TOPIC 2: POLICY-MAKING

- Basic concepts of policy-making
- Perspectives of policy-making
- Policy-making process

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Policy formulation varies from one country to another. It depends on the type of political structure and philosophy of a state. The world trend also may have influenced on the overall practice of a nation. There are several perspectives/models to explain the policy-making process. The models are based on major political perspectives that make up different ideological approaches to social policy.
PERSPECTIVES ON POLICY MAKING

- Conservative:
  - Generally emphasize empowerment of the individual to solve problems.
  - Believe in personal responsibility, limited government, free markets, individual liberty, traditional American values and a strong national defense. Believe the role of government should be to provide people the freedom necessary to pursue their own goals.
Social democracy:
It originally advocates the creation of legal reforms and economic redistribution programs to eliminate economic class disparities between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.
Practical modern social democratic policies include the promotion of a welfare state, and the creation of economic democracy as a means to secure workers' rights.
Develop a secular and socially progressive policy.
A foreign policy supporting the promotion of democracy, the protection of human rights and where possible, effective multilateralism.
Advocacy of social justice, human rights, social rights, civil rights and civil liberties.
Feminist:
- Advocated for equal opportunities policy.
- Invoked 3 models of gender equality i.e. equal treatment, positive actions, and mainstreaming.
  - *Equal treatment*: equal pay, equal access to employment, training, and promotion.
  - *Positive actions*: creating conditions for equality outcome rather than equality of access. Aims to overcome the inequalities that exist within the structures of the society. Eg; policy on child care, political representation of women, and creation of women’s network, and violence against women.
Gender mainstreaming: Requires the adoption of a gender perspective by all the central actors in the policy process.

- This has expanded the existed focus of policy frame from equal pay and equal treatment to the women’s rights in general.
Postmodernism:

The central tenet of postmodernism is “incredulity towards metanarratives,” means a state of being disbelieve of high level theories, which gave traditional emphases of social policy (such as writings offered by Marx, Durkheim and Weber).

The metanarratives which offers totalizing explanations for everything that happens in a society is seen as misguided and dangerous. It has led to an atheoretical empiricism or evaluating existing policies with limited critical analysis of the wider political and economic framework in which these policies were developed or suppression of difference and diversity.

According to postmodernism, social change at best is small and local changes.
This model is one of the oldest and most common approaches to the study of policy-making which is derived from the early work of H. Lasswell (1951), an American political scientist.

The study of policies, particularly public policies, have developed over time, based on this model.

Such stages include:
1. The *identification* of policy problems or issues, through demands for action;
2. *Agenda-setting*, or focusing on specific problems/issues (this stage is sometimes merged with the previous one);
3. The *formulation of policy proposals*, their initiation and development, by policy-planning organizations, interest groups, and/or the executive or legislative branches of government;

4. The *adoption of and rendering legitimate of policies* through the political actions of government, interest groups, political parties;

5. The *implementation of policies* through bureaucracies, public expenditures, and the activities of executive agencies; and,

6. The *evaluation* of a policy’s implementation and impact.
This model does not primarily focus on the actors and institutions involved in policy-making but rather emphasizes the fact that policy-making, as a comprehensive process, cuts across and sometimes links this variety of actors and institutions (i.e. the executive and the legislative branches of government and the courts, civil society, intergovernmental bodies, etc.).

Porter and Hicks: by shifting attention to the process and its component steps, this model “transcends the boundaries of specific institutions and points to the ways in which individuals and groups interact across them.”
Although this model is extremely important in the policy-making literature and is considered a traditional approach by many authors, it has also been subject to criticism. The main criticism focuses on the so-called linearity of the model.

Critics say that this is extremely misleading since, although policy-making may well proceed in stages, it is not linear; the entire process is in no way automatic and can change directions or even cease to be at any point.

Far from being linear, the policy process is dynamic and, at times, even chaotic. For instance, a policy can end without having been subject to evaluation, and another can be implemented before having been formally or legally adopted.
An 8 step policy cycle is developed in detail in *The Australian Policy Handbook* by Peter Bridgman, Glyn Davis and Catherine Althaus:

1. Issue identification
2. Policy analysis
3. Policy instrument development
4. Consultation
5. Coordination
6. Decision
7. Implementation
8. Evaluation
The Althaus, Bridgman and Davis model is heuristic and iterative. The policy cycles are typically characterized as adopting a classical approach. Accordingly, some postmodern academics challenge cyclical models as unresponsive and unrealistic. They consider a broader range of actors involved in the policy space that includes civil society organizations, the media, intellectuals, policy research institutes, corporations, lobbyists etc.
POLICY-MAKING IN MALAYSIA

- It can be created through one or combination of three processes:
  - **Political channel** - the policy is initiated through Cabinet orders or through recommendation of several political reigning parties.
  - **Administrative processes** - it happens at the ministerial level. The drafted policy is discussed at several high-level government meetings.
  - **Integrated approach** - it combines both processes. Special committees may be set up to study the policy in-depth before presenting it to the Cabinet.
Several stages involve:
1. Identifying the arising problem.
2. Planning
3. Recommending suitable alternatives
4. Legitimizing policies
5. Implementing the suitable action policy
6. Coordinating various events to suit the established policy
7. Evaluating policy effectiveness
POLICY-MAKING ACTORS

- Generally, 3 groups of actors are identified:
  1. Politician and government public administrators
     - including Cabinet, members of Parliament, high-level government officials. They are the major players responsible in ensuring the success of the policy implementation.
  2. The public
  3. Related interest group
     - The public can act individually or form interest groups to put forth their ideas and needs for government consideration, but they do not have exact power to formulate public policy. However, their movements through campaigns and activities can get strong public supports and make the policy maker understands the ground problem better. So far, this method is quite effective to trigger the government machinery.
THE ROLE OF COORDINATING AGENCIES IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN M’SIA

The Cabinet

- National Development Council (NDC)
- National Economic Council (NEC)
- National Security Council (NSC)

National Development Planning Committee (NDPC)

Economic Planning Unit
CONCLUSION

- Policies are dynamic, not just a static list of goals or laws.
- Policy blueprints have to be implemented, often with unexpected result.
- The actions of the organization usually takes may often vary significantly from the stated policy.
- The differences is sometimes caused by political compromise over policy or lack of policy implementation and enforcement.
- Social policies are what happen “on the ground” when they are implemented, as well as what happens at the decision making or legislative stage.