

## BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS (BP): IDENTIFYING THE CAUSES AND ELEMENTS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING PROJECTS DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL HOUSING POLICY (NHP)

ZarinaBtMohd Zain  
<sup>1</sup>Ku HasnitaBt Ku Samsu,  
<sup>2</sup>Zatul HimmahBt Adnan  
<sup>3</sup>Mohd Mahadee B Ismail

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### ABSTRACT

Politics often affects administrative systems, especially when it involves the implementation of government policies and programs. The evident can be seen in the housing development sector where frequent interference from members and political parties in administrative affairs has ultimately undermined the effectiveness of the implementation of a housing project. As a result, there are problems with late-backed housing projects, abandoned projects and ill-reported projects every year resulting peoples received direct impact on the problem, so they cannot afford to have a home to be desired. Most of the study in the housing sector focus mainly on identifying the factors and effects of abandoned housing projects but there has no research done on the effectiveness of the initial process involving the process of evaluation and approval by the authorities to initiate housing development projects where this failure has contributed to the issue of current housing development. Does bureaucratic politics situation really happened in the early stages that contributes to the country's housing issue? Hence, this study focuses on reviewing the management structure during the initial process of housing development project in implementing the National Housing Policy (NHP) to ensure that each housing project is successfully implemented. The main objective of this conceptual paper is to identify the root cause of the intervention or political influence of the bureaucracy (BP) and to evaluate the elements or characteristics that make up the bureaucratic politics situation during the implementation of the housing policy through the housing development project. This paper was written by using secondary data from secondary sources, through library search, journal and articles analysis with reference to several bureaucratic politics models used by previous researchers.

Keywords: Bureaucratic Politics, Development of Housing Project, National Housing Policy

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### INTRODUCTION

The National Housing Policy (NHP) launched in 2011 was created to outline the direction and be the basis for planning and development of housing at federal, state and local levels. The goal of the NHP is to provide adequate, comfortable, quality, and affordable housing to improve the well-being of the people. To offset the current needs, the government and the private sectors play an important role in fulfilling social responsibility to the people. Comprehensive approaches are introduced to facilitate the accessibility of the people to own or rent houses provided by the government (Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government, 2015). However, housing and home ownership issues are not new in the country and many studies have been done on housing development issues including the rising on house prices up to the issue of delayed housing projects due to interruption during the development process either at the stage of getting approvals until the process of delivering the houses to the purchasers. Other than that, impact on rapid urbanization process resulted in the increasing number of residents in the city also contribute to the issues on housing where there's an increasing demand for housing but the government was unable to meet the demand.

### PROBLEMS DURING THE APPROVAL PROCESS ARE ONE OF THE CAUSES FOR HOUSING ISSUES IN MALAYSIA

Among the issues associated with the housing sector were the failure of a project to commence due to the difficulties in getting approval from the state's local authority (PBT) as well as failure to obtain land use permission from the state government to develop the housing projects. This happen because of the political influence in every administrative process known as bureaucratic politics (BP). As a result, an increase in abandoned housing projects, illness projects, and late projects may causerakyat as the buyers fail to have the expected home (Wolman, 1971). The bureaucracy-related issues often affect the policy implementation and also occur during the implementation of the National Housing Policy (NHP) in Malaysiadue toseveral problems such as delay to start the project because the problems to get an approval, too many procedures in getting the project done and also the problem in distribution of end products because of the interference by political individual or party in finalizing the recipients as what happened to government-built housing projects. During the managerial activities for housing development sector, it begins with the land development process, the layout plan and the building plan which usually takes more than one year (Nor Aini, 2001). This delay occurred due to political inteferece or influence in the implementation of the NHP, especially when it involves the acquisition of land from the state government. In addition, political influence in related agencies also involved in planning, approving and implementing each project and this will definitely impact the public sector such as housing agencies that often face problems and hindrance further efforts to assist the government in implementing the housing development program. For example, Taman Manggis land issue arose when TasekGelugor Member of Parliament Datuk

ShabudinYahaya brought to the Dewan Rakyat's knowledge and asked the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to investigate the sale of several parcels of land in Penang, which was originally intended for the People's Housing Project (PPR) development but it's used for the construction of private hospitals. This proves that the state government's intervention happened in this case of the development which affected by political elements and indirectly resulted on difficulties for the people to own a house.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THIS PAPER:**

1. To assess the cause of bureaucratic politics in the implementation of NHP on the development of a government housing project.
2. To identify the elements of bureaucratic politics that affect the implementation of NHP on the development of government housing projects.

#### **BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS (BP)**

Dahl (1975) defines politics as any persistence pattern of human relationship that involves power, rule, or authority. Thus, politics is about struggle for power on all three levels which are State, intra-State and inter-State (Morten & Syed Serajul, 2006). The bureaucracy as intended by Weber (1947), refers to the system of government administration as public administration system that involving government-appointed or bureaucratic officers in executing any political product such as the policy or program that has been drafted. Thus, bureaucratic politics can be defined as an administrative or management system that involves formal structure and process governed by an individual or organizations that in power, interest and authority to ensure that the tendency of implementers (individual or agencies) to achieve their goals can be implemented successfully and recognized (Peter & Pierre (2012); Abdul Rashid & Syed Sirajul (2006)). Bureaucratic politics is also a decision-making process involving many interested actors / groups whose aspirations and agendas are to develop their own strategies through consultation or compromise in line with the goals to be achieved (Charles, Peter & Thompson, 1990). In addition, bureaucratic politics refers to a method involving bureaucrats of various backgrounds, desires and views and plays an important role in the creation and implementation of policies. The policy is usually derived from the interaction and discussion of elected legislature who are the politician and for BP, the policies is considered as political product (Halperin & Morten, 1974; Bendor & Moe, 1985). In a simple word, BP refer to the situation where there is an existence on elements of politics appears in the administration or managerial activities.

#### **WHY BP HAPPENED DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL HOUSING POLICY (NHP)? : THE ROOT OF BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS**

As discussed earlier, bureaucratic politics is a situations where the elements of politics involved in administration activities and this can be referred as political influence or interference in a government's administrative process. Basically, the interference arises due to misunderstandings between the two main entities of the implementation process which are policy makers comprising politicians, and policy implementers consist of bureaucrats or public administrators. The conflicts occurs because of the differences in term of idea, views and because of decisions made which dissatisfying the other groups then lead to conflicts. According to Haradian Shah Hamdan's (2016), supposedly, when there is issues in delayed projects, it can be resolved by having the intervention between state governments with the developer such as REHDA. Even though the intervention is needed (somehow) but for the state government, of course they have their own requests they will review the prescribed conditions but would not compromise with security issues and others. When such happen, it will create conflict among developer and decision makers where at the end, the involvement of individual or agencies which had the power are considered (political actor). This is also supported by Yazit Razali's (2016) in his writings on FELDA's New Generation Housing Project which arose several problems including land acquisition issues, utility facilities and issues on approval from agencies under the local authority (PBT) and state governments. This clearly demonstrates that conflicts between state governments and project executives in the development of the project due to failure to obtain approval shows that before the process of development was carried out there was an intervention between the two administrations players. If the intervention gives advantages to the buyers, then it's not a big problems but the issue now is that intervention will give negative impacts to the projects thus authorities who have powers, interest and authority have to involve to solve the disputes.

In addition, bureaucratic politics also may happen due to an increase number of issues in housing projects such as abandoned projects, late projects, sick projects which arise due to weaknesses in monitoring and enforcing of law towards the developers. The failure of developers in completing the projects within the time frame may cause governments (federal or states) have to interfere. When no action is taken by the authorities, immediate action must be taken to ensure that the problem is solved. One of the action is by get the influence from an individual who has the power and this refer to the politicians and key implementers at the federal level so that action can be taken towards developers who fail to settle the problems. According to Nor 'Aini (2001), developers had to go through nine to eleven major processes in building and selling houses in Malaysia including land acquisition, preparation for project evaluations and distribution, obtaining plan approvals, advertising of permits, licenses application until home distribution process. This clearly shows that the complexity of passing through each phase of the process lead to housing issues and this may cause the government to intervene in ensuring that every process is cleared without the need for a rigid process. This is where political interference or influence applies in bureaucratic political situation.

#### **HOW BP INFLUENCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NHP? : THE ELEMENTS OF BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS (BP)**

Every actor involved has its own interest to be fulfilled and to achieve it, they need to take advantage in every administrative process starting from agenda setting, decision-making to implementation stage. Weldes (2006) in his writings identified three major concepts of bureaucratic politics which are interest, power and rationality. For Etzioni-Halevy (1985); Page (1985) and 't Hart and Rosenthal (1991), they agree that bureaucratic politics occurs due to the influence of power in the policy-making process which leads to meet the self-interests or organization represented. Allison and Halperin (1972) evaluate the bureaucratic politics from the basic unit of analysis involving the structure and the number of actors involved, concepts or processes during the implementation and obstacles encountered during the process. It is clear that bureaucratic politics that occur in the public administration system are influenced by several factors, namely the organizational structure or the number of actors involved in the control of the agenda, sectoral interests and responsibilities given to each actor during the decision-making process and execution and power possess by key players that involved during the implementation of the policy.

#### **NUMBER OF IMPLEMENTERS AND DIVERSITY OF IDEAS IN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The existence of BP can be seen through compositions of members in the branch where there are numerous individuals and organizations with various goals and objects involved. Allison and Zelikow (1999) stated that the more people involved in the policy-making process, the higher the diversity of interests and perspectives and this will affect the outcome of the policy decision (Boin&Rhinar, 2009). Most administrators give space to the involvement of more individuals to be involved in the policy-making process but some limit the number of participants to facilitate during the decisions made so that decisions can be focused without being influenced by various opinions (Rourke, 1984). When policy decision is taken from a handful number of individuals, it will certainly reduce the competitor's conflict. This is because the probability on the number of decisions to be achieved is minimal and it can facilitates decision makers to evaluate and decide more quickly based on the limited number of alternatives (Preston and 't Hart, 1999). This is good to help the decision makers to have effective decision-making as each decision is assessed in terms of their strenght and weeknesses before finalize it, but sometimes this diversity will lead to conflict if the underlying players insist on making sure their ideas should be accepted as a result. A study conducted by Christiansen (2006) on the implementation of policy in Europe showsthat the final decision at the Parliamentary level was made through a large number of actors consisting of twenty-seven commissioners and to obtain this consent, the legislative process had been used between each individual involving well-administered government officials as well as politicians (Christiansen, 2001).

For Allison and Halperin (1972), they refer the actors involved in the development and implementation of the policy had include senior players that comprises politicians, principal administrators of either government or non-government organizations. They works as key element in ensuring that government policies can be realized. In addition, there are also junior players comprising media, interest groups and civilian representatives who are directly or indirectly involved in the policy process. However, in most situation, the cooperation between the two players is based on the issues and policies that have been drafted and if the draft satisfying both parties, then it can be proceed but if it wasn't agreed then conflicts may occurs. Not everyone needs intervention or support from junior players because normally this group is considered as the recipients of the output or outcome, so they no need to be involved with execution stage. The same idea was raised by Hart and Preston (1999) who argue that bureaucratic politics involves organizational size and difference of ideas and this division of staff in the executive bureaucracy is due to bureaucratic politics ('Hart & Preston, 1997). Numerous numbers of participants will assist the administration to make decision and produce work with effective and efficient but sometimes the differences in organizational units because of the overlapping of responsibilities and tasks may lead to barriers in communication, coordination and ultimately leading to competition. When political influence affects the actions of an organization, then every activity is bound to be limited by the power of the political leader and every decision or action that to be taken should be referred first. This will create difficulty for every implementer to act especially when conflicts of interest are shared by the head of the administration among the organization involved (Bendor& Hammond, 1992; Rhodes, 1994).

#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND RESPONSIBILITY**

One of the key challenges in bureaucratic politics is to ensure integration in administration (Kaufman, 1960). Complex issues usually occur within the jurisdiction of the organization especially where it involve numerous number of participants during any implementation (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984; Peters, 2001). As a result, confusion and discrepancies have led to bad effects on the organization (Allison & Zelikow, 1999; Rhinar&Boin, 2009). To minimize this disunity, the power balance should be given by giving responsibility to each unit (Page, 1992; Larsson et al., 2005; Wallace, 2005). Each unit needs to be given their own function of responsibility, operating procedure with its own work culture that will definitely facilitate the interaction within the working space (Kassim, 2003). In the bureaucratic politics, every decision is based on the interests of the actors involved to make sure their goals and expectations are fulfilled. Therefore, if they are given the responsibility, then they will try to get their interests accepted and taken as government decisions. Bureaucratic politics focuses on plural political analysis as well as conflict of interest (Kaarbo, Juliet & Deborah, 1998). The importance herein refers to national interests, organizational interests, domestic interests or individual interests (Allison, 1971) or the importance of a player's position in the organization. Referring to the Miles Regulations', power of interest is subject to the position of administration where you stand (policy issue) depends upon where you sit (in the bureaucracy) (Kozak, 1988). This tendency or interest is usually influenced by the importance and perceptions of the position being taken. Allison

(1971) agrees that 'to motivate members within the organization, key players must be sensitive to the needs of the organization itself'. Weldes (1998) states that humans will respond to an object including people around if the object will benefit them. Fulfilling the interests of individuals or organizations in bureaucratic politics is related to the subjects and sometimes, the situation will change according to current rules or circumstances.

#### **NEUTRAL VS POLITICAL POWER**

To ensure that an effective service is received by the people, competition is the basis of bureaucratic politics. Competition exists when there is power, and each strives to exercise power in order to get influence so it can fulfill its own interests and achieving the desired goal. It is stated that the best efforts of the agency to seek more resources (financial resources, human resources and resources) will only be achieved if the players or actors involved have the 'power' (Carpenter, 2001; Ellison, 1995; Niskanen, 1971). There are two basic sources of power that are the expertise and support powers which used in implementing the process of decision making especially when involve government administrative system (Rourke, 1984). Expertise is the foundation in an administration where each individual skill was acquired optimally in order to ensure that every implementation activities can be achieved effectively. The interests of the people are assured when every agenda is taken over by professionals according to their respective areas of expertise such as politicians. Expertise is a major source of governance where it can help in order to controls the flow of information. It is important that this information be channeled and received by those who have the power, especially in terms of the expertise and wisdom required by the organization (David Easton, 1965). The power of voter in the other hand refers to the influence of the other management units, whether internal or external, in government or private unit, in which all these units are usually involved in the policy implementation process (Rourke, 1984). Typically agendas and decision-making processes are undertaken by the government, but in terms of implementation sometimes involve third parties so it is important for government agencies to be involved in influencing the agenda control process to ensure that each policy objective is achieved. The third party here referred to political party or politician, stakeholder or non-governmental organization which involved and directly affected in the government policy process other than policy implementers. Administrators normally maintain their power through competition by controlling each decision and always voice out in the policy process (Moe, 1989).

Peters (2001) also agrees that in the central administration system, political power can be used in control the resource integration. This can reduce the conflict among bureaucrats because if the conflict continues, it will affect the results in implementation and finally failed to meet the needs of the people. In reality, different government structures have different jurisdictions (Peters, 2001). It is designed to disseminate the power so that every matter and decision taken will only cover the scope of tasks or responsibilities given in order to make sure the administration can be done in very smooth ways and indirectly can help government to settle the problems faced by the mass. However, conflict always occur when there's situation of power clashes between the government levels and this eventually happened when no agreement are reached between the key players (Rhinar & Boin, 2009). This is the common problem that often faced when politics influenced the government administration (Smith, 1983; Kozak, 1988). They use the power and priorities as the tools to fulfill their own interests. These support the idea suggested by Rosati (1981) where he agreed that no individual or organization that involved in any decision making process being dominant to all decisions made. In the bureaucratic political perspective, the President or the Prime Minister has no absolute power in making decisions regarding the implementation of a policy. This is because, although a decision has been made, it is certainly cannot be considered as final yet because the decision may need to be revised or altered according to current circumstances or needs (Allison, 1971; Halperin, 1974). The question of power was also asked by Rhodes (1994) in his study where he argued, the ability of policy players in defending and influencing his or agencies interests is greatly reflexive to power. The power in this context refers to the power of position, the ability of the player to exploit the source's position and the reputation of the player himself in executing the responsibility given by the authorities (Allison, 1971; Halperin, 1974).

#### **ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS OF BP: RATIONALIZATION IN DECISION-MAKING AND THE DEGREE OF COORDINATION.**

Welch (1992) states that bureaucratic politics is considered as 'event-centric'. According to Allison & Halperin (1972) a bureaucratic politics begins during the commencement of implementation agendas either it happen because it is close to the end of the year (annual budget expenditure) or because there's the need for the completion of planned programs and projects. The focus is also including the selection of the agendas of programs and projects. This selection indirectly refers to the rational expectations made by policy makers and implementers (Weldes, 1998). There is no theory of behavior support the statement that every decision made is just to fulfill the intentions per se but actually most of the decisions made is based on the rationality towards the intended objectives and aimed (Simon, 1995). Besides Allison (1971), many agree that rationalist methods are needed in decision making process especially when it involves different interests and powers. Here, policymakers choose the best option, taking into account every obstacle faced by identifying its strenght, weaknesses, threat and opportunities. The rational results are able to control the bureaucratic politics environment in the administration. The rationality of the decision are derived from the process of discussion, bargaining and compromise between those involved. Rosati (1981) states that every outcome is considered a political product which involves the discussion of various parties in achieving such rational decisions. This is because, all actions are affected by standard operating procedures which become the reference and guideline to everyone involved in the decision making process (Allison & Halperin, 1974). If there is deficiency in the procedure, the best method to determine the decision is by identifying the rational decisions which can benefit the

target group. This is as what have been described by Rhodes (1994) as an action channels in decision making process. This structure is formed by select the key players, identifying factors that influence the individual to be involved in the basic policy game and finally identify the cause and effect when they involved in the policy game. This is also one approach that can be used to have rational decisions (Allison, 1971; Krasner, 1972; Art, 1973). Bendorb& Hammond (1992) in reviewing the Allison Model states that rational nature should be available to every decision maker. But in ensuring that every decision taken is truly rational, it is necessary to work with complete information as it can help decision makers to obtain optimal input in ensuring that decisions are made according to the needs and demands of the mass and directly beneficial to the people.

#### **LEVEL OF COORDINATION AND COOPERATION**

Problems that involving people are difficult to resolve by an agency or organization alone and it require cooperation from various agencies. Toleration and cooperation between these parties will help the government in ensuring their peoples get what they want and at the same time keep the reputation of the implementors involved without harming any party. When an implementation requires collaboration from various parties, then the SOPs are urgently needed in order to set a decision for implementation to be adopted by each agency involved. This provide a smooth implementation process. O'Toole (2003) states that the basis for collaboration between organizations can be seen in terms of resource requirements as well as achievement of the same goals between all organizations. This is supported by Smith, Carroll and Ashford (1995) and they also assume that besides sources and goals, the level of trust between agencies also helps in establishing a successful collaboration. The successful implementation of a policy can also be seen in the presence of involvement from various agencies and groups working together to ensure that the policy objectives are achieved and this involves a tough task as it involves multi-actors and is difficult to ensure this massive group can act effectively and able to look for flexible solutions in dealing with any challenges. Wood and Waterman (1991) argued that, in rural development, it is important to establish a vertical network (coordination) between local organizations and agencies at the highest level of the federal government. Miriam, Julia & Christian (2012) define coordination which involved three main activities, namely information sharing, resource sharing, and joint action. However, in order to ensure that these coordination can be implemented successfully, those involved must first identify three inter-organizational problems that are threats to power, no agreement on the assignment given and the conflicts encountered either in the form of vertical or horizontal (Miriam, Julia & Christian, 2012). So it can be concluded that the coordination between the three networks discussed is the best mechanism in a policy implementation rather than simply delegating power to the selected implementing institution. In order to ensure effective delivery, focus should be given to coordination activities and where necessary, incentives can also be provided as an effort to ensure that these collaborations and coordinations can be continued so the aims and objectives of the policy can be achieved. Hence the coordination between the units involved is necessary to minimize the fragmentation situation.

#### **ANALYSIS: IS IT TRUE THAT BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS OCCURRED DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NHP IN MALAYSIA?**

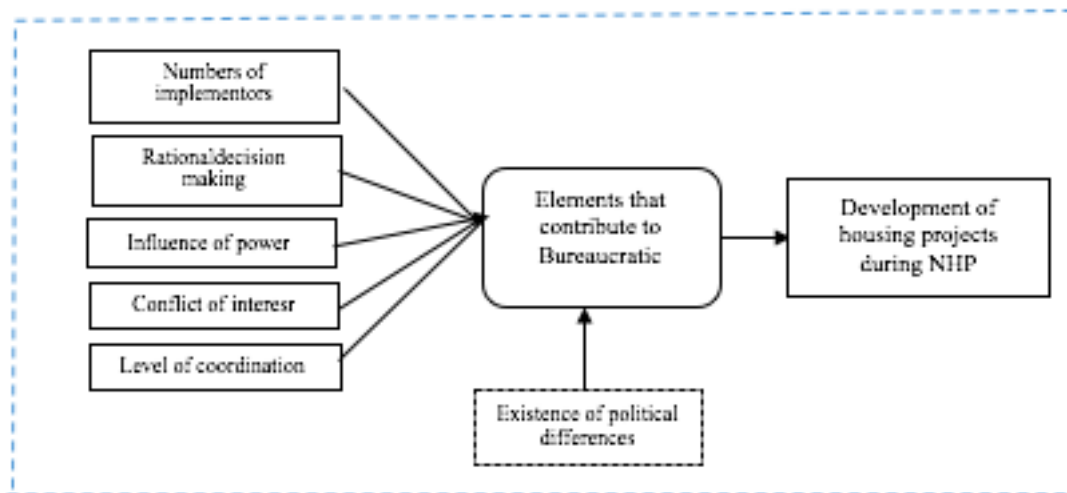
Bureaucratic Politics (BP) applies within different levels of government including at every stage of the policymaking process. From the study, it found that the root causes of political influence or intervention in the bureaucratic administration is due to the existence of conflict between members or political parties with the bureaucrats themselves as well as raising issues relating to housing projects such as abandoned, late or ill projects that cause the government to intervene in executing the policy affairs or getting developer to resolve the issue. This can be seen clearly as happened in Penang regarding Taman Manggis housing project and the Felda Second Generation Project where the housing projects failed to be built or completed due to failure in obtaining land use permission from the state government to build a housing and this happened because of political interference or political influence during the approval process until the development process. This shows that bureaucratic politics happened during the first stage in housing development process.

In reality, bureaucratic politics took place during the implementation of the NHP by looking at the five elements discussed involving a large number of players and they exercised power in ensuring their interests were fulfilled. During the approval process, many agencies under the supervision of One Stop Center (OSC) get involved at the Local Authorities such as the State Land Administration, State Water Authority (PBAN), State Town and Country Planning Department (JPBDN), Public Works Department (JKR) Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID), Department of Environment (DOE), Mineral and Geoscience Department (JMG), Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia (JBPM) and Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) which every agencies have their own expertise and mutual need in assessing the project. When there is contributions and commitments from several players, for sure each of them have their own interest to be fulfilled and this interest influenced by political individu and parties as well. This can be seen through the case of collapsed building in Pulau Pinang which happened to 5-storeys apartment. At the first stage, the Department of Environment had rejected the proposal due to the ecological disturbance and land structures which is not suitable for construction if the project been approved. However, the councillor of the authorities had give her approval to continue where at the end the project have to be stopped and yet killed 11 workers. It is clear that the decisions taken influenced by the political elements in which state government did influence the decisions made.

Eventhough rationality is one elements that contribute to the bureaucratic politics, however, the political interference sometimes more powerful than others. However, from the analysis, in reality showing that during the implementation of the NHP, the level of coordination involving agencies is considered weak. This is due to lack of coordination, especially when it involves cooperation and commitment from the federal government and the state government especially from opposition party to settle the problems of housing development project in their states. Sometimes, Federal government want to give a hand to settle on the matters but state refused to accept this assistance because they want to show that they own approach to cater the problems but until the end the problem remain as problems and people are the one who suffered from that conflict of power. This is happened when different political affiliations between the two levels of government occurred and influence the decision to be made. Each of them tries to show the power and when the issue fails, then they silent and leave it without inform it to respective authorities. This is proven through some of the issues on housing projects happened in Penang, Selangor and Kelantan which are a different from central political administration. So, can be conclude that besides these five factors, political affiliation also contributes to bureaucratic politics during the implementation of the National Housing Policy.

In Malaysia situation, there is one additional element contribute to the field of study which in total make it six elements that form bureaucratic politics which are 1) involving two or more implementers; 2) influenced by authority or power; 3) each implementer has an individual or agency interest to be met; 4) the decisions taken are rationally adopted; 5) the level of coordination is effective but not in total; and the new one is 6) influenced by political differences, especially involving the state and federal governments where this elements clearly shown during the implementation of housing policy during the development of most housing projects.

We did discussed on globalization and sustainability and one way to ensure people globalized and sustained is through providing them with the best necessities. House or shelter is one of this necessities. Authorities have to ensure that the housing development can be done in a very effective manners so the influence of political elements should be minimized. It is true that political interference happened in all administrative or governmental activities and this something cannot be avoided but by reducing the interferences in bureaucracy system, it can help the government to implement all palnned policies and projects and can fulfil the needs and demands of *rakyat* as a whole.



Conceptual framework on elements contribute to bureaucratic politics.

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Zarina Bt Mohd Zain  
*Faculty of Administrative Science & Policy Studies, UiTM N. Sembilan*  
*Faculty of Human Ecology, UPM Serdang*  
[zarina752@ns.uitm.edu.my](mailto:zarina752@ns.uitm.edu.my)

<sup>1</sup>Ku Hasnita Bt Ku Samsu,  
*Faculty of Human Ecology, UPM Serdang*  
[hasnita@upm.edu.my](mailto:hasnita@upm.edu.my)

<sup>2</sup>Zatul Himmah Bt Adnan  
*Faculty of Human Ecology, UPM Serdang*  
[zatul@upm.edu.my](mailto:zatul@upm.edu.my)

<sup>3</sup>Mohd Mahadee B Ismail  
*Faculty of Human Ecology, UPM Serdang*  
[mahadee@upm.edu.my](mailto:mahadee@upm.edu.my)