P06 / Digital Social Media in Policymaking Process

Topic : POLICY, POLITICS AND POLITICAL REGIME

Chair : Mireille Manga (International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC), University of Yaoundé II)

Second Chair : Estelle Etoh Ekwoneng (Cercle de Recherches sur l'Afrique et les Enjeux Contemporains)

Third Chair : Michel Romain Awono Mballa (University of Douala)

Fourth Chair : Oluwasegun David Yusuf (University of Pretoria)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Is there any way social media can influence the policymaking process or contribute to policy change? How do politicians and citizens use social media to transform policies or control the policymaking process? These are some of the questions this panel intends to answer.

Digital social media are defined as online technological platforms which coexist with "concrete" public spaces (Chambat, 1995) controlled by governments. Unlike Habermas' definition of public space, we extend the definition of public space to "common space", a place of "connection" where political power comes to realise (Arendt et al., 1995, pp. 7–8; Zittoun, 2013). Additionally, public spaces operate as strategic tools used by politicians and their public struggling to structure policies, transform them or control their normative orientation. Based on constructivist and pragmatist perspectives of policy studies and policymaking process, we define public policies as sets of interactions created by governments' outputs and effects on their publics who struggle to change or transform the policies using deliberative public and private spaces over time (Zittoun, 2013; Durnovà, 2019; Fischer, 2009; Weible, 2019; Edimo, 2021).

The public policy literature identifies several stages of the public policymaking process (definition of the problem, formulation of solutions, agenda-setting, implementation, evaluation, etc.). Many contemporary approaches to policy studies also highlight subjective, intersubjective and pragmatist policy processes, including enunciation, formulation of the problem, planning, expertisation, and advocacy as social and political practices and activities that structure public action. They have also offered new perspectives on which to rely to enhance the study of domestic policy processes and their interactions with international or different stages of the transnational deliberative policymaking process (see, for example, Edimo, 2021).

Since the works of Christopher Hood & Helen Margetts (Hood & Margetts, 2007), very few studies have focused on the role of digital technologies in transforming public action, particularly with regard to the ability of governments' publics to use and disseminate flows of information; government capacity to continue to control citizens’ behaviours, and the sociopolitical structure of processes of government, etc. While it is well known that government activities affect the citizens' behaviours, how they change according to contexts or environment where they operate.

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel invites papers that explore the relationship between digital social media and policymaking from various perspectives and contexts. Authors may examine different stages of public policy, including agenda-setting, policy formulation, and implementation. Topics of interest include policy advocacy, contestation, governance, environmental politics, climate change, migration governance, migrants' rights, and employment issues.

References

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Yordy, J., Durnová, A., & Weible, C. M. (2024). Exploring emotional discourses: the case of COVID-19 protests in the US media. Administrative Theory & Praxis, 46(1), 35-54.

Edimo, M. M. (2021). Expertise on the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon: A hybrid cultural boundary approach. International Review of Public Policy, 3(3.3), 345-363.

Hassenteufel, P. (2021). Sociologie de l'action publique. Armand Colin.

Hood, C. C. (1983). The tools of government. (No Title).

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Session 1

Friday, July 4th 16:00 to 18:00 (A5)

How is climate change discussed in Nepali social media? A Discourse Analysis

Sudeep Uprety (Prince of Songkla University)

How Hashtag Activism Informs Policymaking: Digital Counterpublics in Indonesia’s Omnibus Law Debate

Calvin Wijaya (University of Melbourne)