P04 / Combining Instruments in Formulating Policies: Why and How Decision-makers Set up Policy Instruments' Mixes

Topic : POLICY FORMULATION, ADMINISTRATION AND POLICYMAKERS

Chair : Andrea Lippi (Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Florence)

Second Chair : Giliberto Capano (Università di Bologna)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The panel discusses the process of selection of policy instruments, seen from the decision-makers point of view. The sequence of actions, thinking, ideas, resources, and institutional arrangements frame how the decision makers perception and their decisional premises when choosing which policy instruments should be adopted- Thus, an evergreen question in policy formulation is "how and why policy-makers set up policy mix of instruments and thus which kind of different criteria of choice they adopt in the light of different contextual factors.

This question raised up in policy formulation literature as prominent field of study since the 1990s thanks to the relevance assigned by a number of studies (Voss& Simmons (2014); Ingold, & Metz, (2014); Béland & Howlett (2015); Walgrave & Dejaeghere (2017); Capano and Lippi (2017), but only recently scholars devoted increasing attention more on the process of assembling and combining instruments than on the nature and the configuration of policy mix. This is to say that instruments' selection is still a partially unexplored topic.

And this "unexplored topic" can be extended to classical issues in policy studies ranging from agenda setting to decision making and related dynamics between technical effectiveness and social acceptance of tools. In sum, the topic grasps the missing link between formulation and decision making, but it is also open to other phases. Hence, the panel is committed to address three streams of debate:

1. The first one concerns the scientific relevance of the assemblage process as a micro focus in itself, as subject for discussion and theoretical thinking. It pertains the analysis of the sequence by which decision-makers decide to set together different elements to pursue the end of a 'good choice', namely the suitable policy mix.

2. The second one focuses on the process of selection and assemblage looking either at the policy process as a whole or at single stages (policy formulation, decision making and implementation). A specific role is also played by evaluation in influencing instruments choice, and here there is room for further analysis of evaluation during the policy process.

3. The third one affects the driving factors influencing the selection ranging from (i) agency (political aims, political career, bounded rationality and different trade-offs), (ii) institutional frames (norms & regulation, institutional setting and cultures, organizational routines etc.), (iii) structural factors (economic and political climate, etc.).

CALL FOR PAPERS

The panel aims at bringing together scholars and practitioners interested in policy instruments selection as emerging topic in policy studies. The focus is on the process determining the mix, namely the logics underlying how and why decision-makers are used to combine different elements to set up their specific mix in which instruments are assembled according to their needs, ideas and perceptions of stakes and problems.

This is a micro focus concerning policy instruments, specifically centered on the different criteria/mechanisms of choice by which a certain type of mix instead of another one is adopted, because it is reputed as more valid, more well performing, more modern, more effective and more capable to solve problems. This topic addresses policy formulation as first, but it also includes decision-making and implementation, whenever policy makers are compelled to set up a policy mix of tools to figure out policy problems.

There is room for analyzing and debating about the cognitive and interactional dynamics that take place at micro level when decision-makers cope with the challenge to adopt effective and consensual tools reputed as valid, effective, credible and suitable, institutionally and legally coherent, from opinion makers, politicians,

technicians and the courts and the like.

The panel is open to different contributions, thus both theoretical pieces and empirical ones, possibly adopting a comparative perspective) are welcome.

The paper should address the following main themes:

1. The sequence through which instrument are chosen and mixed. Here we are interested in papers focused on: why and how decision-makers combine a certain mix and not another one; how timing affect the sequence and thus the choice; the grade of innovation/newness of the selected mix; the role of policy transfer, policy learning and policy advice in influencing the sequence and the choice of instruments

2. The instruments choice at different stages of the policy process. Here the focus should be on the similarity/dissimilarity between different policy stages when instruments should be chosen and on the role of evaluation.

3. The driving factors influencing the instruments' selection. Special focus on: i) agency (political aims, political career, bounded rationality and personal trade-offs); (ii) institutional factors (norms & regulation, institutional setting and cultures, organizational routines etc.), (iii) structural external factors (economic and political climate, political system, parties, think tanks, consultants and the like.).

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Session 1

Thursday, June 27th 10:30 to 12:30 (MB S1.430)

Discussants

Giliberto Capano (Università di Bologna)

Accountability and its limits: Designing stakeholder engagement in rulemaking across the European Union

Jonathan Kamkhaji (European University Institute)

Claudio Radaelli (European University Institute)

Claire Dunlop (University of Exeter)

All that different? Behavioural expertise in policy-making

Kathrin Loer (Fernuniversität Hagen)

Pollex Jan (Osnabrück University)

Policy mix sequencing: The case of energy efficiency in buildings in Switzerland

Nicolas Schmid (ETH Zurich)

Leonore Haelg (ETH Zurich)

Sebastian Sewerin (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich)

Tobias Schmidt (ETH Zurich)

Breaking new ground or adhering to 'what works'? Comparing Policy Instrument Choice to Overcome Regional Shortages in the Supply of Medical Care in Germany and France

Renate Reiter (Fernuniversität Gesamthochschule Hagen)

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Session 2

Thursday, June 27th 16:30 to 18:30 (MB S1.430)

Discussants

Andrea Lippi (Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Florence)

Reforming governance through policy instruments: how and to what extent standards, tests and accountability in education spread worldwide

Antoni Verger (Universitat Autónoma de Barcelona)

Do many hands really make light work? A comparative analysis of ministerial organisation patterns in the UK and France

Claudia Acciai (IT University of Copenhagen)

Kieron Flanagan

Strategy and performance in public policy - Establishing the missing links

Jarmo Vakkuri (University of Tampere)

Jan-Erik Johanson (Tampere University)

Varieties of contracting-out in local public services. Evidence from the Italian municipalities

Stefania Profeti (Università di Bologna)

Valeria Tarditi (Università di Bologna, Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali)