Social Policy Analysis

- Contents this week
  - Understanding key concepts & motivations in the policy analysis
  - Understanding the stages and models of policy cycle
  - Understanding the relationship between evidence and policymaking
➔ Concepts are puzzling, so always related to policy examples! (always good for exam strategy)

1. Concept of Policy Analysis
- Key areas of policy analysis: policymaking process (*legitimacy*); policy instruments & designs; impact evaluation (*efficacy*)
- Suggest a nice policy example and discuss how you can research the policy in the three areas.

2. Policy Cycle
- Standard model: problem identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making, policy implementation, (impact) evaluation
  - Note that the process often moves back & forth between stages
  - Evaluation leads to a new cycle (maintenance/succession)
- Is this cycle a realistic model to describe the world? Let's think about any recent policies in the UK. If not, why are we using this in research?

3. Problem Identification & Agenda Setting
- Problems need to be recognised as 'social' problems ➔ political agenda
- Also focus on what policymakers are NOT doing – relates to power structure
- What are social problems not actively tackled and why?
- Public opinion vs organised interests: what is the case of Brexit?

4. Policy Formulation & Decision-making
- Policymaking: based on ideology; policy transfers (learning); evidence-based
- Should policymakers prioritise evidence? Why is that not always the case?
- Decision-making frameworks: rational choice, bounded rationality, punctuated equilibrium; advocacy coalition, multiple streams
- Essay feedback: some theory-related discussions (PET, Hall; MSF); more discussions on the nature of evidence; citation

5. Implementation & Evaluation
- Why do policies often not work as intended? Any examples?
- Why is cost-benefit analysis often (almost always) not reliable?

Any More Questions?