

T13P04 / Gendered Innovations in Public Policy Research

Topic : T13 / Gender, Diversity and Public Policy

Chair : Jennifer Curtin (University of Auckland)

Second Chair : Jackie Steele (Institute of Social Science, University of Tokyo)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Gendered Innovations in Public Policy Research

Panel sponsored by IPSA RC19 Gender, Politics and Public Policy

The importance of gendered innovations in the sciences and the social sciences has become increasingly recognised in recent years (European Union, 2013; Jenkins and Keane, 2014; Sawer et al, 2016; Stanford, 2009). 'Gendered Innovation' has been defined as the process that integrates sex and gender analysis into all phases of basic and applied research to assure excellence and quality in outcomes (Schiebinger et al 2013). While this definition informs current research in the sciences, similar feminist approaches to public policy analysis have resulted in new theoretical, methodological and empirical understandings of how gender inequalities are produced through policy and what is required to achieve gender equality in the future. As such, feminist and gendered policy research has enhanced the field of public policy, challenging the gender neutrality of core concepts and conclusions by ensuring gender, and intersectionality, sit at the centre of the analysis, (Agustin, 2013; Bacchi, 2009; Mazur, 2002; Sainsbury, 2009; Stetson and Mazur, 2010; Verloo et al, 2005).

Yet there remain many intractable policy 'problems', global and local, that continue to have a disproportional impact on women's wellbeing and, at both the national and international level, systematic gender analysis remains patchy at best, often dependent on political will. Alongside this, evidence-based policy making, big data and 'social investment' strategies, have become the 'go to' concepts and methods for governments looking for 'innovative' solutions (Boyd and Crawford, 2013; Cairney, 2016; Lerman, 2013; Morel et al, 2012; Stoker and Evans, 2016). Scholars are engaging critically with these constructs, but seldom from a gender or intersectional perspective.

We propose a panel on Gendered Innovations in Public Policy Research. We welcome papers that take stock of the innovative knowledges and understandings produced by feminist policy scholars to date, evaluate feminist policy practices that have produced innovative or transformative change, and challenge and critique contemporary approaches to policy analysis, design and evidence that continue to render gender and diversity invisible. Papers that address the future direction of gendered innovations in public policy research and analysis, be they theoretical, methodological or empirical, are also encouraged.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Gendered Innovations in Public Policy Research

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Session 1 Gendered Policy Innovations

Wednesday, June 28th 14:00 to 16:00 (Block B 3 - 3)

Discussants

Marian Sawer (ANU)

Gender and old age policies: an analytic framework

Lea Sgier (Central European University)

In our ageing society, old age policies are an increasingly important policy field, and generally a strongly gendered one: not only because old age demographics are clearly gendered (with women living longer and a majority of carers being women, for instance), but also because old age comes with gendered representations of what it is to be a "proper" old man or woman. This paper is an attempt to propose an analytic framework allowing to account for this gender dimension in a systematic way, taking into account the key dimensions of gender (gender and sexual categories, constructions of femininity and masculinity and of normative heterosexuality, etc.).

It draws insights from various elements of the literature, such as critical feminist policy analysis (McPhail), critical frame analysis (Verloo et al.), gender mainstreaming, and the capability approach (Sen, Nussbaum), while relating them to two concrete projects dealing with old age policies in Switzerland: a National Science Foundation project on comparative dementia policy in the Swiss cantons, and a smaller project on how nursing homes can support older people's political citizenship.

“Sprinkle with Gender and Stir:” Gender Based Analysis Plus in Canada

Hankivsky Olena (Simon Fraser University)

Mussell Linda (Queen's University)

In the last decade, much debate has occurred at the international level regarding the innovation of Gender Mainstreaming (GM), its efficacy, and future utility (Bacchi and Eveline 2009; Crespi 2009; Hankivsky 2013; Kantola 2010; Walby 2011; Zalewski 2010). Similar discussions have taken place in Canada where GM has predominantly been operationalized in the form of Gender-Based Analysis (GBA). In all jurisdictions, including Canada, there is a push to learn from early GM efforts and a renewed focus on creating mainstreaming strategies that are more responsive to the needs of differently situated individuals and diverse groups of women and men.

This paper examines and takes stock of a second generation of mainstreaming approaches (Gender Based Analysis Plus, or GBA+) to advance equity in the context of public policy in Canada. It seeks to analyze the rationale and processes for the development of the second generation mainstreaming, assess the strengths and limitations of gender (and equalities) mainstreaming in the context of Canada, and constructively critique contemporary approaches to gendered policy development. Informing this discussion is a review of the literature on this topic in Canada, and thematic analysis of interviews with forty-four experts in Canadian government, academia, and the voluntary sector. Key emergent themes from analysis include success stories in the Canadian context, the integration of intersectional principles in gendered work, and strategies to overcome resistance to gendered innovations in government. This research is the newest addition to a larger comparative project examining GM strategies in the UK, Sweden, and Canada.

Social Investment: Contrasting Interpretations by the OECD and the World Bank

Rianne Mahon (Balsillie School of International Affairs)

Although the OECD and the World Bank are often (rightly) associated with the diffusion of ideas and practices underpinning neoliberal globalisation, a closer examination of their policy discourses over the last decade suggests that they have clearly gone beyond brute neoliberalism to embrace the idea of social investment. There are, however, different versions of the social investment paradigm, some of which are consistent with the core premises of neoliberalism, whereas others share the more egalitarian premises of the Keynesian era. Such differences are reflected in how early childhood development and the gendered implications thereof are interpreted. The World Bank's neoliberal version, directed at the Global South, draws especially on the American social policy model, which emphasizes provision through the market, with limited public support targeted at the very poor. It thus ignores the implications for gender equality associated with its favoured programs such as conditional cash transfers (CCTs). In contrast, the OECD's discourse, directed at its member states, exhibits the stronger influence of Western European, especially Scandinavian, experience, where the norms of universality and gender equality remain important.

History, Institutions and Feminist Policy Actors: A review of gendered innovations in public policy research

Jennifer Curtin (University of Auckland)

This paper reviews the work of feminist scholars who have expanded the analytic reach of historical institutionalism by engaging with the idea that gendered “history matters”. In this body of work, we find important critiques of traditional understandings of what counts as institutionally “new”, and how gendered rules and norms are revealed, remedied, embedded or rescinded, and the opportunities and constraints they offer ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in the pursuit of gender equality. These feminist analyses have begun to build a tradition of their own, at a theoretical level, and empirically through their use of in-depth case studies, enriching knowledge of the settings and sequences required to advance gender equality policy, and the (feminist) actors and activism of import to this process. In this paper I trace these intellectual developments and, evaluate the contribution gendered innovations in policy research and analysis have made to the field of public policy over time.

The metagovernance of public policy networks for gender equity: lessons learned from Medellín-Colombia

Andres Olaya (EAFIT University)

Santiago Leyva

Gender equity is a broad and comprehensive goal that involves all aspects of human life in society. For public policy studies, this means that there are many issues, agendas, actors and conflicts that somehow relate to this goal. In fact, some of these issues can advance unevenly and contradictorily in different arenas of public policy. For example, a country can pass progressive legislation on sexual and reproductive rights for women and, at the same time, be inequitable in issues related with distribution of income and political power (glass ceilings). This implies that conventional forms of governance concentrated exclusively on state, market, community or family mechanisms are insufficient to achieve true gender equity. In this sense, this paper presents three great lessons learned in the construction of the gender equity policy in Medellín-Colombia. First, it shows that building the causal relations of issues involved with gender equity is a major problem. Therefore, it seriously questions the uncritical adoption of discourses and causal relations pre-established by international agencies such as the UN (CEDAW, Beijing 1995), the ECLAC, or the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Second, it points out how the formulation of a policy of gender equity should privilege the construction of policy networks across different sectors of government, firms, communities and families if it really wants to achieve gender mainstreaming. Finally, and taking up all of the above, this paper proposes that for the effective implementation of this policy, it should adopt a network management approach based on metagovernance. This means recognizing that the local state alone cannot achieve a goal that involves all aspects of human life in society. Therefore, the local state must metagovern other actors of the market, society and the family to implement this policy and thus reach the difficult but indispensable goal of gender equality between women and men.