

T04P02 / The Emergence of Public Policy and the Role of Agenda Setting for Policy Change in Countries and Regions of the Global South

Topic : T04 / Problems and Agenda Setting

Chair : Heike Grimm (Willy Brandt School of Public Policy - University of Erfurt)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The aspects of this panel are twofold, with the aim to present research findings about the emergence of public policy and the role of agenda setting for policy change in countries and regions which have not been the focus of public policy research yet. Firstly, the panel will analyze the emergence of public policy as an academic discipline in selected countries beyond the paradigm of developed nations. In various advanced nations, public policy has been established and acknowledged as an academic discipline for many decades, and when discussing public policy theory and practice, we often draw on academic literature and expertise developed in the Global North. Nonetheless, we observe the rise of public policy as an academic discipline across many countries worldwide, although little is known about the experts and knowledge in the field, including the various facets of public policy theory and practice from specific country perspectives. This is specifically true for countries and regions in the Global South, where transformations take place rapidly and knowledge on the creation and theories of public policy is rare, although crucial for development. We assume that the academic discipline 'public policy' plays a vital role for policy making and political advocacy, as well as for the development of institutions which address the growing societal, economic and environmental problems faced by societies.

In this context, the panel further aims at investigating when, why and by whom policy issues are put on the agenda of policy-making; and whether public policy research has an influence on agenda setting. Whereas this is a topic of high relevance, research in the field of agenda setting as an element of the policy cycle has rarely been pursued in academia. Nonetheless, agenda setting is probably the most crucial element of the policy cycle because it is determinative of future policy issues and policy making in a country or region.

Cognizant of the deeply interdisciplinary nature of public policy, the panel considers aspects of history, governance, economics and law as components of public policy theory development, and investigates how these theories have influenced policy-making and, more specifically, agenda-setting in countries beyond the Western paradigm. Papers should draw on the advancement of public policy research in distinct country contexts influencing policy making in all fields including health, agriculture, education, migration, integration, environment, entrepreneurship etc. The research should preferably integrate theories of the policy process such as the Multiple Streams Theory (Kingdon 2002); Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier 1988); Punctuated Equilibrium (Baumgartner and Jones 1993); Policy Domains (Laumann and Knoke 1987; Börzel 1998) etc. As the challenges of accessing data and literature in many countries are well known, descriptive and exploratory research is also very welcome.

Keywords: Public Policy, Policy Cycle, Theories of the Policy Process, Agenda Setting, Global South, Policy Making, Development

CALL FOR PAPERS

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Session 1 The Emergence of Public Policy and Agenda Setting: Case Studies from the Global South

Thursday, June 29th 08:15 to 10:15 (Block B 3 - 2)

Addressing maternal mortality in Cambodia: the role of politics and evidence in policy-making

Helen Walls (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

Marco Liverani

Keovathanak Khim (University of Health Sciences)

Justin Parkhurst (London School of Economics and Political Science)

Much of the support for the 'evidence-based policy' movement widely embraced in the health community draws from concern that policy decisions are often based on inadequate engagement with 'high-quality' evidence. In many such discussions, evidence is assumed to improve decisions if it can only be used more, with evidentiary quality evaluated solely on the basis of its rigour in demonstrating causal effects. In contrast, policy scholars have described this as an overly simplistic view of the policy-making process, noting that research 'use' can mean a variety of things, and with multiple competing interests shaping which pieces of evidence are seen as relevant to a decision. More insightful analyses of policy-making processes can be derived from an-explicitly political approach to policy analysis; one cognizant of the complex nature of policy-making systems and informed by theories of policy change. Drawing on in-depth interviews undertaken in 2015/16 with key health sector stakeholders in Cambodia and a related documentary analysis, we reflect on the implementation of a particular health policy – Cambodia's Government Midwifery Incentive Scheme (GMIS), a government initiated and funded performance-based financing mechanism aimed at motivating skilled birth attendants (or trained health personnel) to promote deliveries in public health facilities. In particular, this paper explores why this particular policy approach – an incentives-based approach rather than more structural change designed to addressing maternal mortality – was implemented, and to what extent and how this decision was informed by evidence. There was little clear indication of a rigorous or contextually-specific evidence base, but rather the decision appears to have been made from the highest levels of government. To understand why policy-makers chose this particular intervention, we found John Kingdon's Policy Streams approach to be useful to help identify explanatory factors; as three 'streams' of problem identification, political will, and an acceptable solution appeared to converge for the decision process. Here, a higher than desired maternal mortality ratio indicated the problem, the global prioritisation of the issue within the Millennium Development Goals (and the government's pressure to achieve those goals) reflected the politics of the issues, and the existence of pay-for-performance approaches in health economics in general that could be developed into the GMIS specifically presented a clear 'solution'. The choice of intervention looked little like the result of a rigorous 'evidence-informed' approach to addressing a policy issue as it did not appear to reflect a rigorous or systematic review of empirical evidence and other alternatives as evidence champions often advocate, but rather appeared to reflect the convergence of a clearly identified problem with political will and a solution acceptable within the parameters of the particular policy-making context, as described by Kingdon's approach.

Dynamics of Agenda-setting: Institutions, Media and Electoral Impacts in the Creation of Policy Windows in India

Maitreyee Mukherjee (LKY School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore)

-submitted by Maitreyee Mukherjee, PhD candidate, LKYSPP, Singapore.

Agenda setting is a crucial step in policy cycle, whereby important issues get highlighted and receive

government attention. Understanding the pattern of interactions that focuses government's attention over one or few issues out of a possibly large cluster, might be useful in management of future agendas (Howlett, 1997). Furthermore, this knowledge can help academicians as well as policy practitioners to better formulate policy tools in bringing important issues to government focus.

While studies dealing with various aspects of agenda setting dynamics have been carried out mostly in western nations, there is a dearth of similar research in Asian countries. To address this gap, my paper investigates the nature of issue-attention dynamics in India, specifically the roles played by two key actors, i.e. media and institutions. In addition, I also look into how political interests (created by election cycles) are instrumental in opening up of policy windows to initiate policy agenda.

This paper examines patterns of agenda setting addressing the Ganges river pollution and its abatement in India, over a span of two decades[1]. The Ganges is one of the largest and most complicated trans boundary river basin systems. It is also among the top ten most polluted rivers in the world. The river has enormous cultural and religious significance for the nation and comprise of great economic as well as ecological wealth to the region.

The Indian government had initiated efforts to clean the river back in 1985 with Ganga Action Plan I. However, this and subsequent action plans[2] had little impact on water quality and other ecological parameters of the basin. Once GAP I and II ceased to function post 2000, issues related to the Ganges slowly faded out of public as well as governmental agenda. Eventually wide-spread media attention, along with collective pressures from environmentalists, religious leaders, inter-national agencies and policy entrepreneurs forced the Indian government to revive the Ganges clean-up project under fresh leadership and organizational capacities in 2008. The ruling political leadership has vowed to deliver a visibly clean river by year 2019.

The paper analyses time-series data gathered on the frequency of mentions of Ganges pollution-related topics in parliamentary as well as public or media discussions in the country over the period of 1996-2016. It uses time series case plot analysis and cross-correlation functions to evaluate the nature of agenda setting dynamics in India. Findings suggest that the pattern of agenda-setting in this case-study showed characteristics of punctuated equilibrium (Baumgartner and Jones, 1991) over the time period examined. Moreover existence of an institutionalized policy window opening could also be identified in two instances, which happened to coincide with election years.

References:

Baumgartner, F. R., & Jones, B. D. (1991). Agenda dynamics and policy subsystems. *The journal of Politics*, 53(04), 1044-1074.

Howlett, M. (1997). Issue-attention and punctuated equilibria models reconsidered: An empirical examination of the dynamics of agenda-setting in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 30(01), 3-29.

[1] 1996-2016. This period was chosen due to availability of data and also significant policy related activities ensued during this time.

[2] Ganga Action Plan I (GAP I) ran between 1985-2000

Ganga Action Plan II(GAP II) ran between 1991-2001

Who Sets the Agenda in Kazakhstan? Identifying the key actor for economic diversification

Mergen Dyussenov (Astana IT University)

Abstract

The proposed article, as applied to the context of Kazakhstan, seeks to answer a major question that persists in current agenda-setting debates: who sets the current policy agenda in economic diversification, in 2012-2016? As a broad literature review suggests with regard to a wide range of policy issues, among the major actors across different nations, media seems to exert key agenda-setting influence, though the public (collectively viewed as non-experts) has also grown in influence especially with emergence of the internet in much of the developed, and increasingly across developing, world. Finally, academia and think tanks, collectively experts, also tend to exert agenda-setting influence for some issues, often socially controversial issues and those with scientific uncertainty.

The research methodology includes: using certain think tanks' web-sites to collect observed trends in the number of publications as a proxy for attention dynamics and conducting the content analysis of these publications; Scopus database to trace scholarly articles as a proxy of academic attention; Nexis Lexis to trace media publications as a proxy for attention dynamics, with content analysis of articles; and use of Google search (filtered for blogs)[1] to trace comments of the wider public on e-blogs and/or media articles

related to economic diversification in Kazakhstan. Based on tracing longitudinal trends over the period 2012-2016, the analysis would allow identifying the key actor (or actors) that actually sets the policy agenda in the context of Kazakhstan.

Economic diversification remains a crucial issue that persists across developing nations, Kazakhstan included. Particularly, this issue remains crucial in Kazakh current policy agenda since the petroleum sector's share is about 60% of total national exports as of 2016 (KazMunaiGaz 2016). Although agenda-setting is viewed as the most critical stage of the policy process (Howlett et al. 2009) that determines its subsequent stages (Peters 2015), there appears to be a persistent scarcity of agenda-setting research in the context of Kazakhstan. The present paper, therefore, seeks to fill this gap. A vital policy implication is to allow the Kazakh government and the public to clearly identify the most influential actor in setting the policy agenda for economic diversification to better craft a set of relevant policies, taking this player's interests into consideration. This would significantly improve budget allocation efficiency, with further implications to democratic governance, and further strengthening national competitiveness.

[1] Google has recently disabled its Blog search engine, so now it offers instead Google news search that can be filtered by specifically selecting blogs.

<http://searchengineland.com/google-blog-search-now-within-google-news-search-202202>

Reference:

Howlett, M., Ramesh M, & Perl, A. (2009). Studying public policy: Policy cycles & policy subsystems (3rd ed.). Don Mills, Ont; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

KazMunaiGaz (2016). Oil and gas sector. Retrieved from:
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Peters, B. G. (2015). Advanced introduction to public policy. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar

The issue of the dying patient in Israel in light of Kingdon's streams model

Michal Neubauer-Shani (Ashkelon Academic College)

Omri Shamir (Ashkelon Academic College)

The issue of the end of life in the context of death with dignity has been gathering broad public resonance in recent decades, in light of technological developments that steadily raise the average life expectancy, and in light of the deepening internalization of the liberal rights discourse in society.

Some countries have already regulated it in various ways (for example, Oregon legalized assisted suicide in 1998). Nevertheless, until 2000, this issue was not regulated in Israel, leaving it in the hands of the court system. That year, it was raised to the policy agenda when the Israeli Health Minister Benizri, announced the establishment of a public professional committee to compile a comprehensive bill on the matter. The committee's work led to a process of thorough legislation that was concluded at the end of 2005, when the Dying Patient Law underwent a second and third reading in the Israeli Parliament.

The process of placing the issue of the patient nearing death on the policymakers' agenda in Israel (2005), where it reached the legislation process invites a fascinating examination of John Kingdon's agenda-setting model.

This case-study validates Kingdon's model by exhibiting the dynamic in which, the elements ('streams') were aligned at a certain critical time through a policy window of opportunity, all conducted by three policy entrepreneurs inside and outside of the Israeli political system.

Likewise, it shows that the process is not rational and therefore is characterized by simultaneous occurrences rather than chronological stages.

Nevertheless, Kingdon's model was formulated in the American political context and therefore is local in terms of applicability to other countries. Furthermore, Kingdon's model does not recognize the influence of specific factors on various policy issues, thus reducing its applicability to different areas in public policy. This paper highlights the unique characteristics of the Israeli context in regard to the agenda-setting process, thus enabling the adoption of the model. Likewise it pointed at the specific factors, which influence the venue of state-religion issues in Israel, thus decreasing its over generalization.

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Session 2 The Emergence of Public Policy and Agenda Setting: Theories, Tools and Application in a Global South Context

Thursday, June 29th 10:30 to 12:30 (Block B 3 - 2)

Understanding Policy Change within CITES Convention through the lens of Advocacy Coalition Framework

Remi Chandran (National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES))

Formulating policies on conservation and trade can be complex and addressing such complexity by means of a rationalistic policy approach alone seems to be inadequate. As conservation and trade policy processes are influenced by macro- and micro-level changes caused by attributes within or external to the policy domain. The purpose of this article is to understand the policy making process within the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Flora and Fauna (CITES). The volatility of the convention also brings it to the attention of international policy researchers on how the 181-member state convention deals with the often conflicting and contradicting policies pushed by member states. In an attempt to understand the policy process within CITES, this article examines the wildlife-trade[1] subsystem by using Advocacy Coalition Framework as a theoretical framework of policy change based on the beliefs and behaviours of individual actors or groups of actors working within the wildlife policy making domain. The need for understanding the policy process is specifically important as no study has conceptualized the interactions of beliefs and its influence to a policy process within CITES over time (during a time span of more than a decade) as well as the role of coalitions and other external factors in influencing the wildlife-trade policy subsystem.

Public Policy and Ideation: The Case of Pakistan

Atif Butt (United Nations Environment Programme)

The history of public policy is as old as the notion of a 'government'. The scholarly quest of developing a deeper understanding on how and why public policies evolve is also at least two centuries old. Yet, existing theories of public policy fall short of capturing the politics and environment of policymaking in developing countries and characterise features such as those represented by the United States or the continental Europe. By taking the case of Pakistan, the paper fills-in this theoretical gap through post-empirical analysis of social-sector policymaking.

The paper studies underlying motivations and the role of ideation in policymaking. It is not concerned with how effective the policymaking process is or how impactful its results might be; rather it is an exploration of those factors that become basis for policy actors, whether inside or outside the decision making circles, for making certain policy choices over others. In other words, the research is aimed at producing knowledge of the policy process, that is how and why of policymaking, rather than knowledge in the policy process which is referred to analysis and evaluation of policies.

By applying the case study approach and qualitatively studying the three social-sector legislations in Pakistan, the research brings out several key findings to substantiate the enormous promise ideational institutionalism holds for studying policymaking process in countries of grey-zone. The paper lays out essential features of ideational institutionalism by introducing and applying an ideational framework of public policy, which combines cognitive, normative and material dimensions behind a policy decision. The paper advances the scholarship in policy studies with an interest in ideas and discourse for overcoming theoretical shortcomings.

The Making of the new Global Migration Regime: Agenda setting by the Global South

Anja Mihr (HUMBOLDT-VIADRINA Center on Governance through Human Rights)

This paper investigates the emerging role of agenda setting by Global South actors, governmental, private and non-governmental ones, to the newly emerging Global Migration Regime a part of the GPP debate. As opposed to the leading Global North countries, governments in the Global South countries have since the 1990s starting to promote their own global public policy agenda in migration based on local and domestic policy interests. The UN Convention on Migrant Workers, the IOM policies or the various ILO agreements concerning migration and labor were among the first initiatives by Latin American and Sub-Sahara Africa countries to shift the powers and the agenda setting of global public policy arena after the great power shifts in the 1990s.

It soon became clear that the driving forces for the rising migration are not only bad governance and population policies, climate change, poverty, conflict, war, suppression and despair but also organized migration policies (from agenda setting to implementation) by local and domestic policy makers in the Global South. They have been challenging and counteracting the hegemonic agenda setting of migration and development policies by the Global North. The economic 'benefits' of remittances or human trafficking, the export of 'dissidents' to other countries or organized modern slavery, has made organized migration an agenda item of a new quality that affects all other policy areas in the Global South and North. Mass migration and human trafficking (different from refugees) goes mostly towards economically well established countries in the Global North or and is thus one of the most dramatically emerging economic and social global policy agenda items in the years to come. Due to population growth and globalization the human mobility has entered in all parts of the world. Global South countries like Cameroon, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mexico or China have supported multi-stakeholder and advocacy coalition policy approach to change policy agenda in this respect; promoting a change of migration policies in other 'receiving' countries towards their benefits. The Global North, overall North America, Europe (including Russia) and Australia/New Zealand have thus far not responded to the regime in a progressive way, instead upholding the 1950's UN refugee and asylum regime as one of the sole but ineffective response to uprooted people. Bilateral migration agreements, regional development aid policies and last but not least the SDG's are no adequate responses to the local and domestic organized migration policies that are currently emerging. This paper also aims to challenge Kingdon's multiple stream theory (1995) on why and how various actors and countries set policy agenda's. Furthermore, it will present preliminary results of comparative studies between Global North and South based on recent data on migration, refugee and trafficking policies.