P04 / Roundtable: Mapping the development and future of policy sciences: the coming of age of a research field

Topic : OTHER

Chair : Nathan Levy (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

Second Chair : Peter Scholten (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

This roundtable discusses the development and future of policy sciences. How has the field come of age, what are key current transformations in the future, what will be the future of the field?

The roundtable features 2 parts. First, three core pieces of work are presented that reflect on the development of the policy sciences. This includes a systematic mapping of the development of the field, a study on cultural bias and policy analysis, and an analysis of public policy in Latin America.

Secondly, a roundtable discussion is held between participants and invited experts, including:

- Prof.dr. Iris Geva-May
- Prof.dr. Christopher Weible
- Prof.dr. Claire Dunlop

Core questions discussed in the roundtable include:

- How do participants assess the current state of the field of policy sciences, and what future directions do they foresee/wish for the field?

- To extent has the policy science tradition globalised beyond its North American orientation in recent decades?

- What have been the key turning points & paradigm shifts in the history of the field?

- To what extent can (and ought) we consider policy sciences is a discrete, institutionalised research field? Or has it become fragmented?

- What of the future agenda of policy sciences in relation to the above questions?

CALL FOR PAPERS

Roundtable

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Session 1

Thursday, June 29th 10:20 to 12:20 (POD370)

(Virtual) The Field of Public Policy in Latin America: History, Development and Challenges

Nelson Cardozo (Universidad Argentina de la Empresa)

The field of public policy has experienced significant development in recent decades, both in its interdisciplinary version of "policy sciences" and in its strictly political science dimension. Much of its main theoretical body of work has been produced by the U.S. academy, which has taken as a reference the particular conditions of the policy production processes in that country. The purpose of this paper is to present a state of the art of the policy field in Latin America. The main objective is to discuss the notion of "relative backwardness" that is usually presented in the literature when compared to the core countries. This hypothesis has the following assumptions: 1) that there is no updating with respect to the theories in vogue in the central countries (advocacy coalitions, cognitivism, neoinstitutionalism, punctuated equilibrium, policy networks, among others) in academic research; 2) the low volume and impact of production at the international level (mainly measured in the presence of scientific journals indexed in databases such as Scimago, Scopus or Word of Science); 3) the absence of own theories on the making of public policies in the region. This work will discuss these points by elaborating the idea of a conception of disciplinary development that will see the following dimensions: 1) the autonomization of the field from other areas such as law, sociology or administration; 2) institutionalization through the creation of undergraduate and graduate programs in the area, as well as networks and research centers; 3) professionalization, understood as the social recognition of public policy specialists; and finally, 4) the specialization of sub-areas with their own weight (such as health policies, civil service, social policies or public security).

A Study on Cultural Bias and Policy Analysis

Iris Geva-May (The Wagner School, NYU and SPPA, Carleton Univ. Canada)

Shawn Drake (School of Public Policy & Administration, Carleton University, Ottawa)

Globally, jurisdictions responded with varying degrees of coordination and acumen to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alike, there is a myriad of policies designed to address global warming. Immigration and refugee policies vary too, despite similar inputs, politics, administrative or other constraints. While some studies have touched on the affect of the cultural bias of social units on policy making, the authors are not aware of any social sciences study addressing the affect of cultural bias as an independent variable, on the process of policy analysis as a dependent variable. With policy analysis being a widely adopted process aiming to extend evidence-based reliable and transparent policy advice in a world of complex policy problems, such a study is more pertinent than ever.

A recent study by Drake and Geva-May applies for the first time, Geva-May’s Model of Policy Analysis by Cultural Bias, which initially, appeared in a Special Issue of the Journal of Comparative Policy analysis Research & Practice (2002, vol.4, no. 3), titled “Cultural Theory’s Gift for Policy Analysis.” The findings from this study have established at a high degree of significance, that there are major causal relationships between the contextual cultural bias of a social unit and the degree of utilization, or lack thereof, of policy analysis methods. This causal evidence moves the dialogue beyond typologies of policy analysts (Jenkins-Smith, 1982; Mayer Van Daalen & Bots, 2001; Meltsner, 1982). The study is based on a comparative multi case research design and the objects of analysis are Canadian provincial and territorial governments-level social units where policy analysis takes place, i.e., the cultural bias context and the analysts performing policy analyses, whose procedures are assumingly affected.

Beyond ascertaining the causal relationship between types of cultural bias and degrees of utilization of

policy analysis methods, and which methods (approaches, strategies or techniques) are more or less susceptible, another key contribution of this study includes the establishment of a reliable Battery of Tools, sensitive enough to identify and assess dimensions of cultural bias (as per Dame Mary Douglas's Grid/Group-Cultural Theory) and degrees of use of policy analysis methods (as aligned with the "Stages Approach" for Policy Analysis (Lindbloom, 1946 ,de Leon 1988, Geva-May 2023, Dunn, 2015; Geva-May & Wildavsky, 1997; MacRae & Whittington, 1997; Majone & Quade, 1980). A further contribution concerns the use of the research design operationalizing the Geva-May Model in delivering a strategic, diagnostic barometer capable to assess cultural bias per core systematic methods of policy analysis. This barometer has implications for further studies concerning cultural bias and other phases of policy making.

RT T21P04

Claire Dunlop (University of Exeter)

RT discussant

RT T21P04

Christopher Weible (University of Colorado Denver)

RT DISCUSSANT