

T09P16 / Public Policies and Urban Governance in the Global South: Dealing With Policy Processes that Challenge Established Boundaries

Topic : T09 / Governance, Policy networks and Multi-level Governance

Chair : Charlotte Halpern (Sciences Po Paris - Centre d'Etudes Européennes (CEE))

Second Chair : Alvaro Artigas (Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po))

Third Chair : Carlos Alza (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Large Cities are a new phenomenon in urban history. The emergence of urbanized areas with a population over 10 millions is not only a change of absolute proportions, but it implies changes of scale as well. Most of these metropolises are located in large emerging countries; this fact certainly has particular implications in terms of their sustainable development. Their rapid emergence during the 20th century has drawn the attention of numbers of researchers, and methodological streams: studies focusing on large cities constitute an active debate and research field (Le Galès and Vitale, 2011; Lorrain 2015). To further the theoretical debate about their political and technical functioning and the evolutions they are enduring, an in-depth empirical fieldwork is needed. The aim of this panel is to use the tools of policy studies in order to grasp this urban phenomenon in the Global South.

Indeed, the governance of cities in the Global South (Miraftab and Kudva, 2016) poses important methodological challenges for policy specialists and challenges conventional wisdom, often leading to the functional stretching of analytical categories. Cities such as Lima, Mumbai, Lagos and Manila often present -but not always- commonalities pertaining to important elements of policy making. On the one hand, we witness a hyper concentration of sectoral policies that determine much of city day-to-day functioning in very few hands, which often lead to serious implementation setbacks and lockdowns that are hard to overcome. On the other hand, policy processes are loosely articulated which leads to a segmentation and/or encroachment of decisions, but also to conflictive implementation processes that limit the possibilities for evaluation and policy learning.

This dual dynamic is very much related to the difficulty of national politics to account for the reality of cities and of national policy sectors to adequately integrate policy processes pertaining to subnational units. Confronted to the imperatives of multi-level, cross-sectoral and cross-territorial coordination, can urban problems become politicized enough as to derive into new, challenging policy-making processes? To what extent do central-local relations constrain the autonomization of the urban political agenda and political elites, which is often considered a key dimension of urban governance? Finally do we encounter commonalities in the set of actors engaged in the transformation of these cities (e.g., development banks, large urban firms, ...) or in the diffusion and transfer of standardized policy solutions? Building on this, we explore the dynamics of the policy process in the light of fundamental interrogations that have long animated the debates in policy sciences. As such, the study of decision-making remains a process of analysis through information gathering and processing but also of coordination and ultimately of conflict resolution within and between public and private actors and government actors and bureaucracies. In spite of this ambition however, intragovernmental interactions often follow a negative type of coordination whereby bandwagoning sequences of participation are the norm rather than more reactive policy-making, where forms of positive coordination would encourage learning processes and the inclusion of larger coalitions of stakeholders within this singular policy subsystem that are cities (Peters, 1998 ; Araral et al., 2013).

While patterns of interaction between governments and society in policy networks are regarded as an omnipresent phenomenon, the particular constellation of actors within large policy networks from cities in the Global South challenge our views on how policy domains get stabilized, and how specific arrangements pertaining to culture and history determine allegiances and shape the tune of conflicts.

CALL FOR PAPERS

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terms of their sustainable development. Their rapid emergence during the 20th century has drawn the attention of numbers of researchers, and methodological streams: studies focusing on large cities constitute an active debate and research field (Le Galès and Vitale, 2011; Lorrain 2015). To further the theoretical debate about their political and technical functioning and the evolutions they are enduring, an in-depth empirical fieldwork is needed.

The aim of this panel is to use the tools of policy studies in order to grasp this urban phenomenon in the Global South. It aims at bringing together scholars currently conducting research on policy processes in cities in the Global South either in a comparative or in a monographic perspective. Proposals linking the analysis of a specific case study with theoretical and / or methodological thoughts are encouraged. Particular attention will be paid to the following themes:

- Forms of urban governance in a context of transforming central-local relations
- An assessment of public policy change and implementation
- A comparison of diverse networks and assemblages of public and private actors that exist;
- A analysis of conflict-solving and coordination mechanisms between multiple interests

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Session 1 Public Policies and Urban Governance in the Global South: Dealing With Policy Processes that Challenge Established Boundaries

Wednesday, June 28th 14:00 to 16:00 (Block B 3 - 6)

Discussants

Carlos Alza (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Alvaro Artigas (Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po))

Urban policy-making at the crossroads? Understanding coordination challenges in policy processes in South American capital-cities

Charlotte Halpern (Sciences Po Paris - Centre d'Etudes Européennes (CEE))

Alvaro Artigas (Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po))

Carlos Alza (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Large cities in the emergent world have been increasingly confronted to critical coordination challenges and reform opportunities that have been amply discussed by public policy related literature. Driven by important administrative change processes ignited in the last three decades, these reforms, whereas focusing on decentralization or the extension of policy networks to non-traditional policy actors have sought to revert traditional command and control approaches and to “move political administrative controls away from the political center of government” (Peters 2014). As usually happens in comprehensive administrative policy changes, these reform agendas often sought to achieve contradictory goals and have produced unintended effects (Margetts et al., 2010). In the South American context, the most relevant policy goal behind such reforms has been to democratize national and local politics –and to a lesser extent– to reducing governance’s political discretionality and to ensuring that lower government levels increasingly and effectively engaged into the formulation and implementation of territorialized solutions. Implementing these reforms, however, often led to creating powerful regulatory agencies in charge of overseeing and developing vital utilities, services and infrastructures (Lorrain 2015). While it has certainly led to a greater predictability of public action and altered preexisting patterns of city development, it has not been able to alter decision-making patterns, subjecting many of these agencies to ministerial -and ultimately governmental- design to the detriment of newly empowered subnational levels of government. This situation is particularly exacerbated in capital-cities pertaining to highly centralized states, such as Chile or Peru, where metropolitan governance structures are characterized by low levels of autonomy and political capacity vis-à-vis municipal and national levels of government, public agencies and private actors, as well as international governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Our conceptual paper claims that this has led to two important consequences when it comes to city governance: a) the replication of important hierarchical path dependencies at the formulation level and the relatively limited appeal of challenging policy solutions to long standing problems; and b) the complexification of policy decisions in the light of increasing conflicts and decision deadlocks resulting of more government levels and increasingly encroaching governmental agencies. Lima and Santiago city governance will be used to explore these ideas, resorting to metropolitan planning strategies on the one hand, and to water, energy and transport issues on the other one.

Evolution of Governance Mechanisms: Mental Models, Learning & Fields in the Social-ecological System of Urban Lakes in Bangalore

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The governance of Bangalore's urban lakes has gradually transitioned from a state-dominated publicly-governed mode, to one in which local communities have a much larger say. Therefore, the research question that I seek to answer in this article is – "How has the governance of Bangalore's urban lakes changed over time?" I seek to answer this question by using the concepts of actor interactions, power dynamics, mental models, learning, linked action situations, level-shifting, and turbulence in strategic action fields. I draw upon these ideas from three distinct streams of literature - the theory of strategic action fields (SAFs), the Management and Transition Framework (MTF) and the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (IADF). Each of these approaches, if used on its own, provides only incomplete explanations of the same phenomenon. It is only by bringing together diverse concepts from different theoretical approaches that we are able to develop a wholesome understanding of governance change. My quest in this article has been to redirect attention to the need for continued theoretical focus on the human aspect of social-ecological systems. Specifically, I seek to draw attention to the role that social-sciency variables, such as power, mental models and learning, play in the governance of complex human-environmental interactions.