P05 / Politics and Policymaking in MENA Countries After the Arab Uprisings

Topic : POLICY, POLITICS AND POLITICAL REGIME

Chair : Robert Hoppe (University of Twente)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The major aim l is to enrich comparative policy studies by throwing light on public policymaking in the Arab world, which so far is hardly visible. The second aim is to explore policymaking practices in extremely uncertain conditions such as post-revolutionary situations in non-democratic states. This exploration may start from two perspectives: first, the influence of contested politics and citizen activism on public policymaking under the new political opportunity structure; and second, policymaking and governing practices embraced by the political élites in response to the Arab Uprisings.

The Uprisings shocked the world when the masses broke decades of fear by occupying public squares in many Arab cities, demanding freedom, democracy and justice. This constituted a rupture from the established 'social contract' of the post-colonial modern Arab states. The most apparent demand was the need to transform the governance, and the relationship between the people and their rulers. But the revolutionary moment did not last. Counter-revolutions aiming at reinstating Arab ancienregimes became the norm. Bayat (2017) argues that instead of completing a full-scale revolution, the uprisings appeared to be satisfied by just pressing for reforms for more democracy and social justice. Thus, the Arab uprisings were not a revolution in the sense of rupturing the old political structures, but a 'refolution'.

Nevertheless, a new opportunity structure for civil society emerged, partly due to sidelining , elimination or suicide of established political parties. Hence (religious, civil-domestic and externally financed) civil society associations became vehicles for articulating citizen demands to governments. This opened up long suppressed political debates (e.g. about gender and labor issues), and offered some space for novel policy initiatives. One interesting and relevant task would be to develop a taxonomy of roles for civil society associations in influencing public policies under these exceptional conditions, and compare it to standard western models of contested politics and citizen activism, deliberation and participation.

Another comparative axis would be to ask whether it is be possible to apply theories about policymaking in stable democratic regimes to post-Arab Uprising states. Would this just lead to concept stretching; and if so, how would the theories have to be amended to analyze policymaking in the Arab world without conceptual 'overstretch', bias and blind spots? It would be interesting to demonstrate where these theories run into problems when applied to unstable and less-than-democratic contexts.

E.g., policy process theories from the West all assume that a substantive policyissue logic governs everyday politics; but in unstable democracies, or post-revolutionary situations (like after the Arab Uprisings) there is always a regime logic that may trump issue logic - a form of powering that trumps even policy issue powering. Another potential enriching of comparative policy studies would be to study actual policy formulation and design practices (if any) in Arab states. Instead of incrementalism, or mixed scanning or design by policy-oriented learning (Howlett and Mukherjee, 2014) policy practices may follow other patterns, like constraint dodging and feasibility testing, driven by extreme resource scarcity, sharply circumscribed distributional constraints, and prescribed, inflexible institutional frameworks (Hoppe, in Yassin & Hoppe, 2019).

CALL FOR PAPERS

We are interested in submissions that explore questions including, but not limited to:

- How did the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings affect public policymaking in MENA countries?
- Do concepts like 'policy' and 'policymaking' make sense in applying them to what are obviously not 'policy states' (Orren and Skowronek, 2017)?
- To what extent is applying policymaking theories in good standing from western countries (ACF, MST, IAD, etc.) to governing practices in MENA countries possible without concept overstretch and creating bias and/or blind spots?
- What impact does civil society activism (by 'the street', by spontaneous movements, by religious CSOs,

civil-domestic CSOs, or internationally financed NGOs) have on different stages (agendasetting, policy formulation, policy adoption policy implementation, policy evaluation, policy termination) of the policymaking process?
- How to trace and analyze the influence of 'conditionalities' and 'donors' on policymaking practices in MENA-countries?
- How can we objectively assess policy performance, democratic quality and governance capacity in MENA countries?
- Which policy issues in MENA countries lend themselves (better) to external (political, economic, social, cultural) influences?

P05 / Politics and Policymaking in MENA Countries After the Arab Uprisings

Chair : Robert Hoppe (University of Twente)

Session 1Policymaking in post-Uprisings MENA countries (1)

Friday, June 28th 10:30 to 12:30 (MB 3.255)

Discussants

Robert Hoppe (University of Twente)

“Neglegislation”: Why parliaments and parties fail in public policy making in North Africa

Jan Claudius Völkel (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Institute for European Studies)

REFUGEE POLICY-MAKING IN THE MIDDLE EAST: THE CASE OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Ola El-Taliawi (University of Twente)

Understanding Policy-making in Lebanon: An Application of the Multiple Streams Framework to the 2012 Wage Hike.

Lea Bou Khater (American University of Beirut)

Robert Hoppe (University of Twente)

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Chair : Robert Hoppe (University of Twente)

Session 2Policymaking in post-Uprisings MENA countries (2)

Friday, June 28th 14:00 to 16:00 (MB 3.255)

Discussants

Jan Claudius Völkel (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Institute for European Studies)

Which Civil Society? The Role of Traditional Media in Shaping the Politics of NGOs in Egypt

Nermeen Kassem (Ain-Shams University (Egypt)/ University of Texas at Austin)

Governance Reforms and Its Implications in Egypt

Shahjahan Bhuiyan (American University in Cairo)

The Regime and the Political Elite after the Arab Spring in Morocco: A Power Struggle or a Reluctant Elite?

Amina Drhimeur (Sciences Po Lyon)