

**Politics & Public Policy Planning (2734804)**

Major Elective IV

# Conceptual Framework for Policy Making

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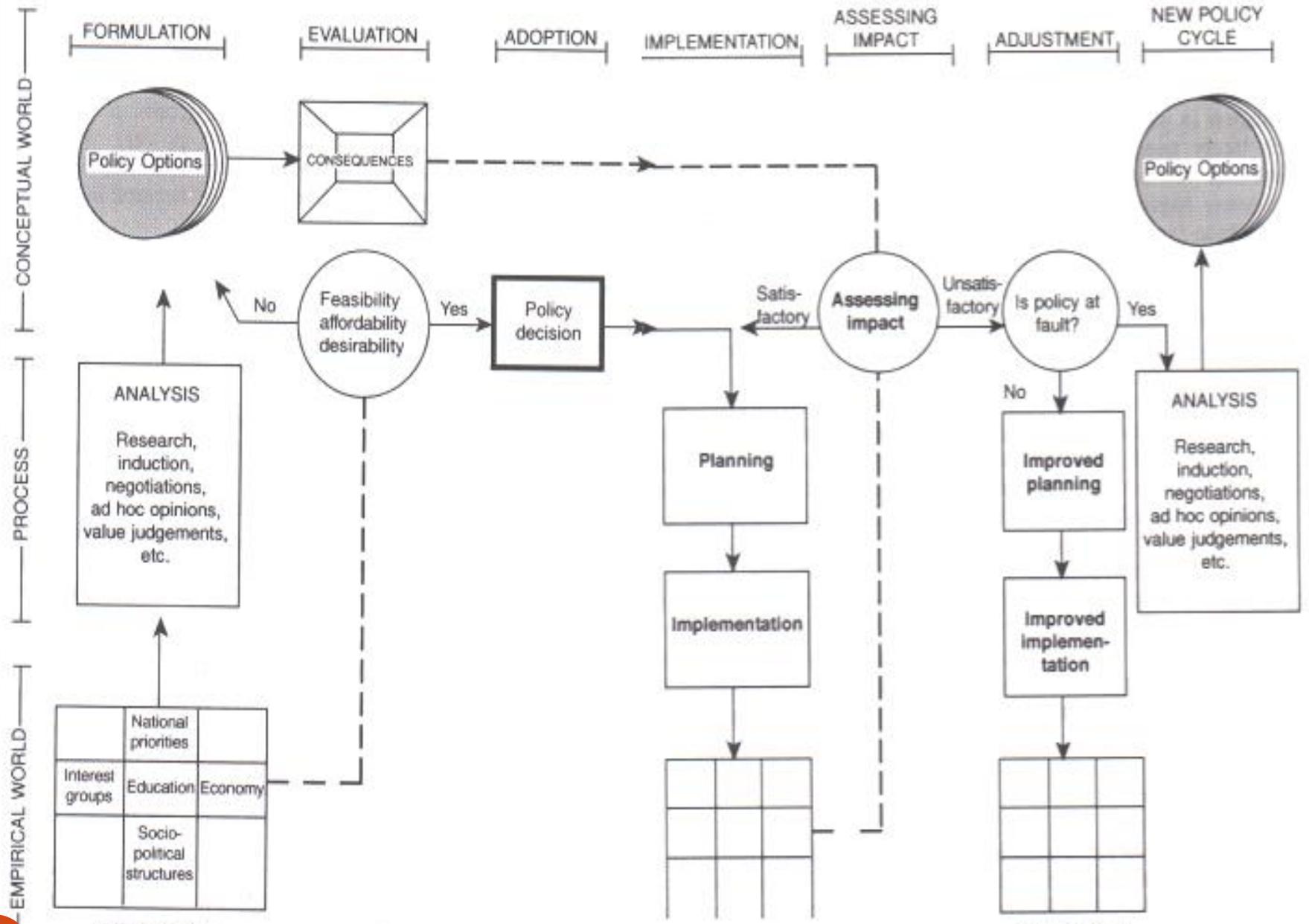
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# Conceptual framework for policy planning

- The policy planning process, is preceded by analytical and/or political activities (analysis, generation of options, bargaining, etc.) and followed by equally important planning activities (implementation, assessment, and possible redesign)...
- The framework should be broad enough to capture and integrate the intricate process of any policy making model...

# Conceptual framework for policy planning

- The framework consists of *seven policy-planning processes*, the first four of which deal with **policy making**, the fifth with **planning** and sixth and seventh with **policy adjustment**:
  - Analysis of the existing situation.
  - The generation of policy options.
  - Evaluation of policy options.
  - Making the policy decision.
  - Planning of policy implementation.
  - Policy impact assessment.
  - Subsequent policy cycles.



# 1. Analysis of the existing situation

- Country background
- Political context
  - *The capacity of the state to do planning at the national level is another critical variable in the institutional analysis of the political sector.*
- Economic Context
- Dynamics of change

# 1. Analysis of the existing situation

- Economic Context

- *First*, variables such as demographic shifts, urbanization, and migration, coupled with the likely growth in various sectors of the economy...
- *Second*, the level of economic development will set enormous constraints on the capacity of any of the systems to build infrastructure facilities and to expand...
- *Third*, the economic growth rate is important not only for estimating the likely need for certain kinds of skills but also for estimating the future amounts of slack resources...
- *As the rate of growth increases, more funds are often made available to development; by the same token, as it decreases, allocations to development are among the first cut.*

# 1. Analysis of the existing situation

- Dynamics of Change
  - Nobel laureate North (1994) - *“There is no greater challenge facing today's social scientists than the development of a dynamic theory of social change”*
  - *Individuals and organizations with **bargaining** power as a result of the institutional framework have a crucial stake in perpetuating the system...*

## 2. Generation of policy options

- New policies are usually generated when the present situation of the sector and its context is disturbed by a problem, a political decision or a reorganization scheme (overall national planning)...
- Policy options can be generated in several different ways to accommodate the disequilibrium...
- Processes of generating policy options can be grouped as:
  - Systematic mode
  - Incremental mode
  - Ad-hoc mode
  - Importation mode

# The Systematic Mode

- The systemic mode is characterized by three operations:
  - Generation of data,
  - Formulation and prioritization of options, and
  - Refining options.
- A large number of options can be generated to fit the different 'givens' of the sector and its context, as its based on data alone...

# The Incremental Mode

- Since the problem is likely to be located in one particular segment of the system, then the issue is how to formulate a policy to adapt the system to the response – The Acting Out Approach...
- Here, the policymaker seeks to adjust present difficulties rather than to anticipate future ones, thereby promoting incremental improvements...

# The Ad-hoc Mode

- Sometimes the problem is outside the system.
- It may not even be a problem but instead the emergence of a new elite or a major political event which requires that a particular system make some adjustments or changes.
- Here the policy may have no rational basis within the sector.

# The Importation Mode

- There are many innovations and fashions in different systems around the world which can be the source of the policy options considered...
- Foreign specialists, operating as consultants for international agencies, can provide the stimulus for this mode...
- Certain policy adopted elsewhere can be imported successfully only if it meets the needs of particular groups in the society...

## 3. Evaluation of Policy Options

- The '*imaginary*' situation that would be created if a policy option were implemented is compared with the **present situation**, and the scenario of transition from the existing to the **imaginary** case is evaluated in terms of **desirability**, **affordability**, and **feasibility**.

# Desirability

- This involves three dimensions:
  1. The impact of the option on the various **interest groups** or stakeholders:
    - who would benefit?
    - who might feel threatened?
    - how might the potential losers be compensated?
    - what would make the option desirable to all stakeholders?
  2. Compatibility with the **dominant ideology** and targets of economic growth articulated in national development plans; and
  3. In some cases, the impact of a policy option on **political development and the stability...**

# Affordability

- The fiscal costs of the change as well as the social and political costs need to be evaluated...
- *Alternative economic scenarios* need to be considered.
  - **Private costs** (will a reform require consumers to share the costs, and if so what happens to the poorer groups?);
  - **Opportunity costs** (are there other measures which might benefit the education system, but would have to be foregone to pay for the current proposal?) and;
  - **Political costs** (if an option favours one group over another, is the government willing to pay the political cost?) should also be weighed.

# Feasibility - personnel

- Another and very different kind of implication is the availability of **human resources for implementing the change...**
- Estimate of what level of training & what number required of *personnel* is very difficult...
- Highly trained personnel may be in short supply...
- Culture of institution – important as they help in attract, retain, and effectively utilize trained personnel...

# Feasibility - time

- Most studies of developmental activities indicate that there are frequent time overruns in implementation...
- More realistic estimates of time need to be made and can only be done by the careful assessment of the implementation capabilities and experiences...
- Developmental initiatives have to be sustained **politically** and **financially** over a *lengthy period of time* to reach fruition.

## 4. Making of the policy decision

- It is the conclusion of a process during which all information relevant to the decision was gathered and carefully analyzed so that a totally optimal policy might be designed and selected...
- The 'trade-offs ' among the interests...
- Political pressures, oversights in evaluation, or the simple pressure of time may short-circuit the process...

# 4. Making of the policy decision

- It is useful to ask questions such as the following:
  - How was the **decision made** - did it go through all the stages of policy analysis?
  - How radical a **departure** is the decision from **current policy**?
  - How **consistent** is this decision with policies of other sectors?
  - Is the policy **diffusely articulated** or is it stated in a manner which is **easily measurable**?
  - Does the policy seem **operational** or is its implementation incredible?

# 5. Planning policy implementation

- Once a policy has been chosen, planning for policy implementation should begin immediately...
  - Schedule for moving people;
  - Physical resources mobilization schedule;
  - Financial resources schedule;
  - Well knowledgeable personnel; and
  - Structured administrative systems
  - Mobilizing political support – a difficult task...
    - *One important strategy for mobilizing political support is that of involving groups affected by the new initiative in the planning process...*

# Policy Implementation strive changes

- Circumstances related to *implementation constraints* cause *policy modifications* to take place;
- *Feedback* obtained during implementation causes *reassessment* of aspects of the policy decision and subsequent modifications by policymakers; and
- The mere translation of abstract policy intentions into concrete implementation causes *re-assessment* and *re-design*.
- These changes occur with great frequency because, unfortunately, implementation problems are often greatly under-estimated during the stage of policy planning...

# Policy implementation - surprises

Policy implementation always brings some surprises.

- *One way to use such surprises to improve policy outcomes is to design the implementation in stages.*

# Policy Impact Assessment

- Once the policy has been in place long enough to produce results, a policy assessment check can take place...
- Purpose is to ensure, how long the policy will take hold...
- Measurement of policy outputs...
- Avoid premature assessments...

# Policy Impact Assessment Process

The assessment process revolves around the following questions:

- What have been the actual impacts of the policies in question?
- Are these impacts desirable given the changes that were hoped for?
- Are the changes affordable?
- Did costs prevent their full implementation?
- Did cost over-runs make it unthinkable to implement them over a longer term or on a wider basis?
- Can the policy be lived with politically and socially?
- Are the impacts feasible?
- Were full impacts accomplished?
- Would exceptional efforts be required to replicate these impacts in other circumstances?

# Subsequent policy cycles

- If a policy initiative is carried out systematically, the process of policy design, planning, implementation, impact assessment, and re-design will become *iterative*, and, in theory, infinitely ...
- However, often the results of verification are *not ploughed* back into policy...
- Policy analysis is never to conclude...