 2). To be noted, public policies are subjected to political issues, and that is quite popular in developing countries such as Iraq, where political system and governance is very complex and the environment is too hectic. Thus, in certain conditions, obstacles arise, which restrict the institutions in implementing phase of the public policy, especially, lack of funds, changes in priorities, poor oversight. (Gerston, 2015, p. 110). Moreover, Robert Lineberry highlighted that “the larger the number of actors and agencies involved, the lower the probability of successful implementation. In the light

of the above definition, there is a need to take a look over the five main core elements of public policy, according to Dr. Michael J, Prince, "how older or newer is the policy? Has importance in the context of the country, "a core element of the design and content of all public policy is tools or governing instruments." Furthermore, "policy tools reflect and relate to the political culture and the style of governance and, to economic, legal, constitutional and social circumstances." (2005, pp. 282-283). In a fragile state like Iraq, the environmental factors negatively affect the implementation and formation of public policy, since policy implementation requires a convenient environment to reach the goals; thus the main variable "political culture, public opinion, social, and economic system" needs to be taken into account for a successful policy implementation. The political culture in the case of Iraq vigorously controls and monopolizes the public policy process, since decision-making is carried out based on the political interest of parties and sects. Apparently, at elections in Iraq people have the right to vote and choose the desired party, yet when it comes to the democratic culture of the ruling and governance, in reality the story is entirely different. Peters contends public policy as "sum of government activities, whether acting directly or through agents, as it has an influence on the lives of citizens. With regard to public policy, the public institutions are the vehicles through which public policies are formulated and carried out." (1993, pp. 2-10). Though, institutions are considered to be the main factors in implementing the policies, yet Meier (1979) claims that public policy is no longer so simple that legislative decrees are self-implementing, the complexities of modern public policy demand function that can only be performed by large scale formal organizations. (p. 2). Due to instability in Iraq, in certain conditions obstacles arise, which restrict the institutions in implementing phase of the public policy, especially, lack of funds, changes in priorities, poor oversight. (Gerston, 2015, p. 110). Moreover, Robert Lineberry points out that "the larger, the number of actors and agencies involved, the lower the probability of successful implementation." (2015, p. 103). Importantly, Schon (1973) acknowledges that public policy is really the study of how societies learn (fail to learn) about those problems they define as being public and how they seek to solve (or fail to solve) their problems." In the frame of the public policy "public good" is the core concern, including the economic, social, and political aspects of the community, and public policies to deal with problems and find solutions for them.

The Process of Public Policy Formulation

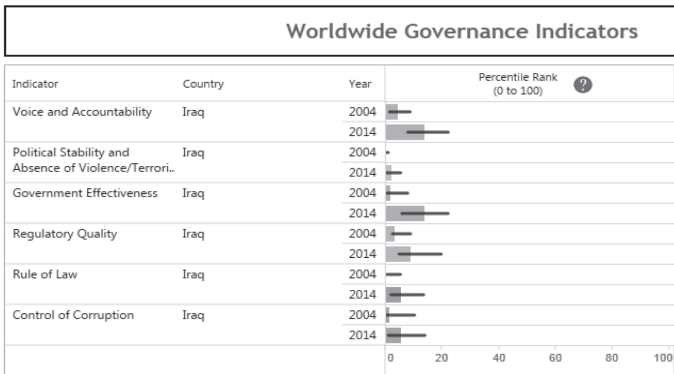
Public policy formulation is a very vital and complex process; policy process has a cycle mood, which is crucial for government and policy makers to work on it carefully. Notably, the policy formulation process demands key stages to finish its cycle properly. In highlighting policy making, it is essential to break down policy making into stages, and deal with each stage carefully based on the country context. In fact, the chain of the policy process goes through serious stages, compliance of government agencies and involved stakeholders in fulfilling this process results in desired

outcomes of the intended policy. In analyzing, the cycle of the policy for two different countries like “Iraq” and “Lithuania” that is totally different in many aspects of policies, governance, and government structure. Importantly, skipping any stage or deleting any element in the policy process will lead to a different outcome, which might create problems instead of solving a problem, therefore, setting the agenda as the first step is vital, “that is to know what the government wants to do? And what is expected from an intended policy? That means setting right objectives, knowing the cost, the solutions and injecting necessary instruments. Besides, the legislative approval, pave the way for better implementation of the policies, not to forget the role of institutions, in which they are the main part in the policy formulation process from the first stage of the evaluation and maintenance phase. (Cairney, 2013). In a sense, the nature of policy making depends on the country’s nature of leadership, governance and available resources, for Iraq, historically the country has experience and practice of top-down governance approach, thus public policy is oriented on this notion. While this seems to be different in Lithuania as a democratic-Baltic European country after its dependency. Concerning public policy, the role of institutions is extremely significant in the output of policies, institutions are part of government, in the public policy domain three variables have a necessary role “the institutions, the stakeholder, and their resource capacity,” therefore, public policy is shaped by them. In addressing the idea of “the test of good policy” Mckieman (1996) echoes that “in the root method, a decision is correct, good or rational, if it can be shown to attain some specified objective.” In his perception, Peter John (2012) defines public policy more broadly than other scholars, as a field that encompasses the operation of the political system as a whole, whether in the neighborhood, city, nation-state, or international society—or across these arenas.” This is exactly, where the public policy only enacts toward a single direction, and neglects the other important realms.

Public Policy of Iraq

The implementation of reforms and structural changes depend on the governmental capacity in carrying out the reforms based on a strategic plan that supports the entire process which needs economic and human capital. To begin with, it is crucial to define “good governance” and the main principles and find out which country follows the right principles. Importantly, dimensions of governance coded as “graft, rule of law, and government effectiveness”. Other dimensions are: voice and accountability, political instability and violence, and regulatory burden. (Kaufmann et al., 1999). Wrong models of public policy design, leads to further problems rather than reforms, at this point, since the Iraqi invasion, the country’s capacity declines faster than development, in 2011 USAID established the first-ever Bureau of Public Policy in Iraq on October 17, 2011, which claimed to involve the Iraqi citizens in the process of public policy formation, and USAID official Lisa Whitly stressed the importance of public policy development in Iraq as a tool for better governance at all levels.”(MSI,

2011). This is where Iraq moved from “Tatweer to Tarabot,” under the previous regime, the Iraqi people had no voice in their government and no say in the formulation of the policies that directly affected their lives.”(USAID, 2013). According to USAID (2013) “the Iraqi constitution is the constitution in the Middle East to mandate its executive offices to engage in a democratic, consultative process of public policy making.” In a country like Iraq, the government has the absolute right legally to control the economy. In Iraq the government has history in economic intervention which brought more harm than growth to Iraq. In an attempt to compare the role of Lithuanian government in transition to rapid growth, and the judgment can be done by investing in the data. The role of government intervention in the economy is very hierarchical, the policy makers have a far weaker role, and the Iraqi government failure resulted in economic backwardness which was accompanied by domestic economic crisis. Policies are more politically oriented and this does not assist in fostering growth; there are several explanations for the Iraqi failure in doing well in terms of growth and sustainability. According to the World Bank (2017), the security situation coupled with the decline in oil prices had a direct effect on poverty rate of the Iraqi population. Since 2014 the security crisis has created a major humanitarian crisis with 10 million people in need and over 3 million internally displaced persons in the entire country. While, the case was slightly better in Lithuania in 2013, with 20.6% of the Lithuanian population living below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. (The Baltic Course, 2014). In fact, the experience of Lithuania is far better compared to Iraq. Apparently, the Iraqi government effectiveness is not positive in the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), combining the scores for institutions and their performance indicates the way government implements policies, in terms of institutional quality, political stability, rule of law, and etc. taking a ten year improvement still Iraqi improvements are not effective as the **following figure (5)¹ shows:**



Government patronage in controlling the country’s resources, such as the ownership right of the Iraqi government over the natural resources and governance pro-

1 Worldwide Governance indicators, *what is governance?* (World Bank, 2014).

cess. Thus, competitiveness economically depends not only on natural resources, since the emerged Asian Tigers, and economic robust countries are not rich in natural resources, while they are wealthy. Being a member of the EU and also preparing for accession to OECD supports better reforms and invests more in economic growth and sustainability.

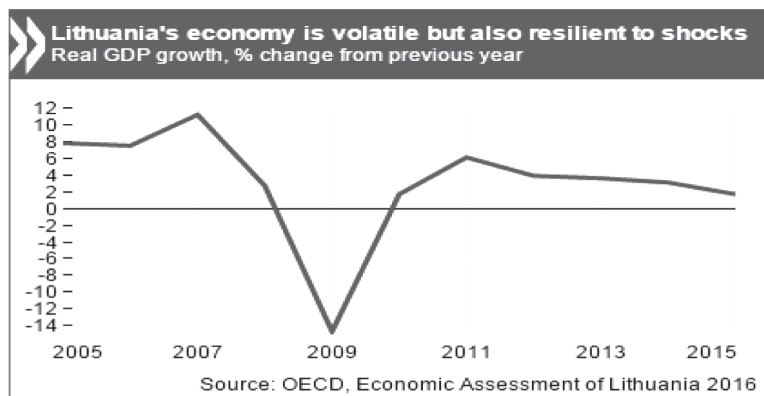


Figure (6)

In the space of a few years, before the EU accession, Lithuania has undertaken serious radical changes and reforms, therefore, between 1998-2003, Lithuania worked with the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) and the Ontario Public Service (OPS), to introduce reforms aimed at strengthening planning, coordination and use of evidence in the policy making process. Besides, in 2007 a national program on better regulation was prepared and adopted in 2008; reforms were accompanied with new management tools and processes as the following:

- A Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, to oversee the priority-setting and budget process and review major policy issues:
- An Integrated Fiscal-Planning System
- A Restructured Center of Government, the Government Office. (OECD, 2015).

In this context, it is important to talk about the government spending in both countries, and to implement an economic theory, which has relevance to the government's spending method, "every economist would agree that there are circumstances in which lower levels of government spending would enhance economic growth and other circumstances in which higher levels of government spending would be desirable."(Mitchell, 2005). In fact, government spending in Iraq has put a heavy burden on the Iraqi public, since big government spending is at the expense of the citizens, and in rentier states the culture of big government spending brings curse to the country. A poor economic performance of the Iraqi government is associated with the quality of governance, as the government since 2003 was unable to translate

the country's natural assets into economic growth and development. The concept of growth in Iraq, a country which has suffered from wars for more than three decades, an economic drawback is not a surprise, if we compare the Iraqi economic growth, the experience of it can be in line with economic growth in terms of quantitative growth, rather than qualitative since the only aim of the government is to increase energy production by millions of barrels, while nothing changes in reality. This idea is linked to "quantitative growth, production is increased by mainly increasing input under a given technological level and industrial structure." (Kim & Heshmati, 2014, p. 6). Thus, growth in the production of output can be considered as unproductive in terms of the state's steady economic growth. Indeed, this is created from short-term solutions, which pushed the Iraqi economy to stagnant in the long-run. Besides, the speed of the economy in terms of growth is only fast in production of energy while the quality of growth is quite low. The Iraqi economy depends on energy heavily, which makes the government vulnerable financially, since single commodity economies can be more affected than the diversified economies during regional and global financial crisis. Whereas, in the case of Lithuania, the government supports qualitative growth, which means better quality of production and output. In their view Stone and Harpham (1982) echo "the importance of considering the context where the policy is made, and how certain policies prevail over others" In the case of government over-spending, budgeting, and public policy making are affected by the political process, as highlighted by Helco and Wildavsky (1981) that the political climate over spending policies." This is where the government of Iraq failed in addressing the issues and problems, and dealing with them in a specific time frame before escalating them, as it has been viewed by Kraft and Furlong a complete agenda for a decision is "problems, policies and politics" but it should be mentioned that the political climate and country context depend on the country and the region. Meanwhile, public policy is affected by social and economic conditions, prevailing political values and the public good at any given time." (2013, p. 8). More importantly, the state of the economy has a major impact on the politics the governments adopt and implement. Examples could include the slowdown of Lithuania's economic growth in 2008 and the recent oil price drop which affected the Iraqi economy. (Kraft & Furlong, 2013, p. 9). Moreover, politics in the rentier states directly affect budgeting process, it is further emphasized that it is impossible to understand public policy without knowing about politics." (Kraft & Furlong, 2013, p. 11). Indeed, the political context of both countries, Iraq and Lithuania, their culture, religion and system of governance have various effects on public policy.

Public Policy of Lithuania

Lithuania as a Baltic country tries to adopt the Nordic countries' approach in institutionalizing the institutions and follows the European approach. In this respect, acquiring the Western, Baltic, and Nordic features contribute well to boosting high

level of institutional quality and public policy formulation. The recent improvements leveraged scoring of Lithuania; this has shown the effectiveness of public policy and institutions. The government's preparedness is a condition for growth and competitiveness nationally and internationally, besides, for implementing "good governance principles" there is a need for creating a proper environment, which makes it easy for approaching the process of implementing good governance principles, the mechanisms and instruments are very vital. Security is a condition in which a country can grow better. Notably, the economic growth depends on the policy factors, in which strengthening the fiscal policy and monetary policy consolidates the economic prosperity, besides, "adopting the Euro, was a key factor for more investment in Lithuania, thus Lithuania was ranked the second best place to invest in Europe." (Rapoza, 2016). Similarly, the Lithuanian government worked to strength the fiscal policy in which record of deficit was 11% of GDP in 1999. "Lithuania's stable currency and sound banking system were the key factor for supporting macroeconomic stability and providing conditions for recovery."² Broadly speaking, economic growth and stability is supported by cooperating fiscal and monetary policy in the economy, this feature is found to be well adopted in the Lithuanian economy. To illustrate further, creating an attractive environment for business and foreign investors is a prerequisite for better economic competitiveness, in this perspective, in 2013 upward, the World Bank Index of ease of doing business, ranked Lithuania 27th worldwide. In the Eurozone, Lithuania works to keep its status as the most rapidly growing state, the strategy is to decrease the unemployment rate even faster than the rest of the Euro area, "the target objective rate is around 4% point from 11.4% to 7.5%, while in the Eurozone it remains at 10.5% by 2018."³ While, the GDP growth rate in 2014 stand at 2.9% and in 2015, was 3.6%, "1.5% growth" difference, Lithuania's accession to the Eurozone on 1 January 2015 is considered as a key variable for further economic development, since the adoption of the euro, associated lower business costs, and rising confidence lead to stronger trade opportunities and investment inflows."⁴ Precisely, the public sector aims in "delivery of high quality service that meets public demands, very interestingly, the service is under regular monitoring, and service users are involved in their development processes."⁵ Responding to economic growth and competitiveness in most countries depends on the role of government, and geographical location. In fact, the strategic location of Lithuania is peculiar: it is a Baltic country and is close to Scandinavian countries. Lithuania, with the implementation of 2030 vision, aims at becoming one of the most 10 advanced European Union member states, the following indexes show positive look for the future:

- 2 Join Assessment of Lithuania's Economic Policy Priorities, Government of the republic of Lithuania European Commission directorate general for economic and financial affairs, May, 2000.
- 3 Eurozone, Lithuania's economy growth – three times faster than the Eurozone, (EY Eurozone Forecast, Lithuania): 2014.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Lithuanian Progress Strategy, "Lithuania 2030", (Lithuania: National legal Document): 2012.

- *Quality of Life Index (now 23rd in the EU)*
- *Happiness Index (now 20th in the EU)*
- *Democracy Index (now 22nd in the EU)*
- *Sustainable Society Index (now 13th in the EU)*
- *Global Competitiveness Index (now 17th in the EU)*
- *Globalization Index (now 25th in the EU)*⁶

The government keen on innovation and progress should seek to improve public services. The Lithuanian government's attempt in stabilizing macroeconomic conditions is supported by the policies for the integration into the EU.

Conclusions

In comparing public policy making in Iraq and Lithuania quite nothing is the same or similar, so the following could be the main concluding points of this study.

1. To evaluate a policy's performance with respect to growth and sustainability, the Iraqi public policy is far less effective than that of Lithuania.
2. In fact, Iraqi public policy making seems inappropriate in tackling problems and challenges faced by Iraq despite the fact that Iraq is a country rich in natural resources; overall the Iraqi government has failed in the process of public policy implementation since 2005.
3. The Lithuanian government started working on better policy options and strategies to pursue growth and development better than Iraq. In this context, Lithuania is better positioning itself in public policy making and implementation of policies properly based on the EU and OECD developments consistently.
4. Drawn from the analyses of this study, the government is the core of public policy making and policy implementation. There are many disparities between Iraq and Lithuania due to various reasons and challenges that each country encounters as it has been addressed in this study before.

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6 *Ibid.*

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Paiman Ahmad

Viešosios politikos analizė: Irako ir Lietuvos lyginamasis tyrimas

Anotacija

Savo knygos "Viešosios politikos analizė" antrajame leidime Peteris Johnas rašė: "įdomu, kad didžiulis interesų padidėjimas interpretuojant politikos analizę, nuo 1998 m. sukėlė palyginus nedaug naujovių viešosios politikos teorijoje, kiek pavyzdžiui, jų buvo XX a. dešimtojo dešimtmečio pradžioje". Tiesą sakant, viešoji politika yra gana sudėtinga sritis, nes ši sistema yra sudaryta iš skirtingų dalyvių bei politikos ir vyriausybės siūlomų priemonių. Pažymėtina, kad viešoji politika įgijo svarbų vaidmenį išsivysčiusiose šalyse, o besivystančiose šalyse tai daugiausia priklauso nuo visuotinės viešosios politikos praktikos. Modeliai ir dalyviai, kurie formuoja viešosios politikos plėtrą yra priklausomi nuo viešosios politikos formavimo teorijų. Kadangi naujos viešosios politikos kryptys nuolat keičiasi, todėl tie, kas dalyvauja politikos formavime yra veikiami skirtingų veiksnių ir aplinkybių. Šio straipsnio tikslas - nagrinėjant Irako ir Lietuvos atvejus išanalizuoti vyriausybės vaidmenį viešosios politikos formavime. Tyrimo tikslas - atsakyti į klausimą: kiek sėkmingai Irako vyriausybė formuoja viešąją politiką įvairiose kryptyse ir palyginti Irako vyriausybės politikos formavimą su Lietuvoje formuojama bei vykdoma viešąja politika.

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