

T02P26 / Bridging the Gap between Research and Action: Making Research Accessible to Civil Society and Policymakers

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

Chair : Nicholas Perry (WORLD Policy Analysis Center)

Second Chair : Mushtaque Chowdhury (BRAC)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The proposed panel seeks to focus attention on three objectives:

- Explore the type of data that is most useful to those actively working to bring about transformational change;
- Understand what data formats (e.g. visualizations, briefs, and infographics) are most accessible to civil society and policymakers; and
- Highlight the ways in which research has been translated into action at the regional, national, or sub-regional levels to advance sustainable development outcomes.

Researchers have a critical role to play in producing actionable data that can be used by civil society and policymakers to enable evidence-based decision-making. It is critical to get the data produced by research institutes and universities worldwide in the hands of those that it is of most value. The challenge is to: a) identify what type of data is most useful to those pushing for positive change, b) understand in what format the research community should disseminate this information, and c) highlight promising policies in producing evidence-based research that is actionable and accessible. Creating a dialogue and open relationship with civil society groups is critical to ensuring that research priorities address the needs of civil society and policymakers so it can be actionable.

The data revolution has supported the creation of new global tools that can be used by policymakers and civil society to advance sustainable development. By understanding what approaches have been feasible and effective for improving health, increasing education, and reducing poverty in other economically and socially similar countries, decision-makers have a tool they can use to move developmental outcomes. Transparency on national action also gives civil society information on concrete steps to advocate for and the power to hold their leaders accountable.

Through looking at regional, national, and sub-national case studies, we can gain a better understanding of how and when civil society and policymakers use evidence-based research. These case studies can also highlight what works in creating strong mutually beneficial relationships between the research community and civil society groups. This understanding is important to the scientific community seeking to produce research that is not only theoretically sound and rigorous but that is also constructive to those actively working to bring about transformational change.

This session will be chaired by the WORLD Policy Analysis Center (WORLD) and BRAC. WORLD works to strengthen equal rights and opportunities worldwide by: identifying effective policy approaches for improving individual wellbeing and enabling countries to thrive, improving the quantity and quality of globally comparative data, and working in partnerships to support evidence-based improvements in communities and countries worldwide. BRAC is the world's largest development organization, operating in 11 countries to empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease and social injustice. BRAC works at the nexus of research evidence, civil society, and service provision and is internationally recognized as a pioneering social enterprise.

This panel invites researchers to reflect on how to best ensure that research findings are accessible and relevant to civil society and policymakers and create meaningful dialogue between researchers and groups working on the ground for change.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Improving the lives of the most vulnerable relies on everyone playing a role, from government to the private sector, from organized civil society to individuals and communities. Core to the involvement of these diverse

groups is empowering them with information. Citizens should know what steps their country has taken and how their government's actions align with other economically or socially similar countries. While NGOs and civil society organizations can be critical engines of innovation, policymakers are often uniquely positioned to operate educational, health, and social services at a national scale with universal provision.

Building bridges for open communication between researchers, civil society, and policymakers is a crucial first step to producing research that has impact. Ensuring that research evidence on what works to improve lives makes it into the hands of those who can use it to make a difference will be critical to making progress. Reflecting on the process through which information empowers civil society and policymakers can help the research community focus on producing accessible and impactful knowledge products.

This panel invites researchers to explore how communication between researchers and civil society can inform research priorities and how actionable research can be made accessible to civil society and policymakers. Questions of particular interest are: What types of data are most useful for civil society groups and policy makers? How can this data then be presented to ensure that they are accessible to the general public? Where do we have strong examples of adopting evidence-based reform to advance sustainable development outcomes? What are some promising practices in collaborating with civil society to produce knowledge products? How can the research community focus efforts to produce actionable and accessible data? Submitted papers should preferably be supported by empirical examples and be grounded in a strong theory of change.

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Session 1

Thursday, June 29th 13:30 to 15:30 (Block B 4 - 2)

Using Global Policy Data to Accelerate Effective Action on the SDGs

Aleta Sprague (WORLD Policy Analysis Center, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health)

Jody Heymann (Fielding School of Public Health; WORLD Policy Analysis Center - University of California, Los Angeles)

The Sustainable Development Goals embody the world's greatest aspirations for human health, education, equality, the economy, and the environment. Their realization relies on investment and cooperation among all stakeholders, including civil society, governments, and the private sector. Yet at their core, the SDGs are a commitment by national governments to strive to meet these critical objectives over the next 15 years.

Central to this commitment, and to the achievement of the SDGs both at the national level and globally, is the formulation and successful implementation of national policies that are effective at achieving progress at scale. Focusing on a small sample of SDGs critical to women's economic empowerment (SDGs 1, 5, and 8), this paper will discuss how data can support national policies and successful implementation to advance the SDGs. While past monitoring efforts have often prioritized outcome data over policy data, as this paper will explore, including globally comparative policy data may provide a crucial key to accelerating change over the next fifteen years.

This paper will first provide an overview of the ways in which globally comparative policy data, alongside implementation and outcome data, can be used to transparently and effectively monitor countries' progress on enacting policies and strengthening implementation in areas where we already know which laws and policies can improve outcomes. The paper will then explore how globally comparative policy data can accelerate progress on the SDGs by deepening our understandings of what works.

In addition, an appendix to this paper will provide examples of one successful approach to translating research on policy impact into accessible language for use by civil society, policymakers, development practitioners, and other stakeholders. Spanning a wide range of topics relevant to the SDGs, including infant mortality, access to education, child marriage, and child labor, these two-page policy briefs will illustrate one method for ensuring that complex research using global policy data to evaluate the impacts of policies on outcomes reaches those who can take action. Copies of these resources will be available for dissemination to panel attendees.

Research of, for and by citizens: citizen science as a grand platform for nuclear energy policymaking and governance

Shoko Tanaka (Japan Forum on International Relations)

Recent years have seen expanding size of academia and various researches being pursued by or available for capable takers. And yet, the full prospects of researches for becoming practical use have still been concealed. Researches in STEM fields in particular have been shared and enjoyed within the scientists, the tendency which largely accounts for the lasting detrimental social impacts that the nuclear disaster in Fukushima has triggered since March 2011. Meanwhile, the nuclear accident has inspired the lay citizens in Fukushima to take an initiative to collect and disseminate radiation data and to assess the risks to their health and environment. However, their influence has been limited to raising public awareness about the

contingencies of issues at stake, and their work has attracted little attention of the Japanese government or policymakers. In light of this, Germany opted for nuclear power phase-out as a response to the accident and the Chancellor Angela Merkel called for a group of academics to form Ethics Commission for a Safe Energy Supply. This move is significant in that it translates into the state acknowledging the social shaping of technology, and the role that academia can play in co-ordinating research and innovation in political arena. Combining the sequence of events as above helps highlight the indispensable links between civil society, academia and policymakers in nuclear field in demand.

Hence, the paper first seeks the intersections between this sort of citizen-led initiatives, or often termed as citizen science, and academia, and illustrates how this collaboration can enable inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches to better respond to social problems. The paper then examines how academia can help translate the social problems into political language, while highlighting its potential in making the voices of the society heard to policymakers.

By way of elaborating the cases of Japan and Germany, the paper attempts to offer insights into the mutual shaping in nuclear field with citizen science playing a pivotal role in the whole picture. The paper also studies Anthony Giddens' concept of risk society. The study enables to regard the gaps between society and science and/or technology as an opportunity for enhancing social interaction and emergency preparedness in civil society.

The paper is of relevance to the panel as it suggests that, rather than to look for the ways to make research accessible and actionable to the general public, priority should be given to reflecting on how we can realise civil participation in (political) issues that are external to the citizens' real life matters at the absence of felt risks. It is this bottom-up approaches to policymaking that can strengthen civil society, which itself leads to bring about democracy and sustainable governance.

Participatory science : a new way of producing actionable data.

martine legris (Lille 2 university)

Over the last 20 years, the participation of lay-people or CSOs in processes of research and innovation has achieved the character of a guiding principle (cf. Epstein 1996; Brown et al. 2004; Frickel et al. 2010; Baldwin/Hippel 2011). CSOs are seen as agents of civil society, which are non-for-profit and oriented towards public's interests. These involvements are attractive for civil society actors due to the opportunity to be involved in research agenda setting, and for researchers due to the access to specific knowledge and human resources. Accordingly, the European Union Commission perceives participation of civil society actors as a main opportunity for improving processes and impact of research and innovation (Felt/Wynne 2007; Schomberg 2013).

Against this background, the purpose of this paper is to show how contemporary modes of Civil Society Organization's (CSO) participation in the scientific research are working in the European research programmes. Our study is based on a combined empirical study about the inclusion of CSOs on the basis of a quantitative survey of all 14.000+ European Commission FP7 projects in combination with a qualitative case-study analysis of 30 projects. We show that EU's attempts to mainstream participation in research were quite successful as in 21% of all research projects in its 7th framework program participation activities took place. But we recognize diverging social and cognitive dynamics happening in such projects. We found out that there are six different types of research projects which include CSOs. These types are built on two dimensions, the social interaction form between CSOs and researchers (difference between marginal, balanced and central position of CSO) and the importance of CSOs for knowledge production (difference between focused or transformative). These types and their specific participation schemes as well as their governance challenges will be sketched as will be theoretical and practical consequences arising from them.