

## **Learning in the Policy Making Process: A Critical Review from the Environmental Policy of Hong Kong**

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### **Abstract**

Reviewing three cases of policy issues in Hong Kong, this paper tries to demonstrate how the challenges were dealt for policy formulation and how the concept of policy learning can assist in developing a better understanding of the policy making process which is a vital part of planning. Policy is not simply a single decision implemented in a linear fashion, rather in practice policies generally consist of a broad course of action which happens sequentially being unpredictable. The findings show that in order to bring the stake holders and actors more effectively into problem solving, three conditions must be fulfilled- common goal of stakeholders, acknowledgement of each other's role, recognition of the ability and power. Then the policy can get a shape and work efficiently. It is recommended that to Hong Kong government needs to balance the needs between stakeholders to prevail an equilibrium condition among economy, environment and people.

### **Introduction**

Policies emerge when there is a crisis. To define policy in a traditional way, it encompasses 'decisions taken by those with responsibility for a given policy area, and these decisions usually take the form of statements or formal positions on an issue, which are then executed by the bureaucracy' (Keeley & Scoones, 2003:22 ). In this way 'Policy' can be conceptualized as a result of a linear process moving through stages of agenda setting, decision-making and, finally implementation. However in practice policy is notoriously difficult to define. Rather than seeing policy as a simply single decision implemented in a linear fashion, many observers such as Smith (1976) have noted that, in practice policies generally consist of a broad course of action. Again Hill (1997) perceives policy as a web of interrelated decisions that evolve over time during the process of implementation. According to Keely and Scoones (2003), Policy also needs to be seen as an inherently political process, rather than simply the instrumental execution of rational decisions. To understand the policy process policy learning is the only way through. Lots of issues become as queries and questions on the way of understanding how the policy is made. Using three examples of policy issues in Hong Kong, this study tries to demonstrate how the challenges are dealt for policy formulation and how the concept of policy learning can assist in developing a better understanding of the policy making process.

### **Objective and Methodology of the Study**

To have a clear view on how the concept of policy learning can assist in developing a better understanding on the policy making process the following objectives have been set for the study:

- Study the concept of policy learning and policy making process
- Investigated real cases from history
- Analyse the factors responsible for the policy making process and make relation to the concept.

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At the very beginning policy learning and policy making process has been studied through literature review and desktop research. Then a policy area of Hong Kong is selected as a real context. Three policy making cases from Hong Kong are then selected for detail investigation. To have a better understanding case study method has been depicted here. At last the cases are analysed to understand the policy making process through two theoretical models of policy analysis.

### **Concept of Policy Learning and Policy Making Process**

Policy improvement is necessary in order to cope with the occurring public demand. For that purpose learning could substantiate the inadequacy and thereby adjust with the changing of social circumstances. In order to demonstrate policy learning a field of governmental responsibility like 'Environmental policy' has been selected for this study to analyse the concept of policy learning. Study shows that efficiency of environmental policy could be improved by organizing the policy as a learning process. Through learning, the objectives and strategy of policy can be continually adjusted, thereby encouraging a progressive dynamic (Glasbergen, P. 1996:175). Through the learning process, better solutions can be found for problems that become defined more precisely along the way, a process many refer to a new paradigm, for policy development (Kaufmann, 1986:224).

According to Glasbergen (1996:176) four types of learning are recognizable:

1. Technical learning: looking for new policy instruments
2. Conceptual learning: redefining policy goals
3. Cognitive learning: based on scientific knowledge and
4. Social learning: based on interaction and communication.

Among the above mentioned Social learning is the most recent and may be considered as highly promising type of learning having equipped with a new concept of democracy. In the case of Hong Kong different learning can be studied from different period, such as

Late 70's: Technical learning, conducted on environmental and planning issues.

Early 90's: Conceptual learning, where previous state of policy became more responsive and adaptive. Cross border issues started to come on focus in line with socio-economic restructuring and globalization.

2001 onwards: Social learning. More responsive to public sentiment resulted in engaging them through stakeholder engagement in some planning projects. To have a better understanding of the policy process two models have been studied. These are

- i. Anderson's (2003:19,20) stage model which provides a theoretical framework for policy analysis:

***Policy agenda → Policy Formulation → Policy Adoption → Policy Implementation → Policy Evaluation.***

- ii. John Kingdon's 'policy window model' where he has divided the process into three different streams, namely ***problem, policy and politics*** (Roger *et al.*, 1981:100).

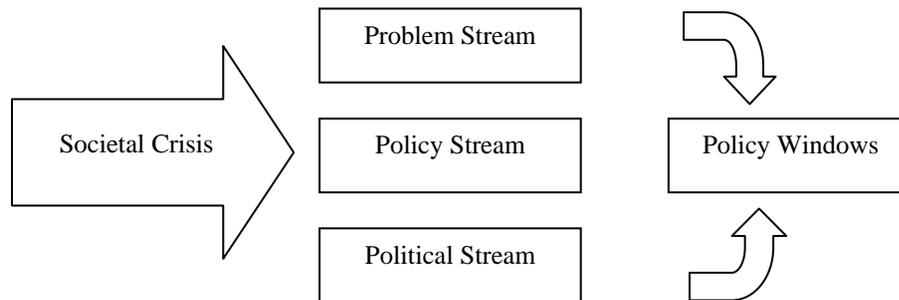


Figure 1: John Kingdon's 'policy window model'; *Source: Developed by Author.*

Definitions of the concepts (based on Kingdon, 1995):

- A policy window may open when simultaneously a problem is recognized, a policy is available and the political context is positive for change:
- Problems are defined as public matters requiring attention, e.g. poor school results or increasing criminality.
- Policies are defined as proposals for change. The policies in this study were given from the start as each single case study describes a measure already in progress.
- Political processes are defined as policy-related local conditions, e.g. political intentions or earmarked financial support (implicit showing political desire).

Kingdon developed this 'policy window model' based on the theory by Cohen, March and Olsen, where he shows the three streams develop autonomously but when the right time comes, or when the 'policy window' opens, they will come and couple together, and the item is able to move from the governmental agenda into the decision agenda. By the term 'right time' it is intended to mean the occurrence of such a situation depended on factors like changes of administration or a disaster or a crisis happening, or even national mood and so on. According to Kingdon's model, the three streams work along different, largely, independent channels until at particular time, which become policy window, they flow together or intersect. This is the policy window or window of opportunity for delivering a change and move items onto the government's formal agenda. Kingdon argues that none of the streams can in themselves place an item high on the decision making agenda, rather it depends on coupling: 'The window may be open for a short time, but if the coupling is not made quickly, the window closes' (Kingdon 1995:178). As Kingdon states, 'to make an item from a less visible arena move up on a governmental agenda, something must happen, and that something often is a real crisis' (Roger et al. ,1981:100). There might be some exceptions too for instance any political pressure, or the personal experience of the policy makers or pressure from the interested or stakeholder groups. John Kingdon has provided this frame work to explain the process of agenda setting in the policy making process. Although his research was based on a study of the development of public policy in the area of transportation and health in the federal government in the United States in the late 1970s, his observation provides insight for this current issue of discussion. According to him 'there may be two key factors affecting agenda setting, namely the participants and the process whereby the agenda items and alternatives attract attention' (Kingdon, J., 1984). Basically agenda means the problems or subjects to which government pays serious attention. Among the many other problems decision agendas receive serious consideration due to the government's intention to take necessary action on these problems or issues.

### Case Study

The three 'Environmental Policy' issues selected for this study are as follows:

1. Anti-smoking Policy
2. Harbour reclamation Policy &
3. Heritage conservation Policy

#### Anti-Smoking Policy

The problem of smoking has been recognized through decades but still we notice the numbers of smokers are not as small as we expect. Despite of the recognition of harmful effect of smoking by the Government and producers, the consumers behaviour towards smoking have not changed. Although smoking seems like a health issue but in broader sense it deteriorates the environment and the surrounding people as well. The second hand smokers get affected by the first hand smokers through the environment in touch (i.e. air). It has been found that '50% increase in chance to get stroke for non-smoker if they are exposed to second hand smoke regularly' (SCMP 2005). Apart from the lungs, respiratory and heart diseases, additional illnesses are found to be associated to smoking as time passes.

Being sympathetic to the problem of smoking the Hong Kong Government started its anti-smoking policy in 1982, with the enactment of the first anti-smoking law. Significant understanding over time enables policy entrepreneurs to be active and push forward for a tighter control on the policy. The government has worked on activating this policy step by step. Firstly they relied on education as the main weapon in the policy making, and then took serious approach towards different areas inclusive of advertising, extension of non-smoking areas and adding tax policy to control the problem.

#### Reason for Attracting the Government

Some dimensions behind reaching the agenda to Hong Kong Government's attention are: The health aspect, Passive smoking, Economic aspect and Youth smoking. In the 1970s, Government only adopted a low key approach and maintained 'education and persuasion' as the main strategy. It was the government's declared policy after 1975 to discourage smoking, to educate the public on the health hazards of smoking and to reduce the influence of cigarette advertising (Anti-smoking Policy by Gov. of HKSAR, 1997). Exposure of more medical findings concerned people and created pressure groups for which eventually the government was forced to take the first step in 1982 to pass a bill which aimed at 'stricter control over the product'. After enacting the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance in 1982, it had not been changed over the years. It was 'based primarily on health considerations, although its social objective is an important secondary theme' (LEGCO 1982). The Government had in fact pushed for tighter and tighter control on smoking, as it realized the impact of smoking on public health.

Over the years, the anti-smoking advocate groups tried to push the Government to work faster on the anti-smoking legislation, and wanted tighter controls put on the tobacco trade. On the other hand, the groups involved in the trade tried to stop the Government from putting more and more pressure on them, and attempted to protect their business. The Hong Kong anti-smoking policy at different stages was, to a certain extent, influenced by pressure from these different groups. After the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance was enacted in 1982, amendments were made to the original ordinance over the years until 1997 on quite a regular basis. Controls on smoking and the related issues of advertising, promotion, and sales became tighter and tighter. An increase in cigarette tax was regarded as a powerful mean of discouraging people from smoking. In February 1983, the tobacco tax was increased 300% as an anti-smoking measure. In 1988 a public

consultation received 1500 public submissions and in the result published in 1989 it was found that people expressed their support for the extension of smoke-free area (SCMP 1989).

The first amendment to the Ordinance was made in 1984 and the subsequent amendments also passed through the Legislative Council quite smoothly until the hand-over in 1<sup>st</sup> July 1997. The newly elected members seemed to express their views more willingly and thus the government had to take into account more views from different stake holders and interested parties in formulating policies. Eventually the proposed amendment in 2001 to the smoking (Public Health) Ordinance could not reach to the policy agenda. The public generally supported amendments but, on this occasion, the Government failed to put forward the proposal to the Legislative Council, and eventually, no amendment was made based on the 2001 proposal. According to learning from Kingdon's theory it was an unsuccessful coupling of the three streams. The amendments sought to further strengthening the tobacco control framework in Hong Kong. The most controversial proposal was to extend the no-smoking area to all restaurants, regardless of the size and seating capacity (HWB, 2001). The ban would also cover bars and karaokes with a longer grace period for implementation. Other proposals included

- (1) Prohibiting smoking at all indoor and outdoor areas of all schools;
- (2) Prohibiting smoking in all indoor workplace;
- (3) Revoking the exemption on the display of tobacco advertisements at licensed hawker stalls and retail outlets;
- (4) Prescribing the size of the price board and price marker and the font size of words printed on them;
- (5) Health warnings on tobacco products to contain pictorial and graphic contents;
- (6) Authorizing public officers to initiate prosecution against certain offences under the ordinance (Ibid.).

According to Kingdon's statement public opinion may not be a major player in policy formulation but it still could have a positive or negative effect on the governmental agenda. The politicians or governmental officials may view public opinion as a vague mood in the country, or they would follow public opinion to take an appropriate course of action (Kingdon, J., 1984).

The 2005 proposal was more comprehensive and also included mah-jong (Chinese traditional game for elderly people) premises, commercial bathhouses and public markets as prohibited places (LEGCO 2005). Although the proposed amendment to the Ordinance in 2001 was very similar to that in 2005, they got a totally different outcome. Similar to the 2001 case, the motion put forward by legislators in 2004 – 2005 formed the drive for anti-smoking work and the motion gained wide support in the Council and a higher position in the policy agenda. In the meantime the Hong Kong SAR Government, being part of the China signed the WHO convention on 10th November 2003 as the 77th member which was sanctioned and endorsed by the National People's Congress on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2005. It provided a better and clearer framework for the anti-smoking work in Hong Kong.

Unlike the 2001 situation, the proposed 2005 legislative amendment were passed in the Legislative Council on 19th October 2006 and the new laws came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 for most of the public places and restaurants. For bars, karaokes, saunas and mahjong parlours, the effective date was 1st January 2009, so that the entertainment premises could make necessary arrangement to adapt to the change. The element in the political stream also facilitated the coupling of the three streams.

### Policy Learning and Policy Making Process

The community was in general support of tighter control on tobacco use, and the Government and the health related organizations realized the seriousness of the smoking problem. It can be said that the social capital was responded in a supportive manner. Thus the elements in the three streams all pointed to the same direction and they all privileged stricter control. The three streams could then couple together successfully through the policy window and a new law then came into play.

### Harbour Reclamation Policy

To meet the growth requirements of Hong Kong, the Study on Harbour Reclamation and Urban Growth (SHRUG, 1983) recommended that reclamation be carried out in several locations to provide land. Later on the Central and Wanchai Reclamation Feasibility Study (CWRF) commissioned by TDD (1987-1989) recommended the reclamation of some 108 hectares along the water front from Central to Causeway Bay in the aim of providing land for Central-Wanchai-Bypass, the Island Eastern Corridor Link, the MTR North Hong Kong Island line and to improve the existing water front by making it more pedestrian friendly and easily accessible by the public. Over the years there have been reclamations through various reasons and there were many supporting and opposing group of stakeholders.

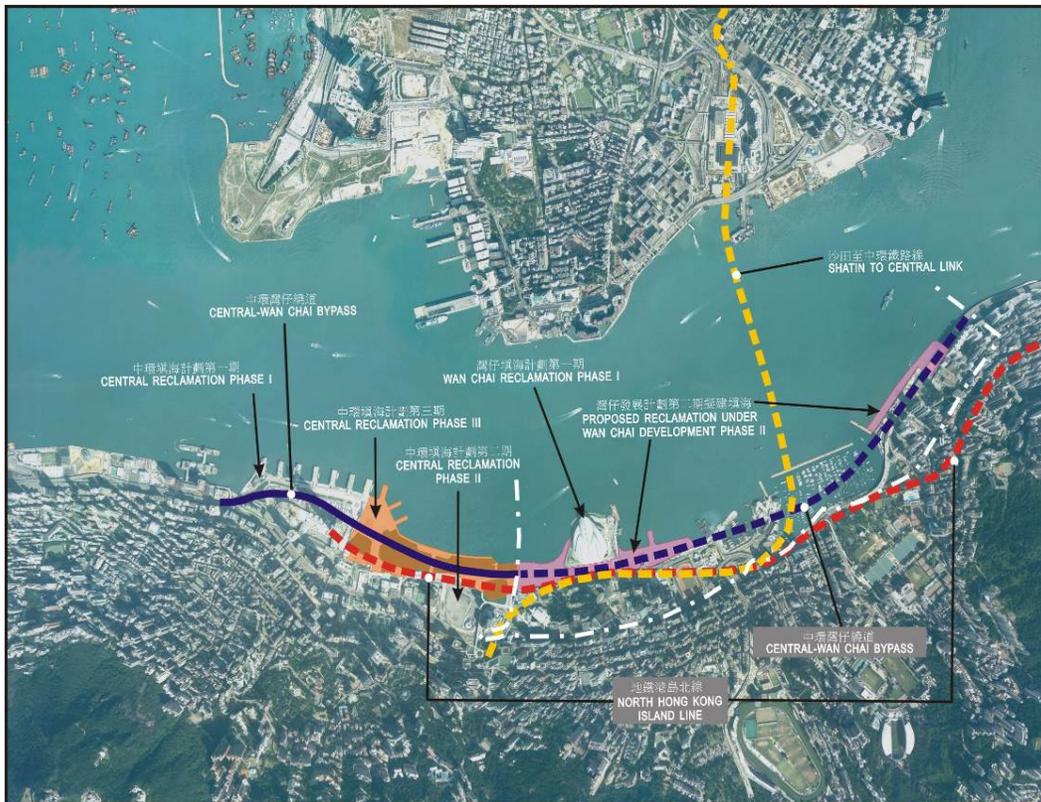


Figure-2 : Hong Kong Island Land Reclamation Map,

Source: <http://www.mappery.com/map-of/Hong-Kong-Island-Land-Reclamation-Map>.

Table 1: Major stake holders and their intention

Supporting groups	Opposing groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Planning Board</li> <li>• Government officials institution e.g. HEC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGO's (e.g. Society for the Protection of Harbour, WWF &amp; FOE)</li> <li>• Harbor Business Forum e.g. Swire, Sun Hung Kai</li> <li>• Professional bodies (e.g. environmental scholars, district advisers)</li> </ul>
<p>Reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide adequate and steady land supply for population growth and hub functions</li> <li>• Can provide essential transport infrastructure</li> <li>• Improve Economic efficacy, and meet expectation of local community</li> <li>• Increase government revenue</li> </ul>	<p>Reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induce adverse impacts on environment &amp; eco-system</li> <li>• Impair marine safety and shipping industries development</li> <li>• Destroy harbour tourist attraction</li> <li>• Decrease the enjoyment of social activities and harbour sightseeing</li> <li>• Ignore aesthetic, historical and cultural values of the harbour.</li> </ul>

*Source: summarized from study findings by Author*

### Governing Laws & Legislations

The laws and legislations related to Harbour reclamation are:

- The Foreshore and Sea-bed (Reclamations) Ordinance (Cap 127)
- Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance
- Dumping at Sea Ordinance (Chapter 466)
- Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (Chapter 531, PHO)
- Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO)
- TDS/PADS (Territory Development Strategy/ Port and Airport Development Strategy)
- HKPSG (HK Planning Standard and Guidelines)
- OZP's/ODP's (Outline zoning plan/ outline development plan )
- Principles and Guidelines issued by the HER (Harbour Enhancement Review)

Among the other regulations PHO (Protection of the Harbour Ordinance) is the most related Ordinance. Here is the brief about the birth of the Protection of Harbour Ordinance:

The society for Protection of the Harbour (Harbour Society) was formed in 1995. A campaign captioned 'Save our Harbour' opposed the government's proposal to further fill in the harbour. The Harbour Society presented the Protection of the Harbour Bill in 1996 as a Private Member's Bill through the then Legislator Christine Loh. Although the government did not support the Bill, it was passed in June 1997 and became the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance applicable to Central Harbour only.

In November 1999, due to an amendment to the Harbour Ordinance to extend the geographical scope the Harbour Ordinance got permission to cover the entire Victoria Harbour. The purpose of the ordinance is 'Presumption against reclamation in the Harbour'.

- The Harbour is to be protected and preserved as a special public asset and a natural heritage of Hong Kong people, and for the purpose there shall be a presumption against reclamation in the Harbour. (amended 75 of 1999s.4) .
- All public officers and public bodies shall have regard to the principle stated in subsection (1) for guidance in the exercise of any powers vested in them.

The Ordinance first came into force on 30 June 1997 as a result from a private member bill, which was proposed in 1996 by the Society for the Protection of the Harbour<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Governments Reaction after CFA**

- Appointed Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC)
- Demonstrated various reviews e.g. Wanchai Development Phase II Review (WDII)
- Held Public Engagement Exercises – HER (Harbour-front Enhancement Review)
- Various reports to demonstrate compliance with 'overriding public need test' (e.g. CMM report)
- EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment )for WD II (Wanchai Development phase II) finally approved on 11 Dec 2008

#### **Policy Learning and Policy Making Process**

There has been a long time struggle between environmental protection and economic development. Before CFA case there was no Government policy on Harbour reclamation. After the CFA the government had carried out review on the size of the project, appointed HEC, carried out HER, some reclamation projects were suspended for review (e.g.- Central-Wanchai Bypass, Kai Tak development). The concept of "multi-stakeholder participatory process" has inspired a new approach of policy making as an alternative to the centralized and top-down approach that has long been adopted by the Government. An example of success is the Citizens Envisioning@Harbour (CE@H), an alliance of over 10 civil society organizations, including professional organizations, environmental and district planning organizations, and universities, who championed a community-based public participation model for planning the Victoria Harbour and the adjoining districts. It unlocked ways for citizens to participate in the development process of harbor reclamation as well as Sustainable city planning. The coupling of the three streams also worked as a modifier. The *Conceptual Learning* is Government has finally redefined the goal behind the policy/ordinance on harbour reclamation and adopted more democratic approach (e.g. public engagement). The *Social Learning* the society has become more aware, democratic and matured, and are willingly fighting for a fair share of policy making with the Govt. (E.g. ferry pier and star ferry by local action group).

#### **Heritage Conservation Policy**

Heritage is one of the city's elements which make it different and diverse from other cities. More specifically heritage formulates a relationship between past and future occupying the present. A sense of continuity and belonging is conveyed to the future generation through collective memory. Due to huge demand of land supply for the growing population in Hong Kong many of the urban

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<sup>1</sup>Shortly after 1 July 1997, Government proposed a bill to suspend its operation but this was not supported...The 1999 Ordinance (amendment) had also originated as a private member's bill...It can be seen from this brief account of the history that the effort of the respondent...were responsible for getting the Ordinance onto the statute book." (quoted from the judgment from CFA on 9 Jan 2004)

areas have been re-developed and as a result many historical old buildings have been demolished. For instance Lee tung street, former General Post Office, old Hong Kong Club and the former Tsim Sha Tsui Kowloon-Canton Railway Terminus can be stated as examples. The issue had not been addressed by government or public as it deserved for a long time.

Although people during the colonial rule suffered in identity crisis, but in the post-colonial period they gave immense response to heritage conservation. As public concern raised with time, government recognized the issue but it seemed their aim was to gain economic return rather a holistic approach. The heritage conservation framework has largely remained unaltered till present. The only major institutional change was the transfer of heritage policy responsibility from HAB to the newly set up Development Bureau (DEVB) with effective from 1 July 2007; and the setting up of the Commissioner for Heritage's Office (CHO) under DEVB in April 2008. The CHO is responsible for providing necessary support to the Secretary for Development (SDEV) in implementing and reviewing heritage conservation policy; taking forward the initiatives announced in the CE Policy Address (10 October 2007); and serving as a focal point of contact, both local and overseas (Heritage Conservation website).

The demolition of the old Star Ferry Pier in December 2006 and the young activist movement it triggered for preserving the pier with its "collective memory" suddenly brought the issue of heritage conservation sharp into focus. Heritage conservation issue was energized and different stake holders and public started to hope for a concrete benchmark. Seeking re-election in March 2007, the Chief Executive (CE) Donald Tsang declared his position in heritage conservation and later honoured his promise in October 2007 with a package of measures for heritage conservation finally put in place.



Figure -3: Former Lee Tung Street



Figure -4: Former General Post Office



Figure -5: Old Hong Kong Club



Figure -6: Former Tsim Sha Tsui Kowloon-Canton Railway Terminus

Source:

Figure-02: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/90/Lee\\_Tung\\_Street.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/90/Lee_Tung_Street.jpg)

Figure-04: [http://www.amo.gov.hk/graphics/trails/C\\_folder/c40a.jpg](http://www.amo.gov.hk/graphics/trails/C_folder/c40a.jpg)

Figure-05: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2d/HKClub\\_1928.jpeg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2d/HKClub_1928.jpeg)

Figure-06: [http://farm4.staticflickr.com/3767/9099396794\\_558655c6e9\\_o.jpg](http://farm4.staticflickr.com/3767/9099396794_558655c6e9_o.jpg)

The presently valid legal framework for heritage conservation in Hong Kong is embodied within the scope of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (A&M Ordinance), which is administered through the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) and the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) (operating within the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) under the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB). The Ordinance, enacted in 1976, provides legal justifications for the declaration of monuments (AMO website). Under the A&M Ordinance, the Antiquities Authority (AA)<sup>2</sup> may, after consultation with the AAB and with the approval of the CE, by notice in the Gazette, declare a place, building, site or structure which he/she considers to be of public interest by reason of its historical, archaeological or paleontological significance to be a monument for protection (AMO, -Cap.53) .

Operationally, the task of heritage conservation involves a number of legislations enforced by different government bodies. In addition to the A&M Ordinance, the Town Planning Ordinance (TPO), Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance (URAO) and Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) are also identified as primary instruments for cultural heritage conservation. The major stake holders are Indigenous organizations, Heritage and conservation NGO's, Individual heritage professionals, Schools and youth groups, Private property owners, developers and landlords, Tourism operators, Religious authorities, Small business owners, Building occupants and tenants, Government departments and related bodies.

#### **Heritage Conservation Movement in Brief**

According to findings from the policy studies, there had been no comprehensive heritage conservation policy in Hong Kong as the government paid attention to professionals cost benefit analysis but not to the people's preferences. The pressure group and activists somehow managed to accumulate public interest but their impact was relatively short-lived. They were not powerful enough to gain responsiveness and accountability of the Government which would lead to a policy agenda. So many built heritages and streets have been disappeared due to being apathetic by the government. In 1999, the former CE Tung Chee-hwa pronounced in his Policy Address the importance of heritage preservation: *'.....The concept of preserving heritage should be incorporated into all projects for redeveloping old areas* (Policy Address of CE, 1999). Only until February 2004 the government launched a consultation document (HAB website). Several consultation was done including the one held in January 2007. Running for re-election in March 2007, the CE Donald Tsang addressed this issue in his Election Manifesto published in early February 2007.

#### **Policy Learning and Policy Making Process**

The policy learning here would be the successful attempts of engaging the community which has stimulated a demand for direct public participation in the policy process and thereby fostered hope for the sustainable development through policy process. In the context of heritage conservation, such growing desire was clearly seen, for example, in the H15 (Lee Tung Street) renewal case, who organized weekly meetings, conferences and residents' workshops to discuss the issue. In protesting against the proposed plan by the URA (Urban Renewal Authority), residents proposed bottom-up a "people-oriented redevelopment plan", which was described as an unprecedented and genuine people's movement (SCMP, 11 July 2005). According to Kingdon, policy window is an opportunity for advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions. Windows are opened either by the appearance of compelling problem (problem window) or happenings in the political stream (political window). In this case it can be assumed that the Star Ferry incident in December 2006 was not only a concentrated event by itself, but also an important policy window opened in the

<sup>2</sup> With the re-organization of Government Secretariat on 1 July 2007, Secretary for Development (SDEV) replaced Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) as the Antiquities Authority.

problem stream, leading to what could be called a “partial coupling”. The second policy window was opened three months later in the political stream at the 2007 CE Election, placing this conservation issue on the Government’s decision agenda with a package of new initiatives announced in the first policy address of the re-elected CE Donald Tsang in October 2007.

The goal to achieve sustainable development has also empowered the heritage conservation drive. Sustainable development is defined as one that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet theirs (UNCED). It is found that these two also share common ideology and principles, such as public access to information and participation in policy making. The policy learning here is that ‘The advocacy to change the institutional system in Hong Kong to allow for the level of transparency, public accountability and consensus building necessarily for sustainable development (Lai, A., SCMP, 2003) set a political atmosphere conducive to policy change in heritage conservation arena.

### Synopsis and Conclusion

These case studies attempt to produce a valuable dimension to the understanding of how favourable the situations need to be before significant change can occur, which ultimately can assist in developing a better understanding of the policy making process. And the concept of the window of opportunity has given scope in the analysis of policy development.

From the three policy issues discussed above it can be summarized that the learning metaphors what, when, why and how helped out to understand each policy making process through the application of Anderson and Kingdon’s theoretical framework. The current finding shows that in order to bring the stakeholders and actors more effectively into problem solving, it seems three conditions must be fulfilled.

- First, the parties involved must have a common consent about the objectionable situation, and they should work to meet a common goal.
- Second, acknowledgement of each other’s role to achieve the goal.
- Third, there should be recognition of the ability and power needed to achieve the goals and objectives by all concerned in a democratic way, not by dictatorship.

Then the overall situation can be brought under a single umbrella and can offer a ‘package deal’. Then the policy can get a shape and work efficiently. The notion goes with Kingdon’s thought where he elaborates ‘People work on problems only when a particular combination of problem, solution and participants in a choice situation makes it possible’ (Kingdon 1995:86). The necessity of an advocate is also felt mandatory from the above situations which have already been discussed earlier in the theories –

*‘Without the presence of an entrepreneur, the linking of the streams may not take place. Good ideas lie fallow for lack of an advocate. Problems are unsolved for lack of a solution. Political events are not capitalized on for lack of inventive and developed proposals’ (Kingdon 1995: 182).*

Therefore it is recommended that Hong Kong government needs to balance the needs between stakeholders and an entrepreneur may involve from the very beginning of a critical situation, and then there may prevail an equilibrium condition among economy, environment and people in line with the hope for a promising future. It is also expected that learning from this paper may be applied to understand other critical circumstances.

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