

T02P10 / Bias and Representation in Policy Making

Topic : T02 / Comparative Public Policy sponsored by Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis

Chair : Anne Rasmussen (University of Copenhagen and Leiden University)

Second Chair : Dimitar Toshkov (Leiden University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Public policy must reflect and arbitrate between the diverse preferences of societal groups, organized interests and citizens. In democracies at least, public policy representation is one of the crucial parameters for judging the quality of governance (United Nations 2015). Accordingly, it has been the topic of a voluminous literature spanning across the disciplinary borders of Public Policy, Public Administration, Political Science, and Sociology (e.g. Achen and Bartels 2016, Burnstein 2014, Lax and Phillips 2012, Page and Shapiro 1983, Soroka and Wlezien 2010, Stimson et al. 1995, Rasmussen et al. 2015). Furthermore, inequalities in representation figure prominently on both the political agenda (Gilens 2012, Rasmussen et al. 2014). There is no lack of arguments that representation is biased towards the preferences of certain groups of citizens or organized interests at the expense of the views of the general public. As a result, there is growing interest in studying whose preferences are reflected in public policy making. This research has been based on different theoretical and methodological perspectives. Despite several seminal contributions to the research field, research has been predominantly focused on a small set of geographical regions and has rarely considered the impact of different types of societal actors within the same project. Expanding research on the theme of policy representation to other parts of the world that represent different systems of government can contribute to increasing the understanding of the mechanisms behind (bias in) policy representation. It will help judge the value of the instruments for increasing input from ordinary citizens in policy-making and regulating the behavior of lobbyists, which are increasingly an object of scholarly discussions and public debates (Baumgartner et al. 2009, Binderkrantz et al. 2015, Dür et al. 2015, Gray et al. 2004). In sum the scientific relevance of the proposed panel is in bringing the study of policy representation to the next level in terms of theory, empirical scope, and integration within the broader study of public policy making.

The objectives of the panel are:

1. to extend the scope of research on policy representation to policies and parts of the world that have so far not been systematically studied;
2. to advance our understanding of bias in policy making, both in empirical and theoretical terms, and the mechanisms through which bias occurs;
3. to bring together scholars working on policy representation from a variety of disciplines, theoretical perspectives, and normative assumptions.

Cited literature:

Achen, Christopher H., and Larry M. Bartels. (2016) *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Baumgartner, Frank R., Berry, J.M., Hojnacki, Marie, Kimball, David C., & Leech, Beth L. (2009). *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Binderkrantz, Anne S., Christiansen, Peter M., & Pedersen, Helene H.. (2015). Interest Group Access to the Bureaucracy, Parliament, and the Media. *Governance*, 28(1), 95-112.

Burstein, Paul. (2014). *American Public Opinion, Advocacy and Policy in Congress*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dür, Andreas, Bernhagen, Patrick, & Marshall, David. (2015). Interest Group Success in the European Union: When (and Why) Does Business Lose? *Comparative Political Studies*, 48(8), 951-983.

Gilens, Martin. (2012). *Affluence and Influence: Economic Power and Political Inequality in America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation and Princeton University Press.

Gray, Virginia, Lowery, David, Fellowes, Matthew, & Mcatee, Andrea. (2004). Public Opinion, Public Policy, and Organized Interests in the American states. *Political Research Quarterly*, 57(3), 411-420.

Lax, Jeffrey R., & Phillips, Justin H. (2012). The Democratic Deficit in the States. *American Journal of*

Political Science, 56(1), 148-166.

Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro (1983). "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy." *The American Political Science Review* 77(1): 175-190.

Rasmussen, Anne, Carroll, Brendan, & Lowery, David. (2014). Representatives of the Public? Public Opinion and Interest Group Activity. *European Journal of Political Research*, 53(2), 250-68.

Rasmussen, Anne, Reher, Stefanie and Toshkov, Dimiter. (2015). Policy Representation in Europe: A Comparative Study of the Relationship between Public Opinion and Public Policy. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Political Science Association. San Francisco.

Soroka, Stuart N. and Christopher Wlezien (2010). *Degrees of Democracy: Politics, Public Opinion, and Policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Stimson, James A., Michael B. Mackuen and Robert S. Erikson (1995). "Dynamic Representation." *The American Political Science Review* 89(3): 543.

United Nations (2015) *Responsive and Accountable Public Governance*. 2015 World Public Sector Report. New York: United Nations.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The panel invites papers which address one or more of the questions below. To what extent are public opinion and public policy actually aligned in different states across the world? Is policy representation to different types of societal actors the same or do we experience inequalities between different income, gender and education groups? Which role do interest groups and political parties provide when it comes to achieving policy representation? What are the theoretical mechanisms that produce or constrain policy representation? And what are the normative implications of the presence or absence of policy representation in different kinds of systems? Contributions assessing policy representation in a comparative manner and in new contexts beyond the well-studied Western democracies are especially encouraged.

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Session 1

Thursday, June 29th 13:30 to 15:30 (Block B 4 - 3)

Discussants

Dimitre Toshkov (Leiden University)

Anne Rasmussen (University of Copenhagen and Leiden University)

Coalition Government and Policy Responsiveness in Western Europe

Dimitre Toshkov (Leiden University)

Anne Rasmussen (University of Copenhagen and Leiden University)

The impact of China's advocacy groups on the policy making and its determinants

Emina Popovic (Freie Universitaet Berlin)

Delegated representation in the 21st Century: the experimentation of shared mandates.

Ricardo Cavalheiro (State University of Santa Catarina)

Leonardo Secchi (Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina)