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ANALYZING THE COALITION FACTOR AMONG ACTORS IN NWRP FORMULATION ROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

Policy formulation refers to the process of formulating, or drafting, an acceptable course of action for the selected policy agenda. Ideally, the objective of policy formulation is to resolve the problems of society. The issue of water in Malaysia is considered as its own problem that needs to be assessed by the government. Water is considered one of the most important national resources, but at the same time, it is scarce. Therefore, water as a resource needs to be planned for, developed, conserved and managed properly by both the Federal Government and State Government for the usage and benefits of society. The Malaysian government needs to have its own policies for water resources in order to secure the governance of water resources and to balance the existing and future water policies under the jurisdiction of various government bodies.

In April 2010, the idea of having our own National Water Resource Policy was mentioned by the deputy minister Tan Sri Joseph Kurup (<http://borneopostonline>, April 2010). With that, The NWRP draft was first presented in the meeting of Mesyuarat Sumber Air Negara (MSAN) on 6 October 2011 and subsequently approved by the Member of Parliaments (MPs) on 22 February 2012. The policy was then launched on 24 March 2012. The main purpose of NWRP is to clearly indicate the obligations of the Federal and State governments in water resource management. This policy differs from the existing enacted Acts under SPAN, namely Act 654 and Act 655, which exclusively focus on water services in Malaysia. Unlike these previous Acts, NWRP focuses on water resource management. Furthermore, the formulation of NWRP itself stresses on the significance of water resources for this country and the need to manage water resources based on integrated water resource management. As encapsulated in the Tenth Malaysian Plan (2011–2015), the sustainability of water resources was highlighted as an important issue. The process of formulating NWRP considered three main sustainable principles.

Principles of National Water Resources Policy

Principles of NWRP Description Water resources security water resources must be secured to ensure its readiness to meet the needs and demands of both man and nature through utilizations of its potential and minimization of its damaging impact.

Water resources sustainability

Water resources are the substance for the environment and development; therefore, water resources should be sustained for the present and future uses. The Federal government and every State government should minimize the wastage of water resources. The opportunities to discover the use of alternative sources and aspects related to demand management should be identified.

Collaborative governance, the comprehensiveness and alliance among actors are essential towards confirming the security and sustainability of water resources as well as the achievement of common goals towards addressing multiple water resources governance concerns. (Source: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Malaysia. 2012: pp 30)

PURPOSE/AIM & BACKGROUND

As a basic human need, water is the most valuable asset for the society and nation. It is a global challenge to properly manage water resources—and Malaysia is no exception. The efficiency in administering water resources and water supply is one of the perpetual problems. The Malaysian government is aware of the significance of water resources management for the sustainability of the society (Tan Sri Dato' Hj. Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin, 2012: 6). Given its significance, it is fundamental to ensure that the right actions are taken to manage water resources. However, the legislations for water resource management in Malaysia are critically outdated. The main idea of this paper is to understand how the coalition of actors formulate the the National Water Resources Policy. This paper highlights the main objectives which are: (i) to determine the main factors for the selection of actors for coalition and (ii) to introduce and adapt the theory of ACF Framework by Sabatier & Jenkins-Smiths (1999) to the policymaking process in Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY

This paper applied the triangulation method with the aim to check and establish the validity in the studies by scrutinizing the research question from multiple perspectives and check the consistency of the results via the multiple methods used for the purpose of understanding the problem statement. The purpose of using the triangulation method is to explore the state of coalition among the relevant actors from the Federal and State governments in Malaysia (specifically for those involved in the process of the formulation of NWRP) in terms of the need and urgency of the coalition (in relation to the policy formulation of water resources).

The use of the triangulation method increases the confidence of research data; it serves as a tool of innovation in research methods, provides unique findings, and challenges or integrates theories to obtain a clearer understanding of the phenomena (Bryman, 2001). This study exclusively focused on actors who were involved in the formulation of NWRP in Malaysia. In particular, the unit of analysis for this study included the following individuals: (1) State EPU officers; (2) State Water Agency officers; (3) Federal officers of NRE, DID, or KETTHA.

FINDINGS/RESULTS

This study proved the importance of exploring the role of actors during policy formulation, considering that these actors exhibit influential power in forming a coalition to regulate policies. The rise of the new governing coalition contributes to the strong alliance in forming the coalition members. Hence the strong alliance gives them the ability to adapt to policy changes and thus maintain their influence.

CONCLUSIONS

It is hoped that this study can make a positive impact to encourage other researchers to apply the ACF (Advocacy Coalition Framework) in studies related to any policy development in Malaysia. The present study generally aimed to explore the occurrence of coalition among actors during the formulation of NWRP from 2010 to 2011 by using the triangulation method.

Keywords: Advocacy Coalition Framework, Malaysia, National Water Resources Policy, State Economic Planning Unit, Triangulation Methodology.

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