

ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC POLICY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

This study aims to clarify the relationship between environmental public policy and sustainable development based on two main axes. The first axis represents the conceptual framework of the study and is used to identify the key concepts of the topic. The second axis serves as an analytical framework for understanding the nature of the connection between environmental public policy and sustainable development. Ultimately, the study will reach a set of conclusions/results.

Therefore, this research addresses the following points:

Axis One: The conceptual framework of the study

- Axis Two: The nature of the relationship between environmental public policy and sustainable development.

Keywords: Public policy, environmental public policy, sustainable development.

Introduction

Environmental issues are among the most important topics in our current era due to the diversity of their policies and laws across different parts of the world. The discussion of environmental problems has become a pressing issue requiring government intervention in the form of in-depth studies into their nature, current reality and the policies that should be followed.

Environmental public policy has received significant international attention. This is because it is closely linked to the lives of humans, animals and plants. Consequently, numerous conferences and specialised workshops have been organised to examine environmental issues and the policies implemented within the context of sustainable development. Sustainable development aims to protect humans and the environment through the responsible use of resources and to support those with limited or no resources by rationalising environmental, economic, social and technological approaches.

Therefore, the relationship between environmental public policy and sustainable development is one of the most important issues in public policy. The environment, which provides humans with vital resources and hosts their various activities, is now under pressure from threats such as pollution, the deterioration of natural resources and climate change, which endanger its balance and continuity. Consequently, environmental public policies are needed to manage natural resources and achieve a sustainable future.

Based on this, the following question arises:

What is the nature of the relationship between environmental public policy and sustainable development?

Axis One: Conceptual Approach of the Study

Through this axis, we will attempt to identify the key concepts in our study: public policy and environmental public policy, in order to define sustainable development.

First: The concept of environmental public policy

Definition of public policy:

Public policy is defined as the government activities or decisions necessary for implementing programmes aimed at achieving political, economic and social goals. Such policies are usually issued

in the name of the public, initiated by governments, and understood by both the private and public sectors. Public policy refers to what the government intends to do, or refrain from doing¹.

It can also be defined as a programme designed to promote specific values and practices, meaning a process of establishing and implementing challenges, demands and expectations relating to the future of the relationship between the 'self' and the 'other'. Some emphasise the element of coercion, describing public policy as deliberately planned coercion or as statements that define the purpose, means, and subject of exercising coercion within the context of power relations in organisations².

Public policy is a means of achieving the political system's objectives and goals. It reflects the balances of power among the political actors influencing the political system. Hence its connection to the values, ideology and political goals adopted by the ruling elite, as well as the alternative values and goals adopted by opposition parties or forces³.

It is also a system that the local government seeks to implement and ensure compliance with, whether from individuals or institutions. In other words, it is a government programme of work that includes a set of rules to which the government is committed to implementing in society.

Moreover, public policy is a set of intellectual strategies through which the government aims to achieve its specific goals. This involves the use of a variety of tools and methods. These tools may include providing public benefits, such as suitable transport options, to deliver services to society.

They are also the mechanism through which the objectives and purposes adopted in strategic plans are achieved. Performance management is also involved — the method by which policy implementation is monitored and evaluated, reflected in strategic planning and ultimately leading to the formulation of another policy⁴.

Public policy can also be defined as the political and non-political processes and procedures adopted by the government to reach an agreement on defining a problem, identifying alternative solutions and establishing criteria for comparing them, thus preparing the way for the selection of an alternative that will form a binding public policy with an explicit presentation of the problem⁵.

Ultimately, public policy can be described as a set of specific actions taken collectively by society, or its representatives, that focus on an issue of concern to society and reflect its interests⁶.

From this, we can extract a set of characteristics that distinguish the term public policy as follows:

1. Achieving the national interest: public policy seeks to ensure that citizens' interests are realised in line with their needs, and to protect their rights. Therefore, public policy is not limited to a specific group of individuals; it encompasses all groups in society.
2. Reliance on studied procedures: Public policy is based on a set of well-planned measures that contribute to achieving all its objectives.
3. Use of human, natural and industrial resources: Public policy employs various types of resources to help ensure the required results are successfully achieved.
4. Coordination among all government institutions: Public policy involves bringing together all government bodies and assigning specific tasks and functions to each one to support effective implementation.
5. Each objective depends on criteria: every public policy objective relies on a set of standards that provide the appropriate tools for achieving the desired outcome.
6. It is binding on everyone, whether or not they participate.

¹- Mohaned Al-Azzawi, "The Concept and Characteristics of Government Public Policy," retrieved from: <https://middle-east-online.com/%AE%D8%B1%D9%89>. Accessed: February 18, 2025.

²- Muhammad Mahmoud Rabie, Ismail Sabri Maklad, Encyclopedia of Political Science, Kuwait: Kuwait University, 1994, P 451.

³- Nadjwa Ibrahim Mahmoud, "The Concept of Public Policy." Democracy Magazine, 2001, P 12.

⁴- Mohaned Al-Azzawi, previous reference.

⁵- Khairi Abdul-Qawi, A Study of Public Policy, Kuwait: Zat al-Salaasil, 1989, P 97.

⁶- Kamal Mohammad al-Maghribi, Administration, Environment, and Public Policy, Amman: Dar al-Thaqafa, 2001, P 8.

7. A complex, purposeful and intentional process: Public policy is highly complex and directed towards specific goals.

8. It produces practical outputs with future impacts, focusing on setting directions for future periods.

9. Best use of available capacities and resources: Public policy involves making the most of the available potential and resources⁷.

2. Definition of environmental public policy: the environment is a set of natural, living (biological) and non-living factors that directly affect life. It plays an essential role in providing living organisms with the resources they need to survive, such as clean air, potable water and fertile soil. At the same time, the environment needs protection and care from human beings because poor treatment can have catastrophic effects on life and the planet.

Thus, the environment encompasses everything that surrounds and affects human beings' ability to live on Earth. This encompasses air, water, plants, animals and other matter, as well as energy in various forms, natural systems and processes⁸, and human activities.

One of the greatest threats facing the environment is environmental pollution. It has a destructive impact on the air, water, soil and wildlife⁹.

It is one of the most dangerous global problems today because it directly affects human health, animals and entire ecosystems. It occurs as a result of human activities that introduce harmful substances into the environment, thereby disrupting the natural balance of life on Earth¹⁰.

Environmental pollution can be defined as an increase in energy within the ecosystem, such as radiation, heat and noise, or an increase in the quantity of different materials in liquid, solid or gaseous form that reduces the system's ability to analyse, disperse, recycle or convert them into harmless substances.

Environmental pollution can be divided into three main types: Soil pollution, water pollution and air pollution. Modern societies also experience other types of pollution, such as: Light pollution, plastic pollution and noise pollution.

This is a global problem requiring cooperation between individuals, governments and environmental organisations. This can be achieved by adopting sustainable solutions and reducing polluting activities, thereby ensuring a healthy environment for future generations¹¹.

Environmental public policy is a term that describes a broad range of policies whose objectives include protecting human health and safety from air and water pollution, as well as preserving natural landmarks that have cultural importance.

It is part of the state's general policy aimed at addressing social problems and environmental issues at local, regional and international levels¹².

It is also a policy adopted by a specific authority to maintain existing structures, prevent potential damage, and repair existing damage. It identifies the necessary and effective measures to protect humans from pollution¹³.

⁷- Mohaned Al-Azzawi, previous reference.

⁸- Safaa Shreim, "An Essay on the Environment," retrieved from: https://mawdoo3.com/%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B6%D9%88%D8%B9_%D8%B9%D9%86_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9 .Date accessed: 02.04.2024

⁹- National Center for Meteorology, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, retrieved from: <https://www.ncm.gov.sa/Ar/Environment/EnvironmentSector/Pages/default.aspx> .Date accessed: 22.09.2025

¹⁰- National Center for Meteorology, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, retrieved from: <https://www.ncm.gov.sa/Ar/Environment/EnvironmentSector/Pages/default.aspx> .Date accessed: 22.09.2025

¹¹- Tasnim Hassan, Research on Environmental Pollution, retrieved from: https://mawdoo3.com/%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%AB_%D8%B9%D9%86_%D8%AA%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AB_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9 .Date accessed: 02/18/2025.

¹²- Michael A. Taylor "Environmental Policy." obtenu : <https://federalism.org/encyclopedia/no-topic/environmental-policy/> consulte :18 05 2025

¹³- Aischa Salma Kehli, "Environmental Policy in Algeria: Between the Stability of the Responsible Bodies and the Integration of the Tools Used," Al-Bahith Journal, Issue 01. D.S.N, 257.

Environmental public policy is a set of broad guidelines that determine how the environmental strategy is designed and implemented. It specifies the roles of the various institutions, agencies and units involved, and those responsible for the results of this strategy. These bodies are subject to binding legislative orders. It clarifies how results are evaluated according to predetermined objectives and describes development mechanisms¹⁴.

It refers to areas in which government or international policies are improving environmental quality at national, regional and global levels. As this field is broad, the focus will be on mechanisms and technologies that strengthen shared capacity and institutional ability to effectively address environmental issues by developing effective environmental policies¹⁵.

Environmental public policy also informs government administration on the actions and steps needed to combat pollution and threats to people and the environment. Citizens can follow the results of these policies' implementation and express their assessment of them through their continued support for them and satisfaction with their outcomes¹⁶.

Second: the concept of sustainable development

In practice, sustainable development is a multidimensional term. It can be viewed from different angles, but is usually defined in relation to the time period, size/extent, role and content of the environmental system to be preserved¹⁷.

Sustainability is not just about leaving resources as an inheritance for future generations. It also means leaving open the possibility for future generations to decide how to manage and use these resources to meet their needs¹⁸.

The concept of sustainability differs according to perspective. There are economic, environmental and social perspectives on sustainable development.

From an environmental perspective, sustainability means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This concept has given rise to a new development philosophy that considers the finite nature of natural resources and the capacity of the Earth to withstand depletion, pollution and environmental degradation¹⁹.

The core principle of sustainable development is that current practices must not threaten future living standards. In other words, today's economic systems should preserve or improve natural resources and the environmental base to ensure the same or better living standards for future generations²⁰.

This requires reconciling ongoing social and economic development with environmental protection by integrating the environmental dimension into development that meets the needs of both present and future generations²¹.

Key characteristics derived from the above:

¹⁴- Mohammed Khalil Al-Rifai: "The Impact of the Media on the Formation of Environmental Awareness," Al-Mustakbal Al-Arabi Magazine, Issue 602/992, P 22.

¹⁵- Ahmad Hussein Al-Laqqani, Farah Mohammad Hassan, Environmental Education Between the Present and the Future. Cairo: World of Books for Publishing, Distribution, and Printing, 1999, P 12.

¹⁶- Nadji Abdelnour Analysis Environmental Public Policy in Algeria: An Introduction to Public Policy Analysis. Annaba: Publications of Baji Mokhtar University, 2008/2009, P 34.

¹⁷- Ahmed El-Hadj Bourouba, Salima Ben Naama, "A Benchmark Study of Tourism Potential in Algeria and the Need to Exploit It to Achieve Sustainable Development (2000–2013)." Finance and Markets Journal. Issue 8, 2018, P 155.

¹⁸- El-Aib, Abdelrahman, "Controlling the Overall Performance of Economic Institutions in Algeria in Light of the Challenges of Sustainable Development." Doctoral Dissertation, (Farhat Abbas University, Faculty of Economics, Business, and Management Sciences, Department of Economics, 2010–2011), P 30.

¹⁹- Abdulhakim Mahmoud, "The Relationship Between the Environment and Development – 4." Retrieved from: <https://arsco.org/articles/article-detail-14819/> . Date accessed: 08/25/2024

²⁰- Mesai Bilal, Ourissi Hibat Allah, "The Tourism Industry and Its Role in Diversifying the National Economic Base in Light of Sustainable Development Constraints." Al-Afak for Economic Studies. Issue 2. (n.p.), P 253-254.

²¹- Maatallah khireddine, Khadija Azzouzi, "Tourism as a Strategy for Sustainable Local Development in Algeria," National Forum on: "Tourism Development and Its Relationship to Local and Community Development in Algeria." Held at Chadli Bendjedid University, El Tarf, May 5–6, 2014, P 8.

- Continuity (sustainability over time): This requires generating a high income that can be reinvested to facilitate the replacement, renewal and maintenance of resources.
- Organising the use of renewable and non-renewable natural resources in a way that protects the interests of future generations.

Achieving environmental balance by preserving the environment to ensure healthy living conditions while ensuring the production of renewable wealth and preventing the exhaustion of non-renewable resources²².

Main principles

Sustainable development is based on a set of principles that form the foundation for its strategy. This strategy aims to achieve development and well-being for current generations without harming the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The most important of these principles are:

1. The Precautionary Principle

The Precautionary Principle requires states to take the necessary measures to address and prevent environmental deterioration. It involves acting early and looking ahead, and is oriented towards the future, either fully or partly. Based on current scientific evidence, action should be taken before proof of actual harm is available.

2. The principle of participation

This involves everyone in collective decision-making, particularly in planning, policy-making and implementing those policies, through dialogue. In general, both official bodies and community groups participate in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of development plans.

3. The principle of integration

Within the legal framework, this principle is reflected in Chapter Eight of Agenda 21, which sets out the main requirements for integrating environmental considerations into decision-making processes. This includes integrating the environment and development at policy, planning and management levels.

4. The ‘polluter pays’ principle

The ‘polluter pays’ principle is one of the most important legal principles for achieving sustainable development effectively and efficiently. Linked to the economic aspect of polluting activities, it aims to ensure that the social costs of pollution caused by such activities are borne by the parties responsible. This creates a deterrent that encourages institutions to manage their activities in a way that is consistent with sustainable development, a concept that is widely accepted by most countries, if not all²³.

Axis Two: The Nature of the Link Between Environmental Public Policy and Sustainable Development

As sustainable development aims to preserve the environment in which people live and is centred on human beings, its main goal is to implement fundamental changes to policies, laws and social ‘upper structures’ and ‘infrastructure’ without negatively affecting the environment.

Examining the goals of sustainable development reveals a focus on meeting people’s needs and achieving long-term social care, while protecting the base of human and natural resources and limiting environmental deterioration. In order to achieve this, a dynamic balance must be struck between economic and social development, and the management and protection of environmental resources. In other words, sustainable development seeks to establish a balanced relationship between humans and natural resources.

²²- Mourad Nasser, “Sustainable Development and Its Challenges in Algeria.” *Al-Tawasul Journal*. Issue 26. 2010, P 136.

²³- Hassouna Abdelghani, “Legal Protection of the Environment within the Framework of Sustainable Development.” Doctoral thesis, (Mohamed Khider University, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Department of Law, 2012–2013), 24-26.

Through its mechanisms and content, sustainable development aims to achieve a set of goals that can be summarised as follows:²⁴

First: Achieving a better quality of life: Through planning processes and development policies, it aims to improve the population's social and economic quality of life in a fair and acceptable way by focusing on qualitative aspects of development rather than only quantitative ones.

Second, preserving the natural environment: sustainable development focuses on the relationship between human activities and the environment. It treats natural systems and their components as the foundation of human life. Put simply, sustainable development recognises the relationship between the natural environment and society, working to strengthen it until it becomes one of complementarity and harmony.

Third: increasing public awareness of environmental problems

This is achieved by fostering a sense of responsibility for environmental issues among people and encouraging their active participation in finding appropriate solutions. This is achieved by involving them in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development programmes and projects.

Fourth: Rational use and exploitation of resources

Sustainable development recognises that natural resources are limited. Therefore, it prevents their depletion or destruction, promoting their rational use and proper utilisation instead²⁵.

Fifth: Linking Modern Technology to Society's Goals

Sustainable development employs modern technology in ways that serve society's goals. This includes raising public awareness of the importance of different technologies in development, and of how to use available and new technologies to improve quality of life and achieve societal objectives without causing environmental risks or negative impacts.

Sixth: Ongoing and appropriate change in society's needs and priorities

This is achieved by adopting methods that match societal capabilities and allow for balance, through which economic development can be activated and environmental problems controlled.

Seventh: achieving technical economic growth

This preserves natural capital, including natural and environmental resources. This requires the development of appropriate institutions, infrastructure and risk management systems so that, ultimately, wealth is shared equally among successive generations.

Overall aim of sustainable development

The main goal of sustainable development is to achieve justice for the current generation by ensuring fairness and equality between today's generation and future generations. It also involves protecting the environment by seeking to reduce global environmental crises and problems. Additionally, it aims to combat pollution and protect the environment by using cleaner technologies²⁶.

The Importance of Environmental Protection

Environmental protection is one of the top priorities of sustainable development. It seeks to limit the destruction of ecosystems and environmental degradation, which threaten the long-term health and well-being of animals, humans and plants, especially environmental pollution, the consequences of which are a global concern in the short and long term.

The Role of Environmental Public Policy

²⁴- Attallah Hedda "The Role of Takaful Insurance Institutions in Achieving Sustainable Development—A Comparative Study of Malaysia, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates." Master's Thesis, (Farhat Abbas University, Faculty of Economics, Business, and Management Sciences, Department of Management Sciences, 2013–2014), P 96.

²⁵- Abo soufiane Zaidi, "The Role of the Human Capital Investment Strategy through Education in Achieving Sustainable Development." Master's Thesis, (Farhat Abbas University, Faculty of Economics, Business, and Management Sciences, Department of Management Sciences, 2011–2012), P 42-43.

²⁶- El-djoudi Satori, "Sustainable Development in Algeria: Reality and Challenges." Al-Bahith Journal. Issue 16, 2016, P 301.

Governments therefore work through their general environmental public policies and institutions to reduce pollution and raise public awareness of its dangers. These environmental policies must be continuously developed, discussed, implemented and adjusted, not only when environmental problems worsen²⁷.

Why policies may need updating

Sometimes new policies are needed to adapt to different factors, such as:

- The state's vision;
- Community demands;
- The strategic plan;
- Legal provisions;
- Pressure from the public or stakeholders;
- An international initiative;
- The need for a new policy;
- External events or changing conditions (such as technological and technical progress);
- Adapting to changes in the policies of other government bodies,

Budget constraints and financial pressure.

Conclusion: The Close Link Between Sustainable Development and Environmental Public Policy

There is a clear relationship between sustainable development and environmental public policy. Sustainable development depends on environmental resources, while environmental public policy aims to regulate and rationalise their use in line with the goals of sustainable development. Consequently, any failure to protect these resources, or any corruption or harm to them, will have a negative impact on both these goals and the development process as a whole.

Furthermore, the scarcity and decline of environmental resources will impact the level of development and its ability to achieve its objectives. Therefore, sustainable development cannot rely on small or diminishing environmental resources. Since environmental damage harms human needs, the two issues should be viewed as inseparable: development cannot achieve its goals without sound environmental policies.

Next section:

Among the institutions and bodies that the state uses to implement environmental policies and reach its objectives, the following can be mentioned: ²⁸

The Role of Scientific Research Centres

Scientific research centres play a vital role in finding solutions to environmental issues. They work to discover environmentally friendly alternatives to approaches that cause environmental degradation. These institutions' work is not limited to estimating environmental pollutants or measuring their harmfulness.

The Role of Media Organisations

The media plays a key role in raising public awareness of the risks of environmental pollution and its impact on the health of all living organisms. This is achieved through awareness programmes that educate individuals on how to interact with the environment correctly. The media also highlights how to recycle and dispose of waste properly.

The role of educational institutions, such as schools, universities and colleges, is to include specialised environmental content in their curricula. They also implement academic and non-academic activities that increase students' awareness of, and sense of responsibility towards, the environment.

The greatest responsibility for environmental protection lies with government institutions. This includes passing strict laws, establishing monitoring systems for chemicals used in industry and

²⁷- Mohaned Al-Azzawi, previous reference.

²⁸- Abdulhakim Mahmoud, previous reference.

managing pollution sources appropriately. Some advanced countries have enacted laws that prohibit the use of toxic chemicals that negatively affect humans and living organisms²⁹.

Conclusion

Based on the information presented, we can conclude that examining the relationship between environmental public policy and sustainable development helps us to understand how they interact. They are interdependent: sustainable development cannot achieve its goals without sound environmental policies.

Environmental public policy, as a direction taken by the state through the procedures it implements and encourages across all fields, helps government institutions to address environmental issues effectively. It also aims to fulfil their need for environmental resources in a way that does not cause random or harmful damage in the future.

Sustainable development is a process of development aimed at fulfilling individuals' needs and desires. As the environment is the source of these resources, it must be used in a rational way so that it can continue to provide for future needs.

Therefore, countries and governments must intervene by developing plans and strategies for development that take nature into account. Relying on specialists and researchers, they should jointly determine the expected changes when projects are adopted and collaborate to reduce any potential negative impacts. The connection between these specialists and researchers must also be ongoing in order to address any new problems that may arise. This is necessary to ensure environmental protection goals are achieved through the formulation of environmental public policies in each country within the framework of sustainable development.

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²⁹- Maab Riad Sajet, Hind Daa Hadi, Research Center of the Iraqi Natural History Museum, Retrieved from: <https://nhm.uobaghdad.edu.iq/?p=23979>. Date accessed 25/09/2025

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