P17 / Navigating the Nexus of Public Policy & Diplomacy: National and International Innovations for Global Challenges

Topic : POLICY PROCESS THEORIES

Chair : Diane Stone (European University Institute)

Second Chair : Marina Cino Pagliarello (European University Institute)

Third Chair : Kim Moloney (Australia New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG))

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The interplay between diplomacy and public policy is central not only to transnational governance but also in confronting the cross-border policy problems that impact on local communities and national jurisdiction, especially when addressing challenges like climate change, pandemics, poverty, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Each challenge exposes the limitations of the traditional categories in inter-state diplomacy. There are also widening ‘public’ and ‘plural’ dimensions of diplomacy that come with a range of nonstate actors. These actors seek not merely to influence international public opinion or inform policy development but also to sit at the diplomatic table. Informal agents – individuals like celebrities, business actors, philanthropists, ‘sherpas’ and organizations like museums, NGOs, think tanks, cities, and cultural associations – act as open channels or ‘alternative’ diplomats. So-called ‘new diplomats’ also find opportunity to enter the diplomatic terrain when government capacity is weak or as technology enables diplomatic actors to engage new or wider audiences via new mechanisms (digital, media and public diplomacy).

The diplomatic field has not only diversified but policy sectors once considered the sovereign realm of national policy and/or welfare provision have become new fields of diplomacy. Today, health, science and innovation, sport, culture and education policy sectors have a ‘diplomatic face’.

The Research Questions that frame this panel include the following:
· What can Policy Studies offer Diplomatic Studies and vis-à-vis, how can diplomatic studies inform the study of public policy?
· What are the interfaces between diplomacy and public policy at the different levels of governance, and how and why might they differ?
· What policy concepts can be adopted to re-interpret contemporary diplomatic practices and processes as an evolution of public policy development and administrative competencies? Similarly, what diplomatic concepts may help reinterpret the policy interface of informal actors with global policy and transnational governance?
· What are the organisational and ‘policy network’ dimensions of the new diplomatic activity?
· Do the chosen policy tools and instruments of informal non-state actors differ from the policy tools commonly used by inter-state diplomatic efforts?
· With what policy authority (if any) and legitimacy do informal (or non-state or non-traditional) diplomats have?

This panel seeks contributions that conceptualize and/or empirically research evolving diplomatic practice within the public policy domain and other crucial areas of policy research, such as policy evaluation and implementation. The panel systematizes diplomacy not as an autonomous theoretical field but one that is influenced by development studies, cultural studies and mostly importantly for ICPP, increasingly informed by public policy studies.

The objective of the panel is to discuss public policy responses to global challenges as one that has national and local dimensions but where public policy can sometimes blur and merge with diplomacy. Considerations span the impact of digital diplomacy, the evolving role of non-state actors, and the influence of public opinion on diplomatic decision-making. Accordingly, the proposed panel contributes to understanding how “informal” diplomacy and public policy shape one another. This will foster interdisciplinary discussions and help bridge the gap between diplomatic studies and public policy.

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel invites submissions that explore the intersection of diplomacy and public policy, focusing on the evolving role of non-state actors in shaping governance at the local, national, and global levels. We seek both conceptual and empirical papers that analyse how informal diplomats, such as NGOs, multinational corporations, advocacy groups, city networks, and cultural institutions, as well as certain individuals from the corporate world, philanthropy or civil society, are influencing dynamic interactions between policy processes and diplomatic practices. Papers should address the ways in which these actors operate within formal diplomatic frameworks or create alternative diplomatic mechanisms to address transnational challenges like climate change, global health, space exploration, or the Sustainable Development Goals. Accordingly, this panel seeks a more holistic understanding of the interplay between governmental bodies and non-governmental entities (such as advocacy groups, multinational corporations, and civil society organizations). Here, diplomacy emerges as a grey area, attributing influence and ‘soft power’ to actors, representing the intricate relationship between informal channels and formal diplomatic efforts.

Contributors are encouraged to explore case studies demonstrating how informal diplomatic actors collaborate with traditional state actors, or how they independently shape public policy through mechanisms like policy transfer or diffusion, public-private partnerships, or other governance innovations. Theoretical papers should aim to bridge the gap between policy studies and diplomatic studies, offering new insights into how the two fields inform one another. We also welcome research that examines the legitimacy, authority, and impact of non-state actors in the policy-making process, particularly when their involvement challenges (in either a positive or negative fashion) the traditional diplomatic monopoly of state actors. For instance, little is known about the role of new diplomatic actors in specific forums, shaping diplomatic interactions and coordinating global public policy such as via policy transfer and ‘policy ambassadors’.

This panel is particularly interested in papers that focus on innovative diplomatic practices emerging from policy sectors not traditionally associated with diplomacy. For instance, sectors such as education, health, science, culture, urban and water governance or other policy sectors. Submissions should ideally be embedded within a strong conceptual or theoretical framework that engages with the interdisciplinary nature of this evolving field. Selected papers will be considered for inclusion in a special edition of a policy studies journal, aiming to further contribute to scholarly discussions on the role of diplomacy in contemporary governance.

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Session 1

Wednesday, July 2nd 13:45 to 15:45 (B7)

Global Policy Studies & the ‘New Diplomacy’

Diane Stone (European University Institute)

Marina Cino Pagliarello (European University Institute)

Starting with the premise that policy design and delivery can be ‘off-shored’ or enacted in transnational domains, this paper takes a novel approach to ask about the utility of policy studies concepts to understand and re-interpret diplomacy. For example, the 'policy community' or ‘advocacy coalition’ frameworks can help explain non-state actor incorporation in international deliberations and summits. The idea of ‘evidence-based’ policy can be used to interrogate ‘science diplomacy’. ‘Policy transfer’ has multiple applications to the sharing of models and information in what is called multistakeholder, informal or multi-track diplomacy. The concept of transgovernmentalism brings into analytical sight the roles of public officials in government agencies cooperating with their regulatory or civil service counterparts in other countries as well as in international negotiations or international standard setting and ‘soft law’. The ‘policy entrepreneur’ concept can be used to assess ‘celebrity diplomats’.

Quasi diplomatic activity is also undertaken by some large international NGOs (eg. Médecins Sans Frontières), think tanks (in security dialogues like the Munich Security Conference), international foundations (like the Gates Foundation) or diaspora communities. Likewise, certain individuals from civil society or the corporate sector – for example, ‘good will ambassadors’ for the UN and other ‘celebrity diplomats’, high-profile scientists, former political leaders and trusted business-men – have broached into or have occasionally been coopted into negotiations. These actors cannot be classified as ‘diplomats’ in the traditional sense of the word. Nor do they act with the same power or authority. But both analytically and in policy practice, there is a trend of hybridity in how ‘old’ and ‘new’ forms of diplomacy which now coexist and often reinforce one another. Transgovernmental regulation is a key example.

Accordingly, this paper emphasises the relational features of diplomacy and moves away from seeing the state as the primary unit of analysis or enforcing the notion of hard sovereign borders. The paper adopts a more contingent understanding of diplomacy as one constituted by fluid policy processes, hybrid actors and porous boundaries.

Sport Diplomacy and the Policy Legacy of Sport Mega-Events for Global South Hosts

Kim Moloney (Australia New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG))

Sport, and sport mega-events (e.g., Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup) have become powerful tools for socio-economic development. At the same time, they are increasingly contested due to their concomitant corruption allegations, escalating costs, and government spending debacles. Consequently, greater consideration is being given to achieving sustainable and positive legacies by governments and sport organizations alike. Nevertheless, there have been limited scholarly studies investigating legacy in the long-term (e.g., five years after the Games). Only a few legacies have been measured by sports and/or policy scholars. Moreover, most focus on legacy outcomes for particular stakeholders and not on the policies and structures that were changed.

At the same time, and with regard to sport diplomacy, there is significant literature on how nations use sport

mega-events to achieve soft power gains. This is an outward-facing objective of a hosting nation. In contrast, where there are discussions of domestic policy outputs of hosting such mega-events, these scholars largely focus on whether sport and politics should or should not mix and/or narrowly upon a singular concern like human rights.

Our paper will articulate an expanded policy-specific understanding of sport diplomacy's domestic or inward-looking impacts. Our focus is on sport mega-events hosted by Global South nations and in particular, the impact of transnational actors (such the International Olympic Committee or Federation Internationale de Football Association) upon domestic policy shifts. Our theoretical framework is drawn from two recent journal articles.

The first arises from Calo, Moloney, and Swart (2023) on when transnational sport actors do or do not 'puncture' the state. This includes when NGOs and international organizations promote policy shifts, when international sport associations encourage policy change, when domestic sport associations interact with domestic policies, and when domestic sport associations opt-out of policy-specific discussions.

The second arises from Preuss' (2019) event legacy framework on sport legacy-specific structural changes. This includes amendments to the law, new regulations, new policies, and/or altered organizational structures. Such changes can create value (e.g., sustainable food policies for London 2012 Games, labor law for 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar); however, they can also create negative change such as the 2016 Games in Rio whereby public procurement procedures were diminished due to time pressures.

By articulating the policy-specific impacts of transnational actors, we suggest that sport diplomacy is not exclusively an outward-facing exercise of hosting nations but also, it is integral to the outward diplomacy of transnational sport actors and separately, the 'internal diplomacy' of hosting nations as they discuss and implement policy shifts.

Does science and education diplomacy undermine academic freedom?

Eva Hartmann (University of Cambridge)

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," Nelson Mandela famously said. But what happens to this force for good when higher education and science are weaponised in a polarised global world?

The paper takes a country-comparative perspective and focuses on the mounting pressures on British and German universities to align their efforts to internationalise scientific collaboration and higher education with their governments' security strategies, notably related to China. It presents the findings of a research project that examined how these pressures materialise within the governments, as tensions between the governments' international higher education and research strategy and security strategies, with important consequences for academic freedom.

The paper starts by outlining how an interdisciplinary perspective drawing on political sociology, critical state theory and International Relations (IR) can be made fruitful for examining how these tensions are mediated within governments (Hartmann 2011, Hartmann 2015, Hartmann 2019, Hartmann 2023). Notably, Nicos Poulantzas' state theory lends itself to this analysis as it draws our attention to the specific material condensation of social forces that characterise a government's different departments and branches. Such a perspective avoids assuming that states are homogenous actors, as many IR scholars do while accounting for the interaction between different policy fields that are often studied in silos by Political Science scholars.

Germany and the United Kingdom were selected as the two countries are important geopolitical and geoeconomic players, scientific powerhouses, and destinations for international students. In addition, they both have changed their China strategy significantly in recent years. What distinguishes the two countries is the governance of their universities. One is much more informed by a federal structure, while its universities have less formal autonomy than its counterparts. They also differ regarding their higher education funding and their colonial past. The study explored the extent to which these different institutional set-ups impact how the governments have aligned their internationalisation of higher education and research strategy with their new China strategy. The study used a mixed-method approach that included the analysis of policy papers, bilateral memorandums of understanding, publicly funded scholarships, statistics about international students and trade flows, and expert interviews.

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From Bottom-line business practices to Food Diplomacy

Sevasti Chatzopoulou (Roskilde University)

Food plays a crucial role in life, representing history, traditions, culture, and identity. Governments use food to establish robust transnational agreements and address common global challenges -sourcing, procurement, and securing food access- and foster international relations. Food is used as an effective ‘food diplomacy’ instrument, seeking to exert influence in global food systems, unite, engage, and nourish people, promote sustainability, culture, and heritage.

Food diplomacy is linked to food governance. Food governance develops strategies and policy outcomes/solution to address emerging transboundary problems at the intersection of food, health, and environment; food diplomacy seeks to externalize policy outcomes and to exert influence in global food systems, promote food culture and heritage, and sustainable food practices. Understanding the food governance- food diplomacy interface is key to both international relations and governance. Within this context, this paper aims to investigate how the food governance-food diplomacy interface influences inter-state relations and sustainable outcomes.

Unlike the traditional state-to-state diplomacy, in food diplomacy, governments collaborate with businesses, whose activities are entwined with the governments’ foreign policy concerns and ambitions. These companies engage in transnational governance and conduct foreign policy, participate in political delegations and visits supported by foreign affairs units and increasingly they represent forces involved in political decisions. Thus, businesses activities extend beyond bottom-line business practices -food production, exports, and trade relations- to diplomatic activities. Food diplomacy takes either the form of soft power- to exert influence through the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies but also technological innovations and standards; or hard power to complement foreign policy through coercion and blackmail e.g. embargos and sanctions.

In food diplomacy, businesses act as ‘bridge-builders’, creating informal networks and public-private partnerships, and establish new channels of influence to address global challenges. Collaborations between businesses, governments, international organizations, and people promote mutual understandings, share knowledge on sustainable food production methods and practices, food technology and innovation. Food technology and innovation have transformed what we produce and what we eat; affect our landscape and environment, societal relations, and economies and become part of national governance strategies. Drawing often on scientific expertise, food diplomacy aims to externalize technology and innovation, practices, regulatory standards, exerting influence in food systems and strengthening inter-state relations and policy diffusion. For example, food companies in collaboration with political authorities strategically promote food technology and innovation (biosolutions) for sustainable solutions like energy, decarbonization and resource efficiency in line with the international organizations’ strategies (EU, UN, WTO etc). In collaboration with chefs and restaurants, governments also develop diplomatic activities and promote the positioning of regional cuisines, diets and local products that link to specific techniques and sustainable solutions (e.g. Nordic and/or Mediterranean diets) but also culture, heritage and identity. Businesses also use food diplomacy to address ethical dilemmas, take strategic risks, share responsibilities with local actors and society and promote norms and practices that aim to strengthen international relations (for example, in times of political instability and war, businesses relocate-i.e. food companies moved to Ukraine from Russia).

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Session 2

Wednesday, July 2nd 16:00 to 18:00 (B7)

Rethinking Diplomacy: Non-Central and Non-State Actors in Brazilian National Delegations

Ana de Oliveira Tavares (Technische Universität Dresden)

Sarah Burns (Technische Universität Dresden)

The Conference of the Parties (COP) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) convenes participants from diverse backgrounds, resulting in negotiation processes shaped by competing interests and politicized narratives. In recent years, an increase of participation of non-state and non-central state actors has shed light into new power dynamics in international relations. National interests do not always align with provincial interests, which in turn might gain a voice through their direct participation in diplomatic conferences, in a process described as para-diplomacy. Moreover, the growing presence of industry lobbyists, particularly from the oil sector, within national delegations has raised concerns about their influence on climate policymaking, acting as informal diplomatic actors. In Brazil, the largest CO2 emitter in Latin America, environmental public policy is marked by the lobbying of a strong agribusiness coalition, and to a lesser degree from the oil and gas sector. Furthermore, it is a federal country with extensive delegation of authority over the management of natural resources to sub-national state actors. Despite this, the influence of non-state actors and the rise of subnational governments in diplomatic processes remain understudied. In this sense, this study aims to describe the networks formed by non-central and non-state actors as national delegates to UNFCCC from 1995 to 2024, covering the complete historic series. It provides a comprehensive categorization by actor type, sector, and geographical scope, and identifies central actors in those networks. Those results are further enriched through expert interviews and data obtained from websites to explore the existence of lobbying coalitions, their interests, beliefs, and potential influence on the COP's negotiation outcomes. Findings show a growing diversification of sectors in national delegations since the 2000s, with agribusiness exerting a strong influence, while sectors such as the pulp and paper industry remain marginal. The growing participation of provincial state actors highlights the interplay between local and global governance, while their ability to influence political outcomes remains to be proven. By analysing Brazil as a case study, this research advances understanding of the interplay between informal diplomacy and public policy processes, shedding light on their implications for global climate governance and the broader evolution of transnational diplomacy.

Building Social Policy Diplomacy in a Fragmented Multilateral System

Osmany Porto de Oliveira (Universidade Federal de São Paulo)

LAURA TRAJBER WAISBICH (Igarape Institute, Brazil)

In recent years, the idea that foreign policy is public policy has grown in international relations studies. In this sense, foreign policy materializes with international actions that go beyond the actions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This includes the creation of international advisories in ministries, increased sectoral diplomacy, South-South cooperation led by public institutions, and through the involvement of subnational governments and civil society in global processes. Brazilian foreign policy in recent years has been characterized by fluctuations. If in the beginning of the 2000's, the Workers Party foreign policy, especially during Lula's first two administrations in Brazil, invested in partnerships with non-western countries, the Bolsonaro government starting in 2019 prioritized relations with the USA and Western countries. After coming back to power, the Lula III government seeks to resume partnerships with Africa, Amazonian

countries and other nations in the Global South again. In fact, since 2023, Brazil has expanded its participation in BRICS+ and used its leadership in the G20 to reposition itself as a "Southern" country, focused on multilateralism and global challenges. This paper analyzes the trajectory of Brazilian South-South cooperation in the past 2 decades. We explore strategies, instruments and partners, focusing on social policy diplomacy, which culminated with the recent creation of the Global Alliance Against Hunger in the G20 Summit last year in Rio de Janeiro. We discuss the internationalization of Brazilian domestic social policy strategies, against the backdrop of a rapidly changing multilateral arena , marked by growing pluralization and fragmentation of processes, arenas and agendas, as well as a profound crisis of legitimacy of existing multilateral institutions. This study uses qualitative methods, involving fieldwork, interviews and uses process-tracing as an analytical strategy.

Trading Wisdom or Selling Solutions? The role of private actors in the Netherlands' water diplomacy

Ellen Minkman (Delft University of Technology)

The Dutch government positions the Netherlands as a global leader in water management, leveraging expertise in delta planning, flood risk management, and climate adaptation. The paper explores the tension between aid and trade in Dutch foreign policy and the role of water diplomacy in sharing Dutch water expertise.

The Netherlands actively shares its water management expertise with other countries worldwide, through various programs and projects. Activities include technical assistance, knowledge exchange and capacity building. Water attachés stationed at Dutch embassies play a key role as intermediaries and in aligning Dutch expertise with local needs. We consider these activities a form of policy transfer, whereby the Dutch policies and practices are transformed into a policy model that is transferred and embedded in a receiving context. In this paper, we concentrate on transfer to the Global South, where the aid-and-trade-paradigm has caused budgets to be cut and required ‘water diplomacy’ to balance (Dutch) economic interests with development goals and climate resilience in the receiving context.

While the role of private-sector consultants in both development cooperation and policy transfer has been established before, there is limited insight in their role in (Dutch) water diplomacy. This paper aims to fill this gap by examining three cases: the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, climate adaptation efforts in the Mekong Delta, and the National Capital Integrated Coastal Development (NCICD) project in Jakarta. Each case exemplifies a distinct approach to addressing complex water challenges through collaborative frameworks involving Dutch government agencies, knowledge institutions, and private sector partners.

This paper argues that the Dutch approach, characterized by its emphasis on PPPs and the strategic role of water attachés, offers valuable lessons for water diplomacy globally. However, it also highlights challenges, including the risk of prioritizing commercial interests over development outcomes, governance issues and questions of legitimacy. The paper concludes with questions about the sustainability of the aid-and-trade model and whether the Netherlands can continue to position itself both as the preacher, guiding the world on water management, and the merchant, seeking to profit from it. Through the analysis of three cases, this paper contributes to the panel by critically examining the role of private sector parties in water diplomacy.

Public Policy and Cultural Diplomacy in the Context of Peace and Security: EU and US Approaches in Ukraine

Lina Kirjazovaite (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

richard higgott (University of Warwick and Institute of European Studies and Vesalius College, Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

The fabric of world order is unravelling. Geo-politics is once again rampant, and war fighting has re-occurred as a symptom of this morbidity. Around the world, the augmentation of already complex crises is leading to increased violent conflicts, political instability, and destruction of social and economic infrastructure. These crises unfold in vastly different contexts requiring innovative, multi-sectoral, and multi-stakeholder strategies to address them. Amid these crises and somewhat unpredictable decision-making by some of the world leaders, the actors are scrambling to find interventions and modus operandi that could enhance the efforts towards global security and peace. In this context, is public and cultural diplomacy an appropriate strategy for more stable public policy intervention in these contexts?

While the role of public and cultural diplomacy in fostering peace and security, has indeed gained

recognition and salience in some scholarly and applied public policy quarters, its impact is under-researched and often over-hyped. There remains a significant gap in our understanding of both the potential and risks of public and cultural diplomacy tools in conflict situations. The aim of this paper is three-fold. Firstly, it will provide a conceptual guide to cultural diplomacy's place in diplomacy writ large. Secondly, it will examine a sample of operation tools employed by the EU and US in the context of the Russo-Ukraine war. Thirdly, it evaluates the impact and limitations of these efforts, as well as enabling factors for them to work.

Using a case study approach, this paper analyses the practical implementation of the EU and US public and cultural diplomacy efforts in conflict-affected Ukraine. The empirical surprise in the paper will be a demonstration of the actual volume and complexity of these initiatives and the multifaceted role they play. Building from this empirical discussion, the paper asks to what extent culture, as an instrument of public policy, has a meaningful role in public policy in war setting? Put as a general question "is there a role for soft power diplomacy as public policy in a predominantly military hard power context?" The paper proposes a contribution to our growing understanding of the links between two domains of activity for too long erroneously thought of as discrete from one another: diplomacy and public policy.

Translating Ideas to Policy: The Usefulness of Translating the Planetary Health Concept into a Policy Framework for Environmental Action and the Challenges Faced

Peili Pey (Nanyang Technological University)

By Mely Caballero Anthony and Peili Pey

With increasing challenges to multilateralism and the lack of cooperative international action on the sustainable development goals (SDGs), a more integrative approach is required to address the fragmentation in international negotiations. Planetary health has emerged as a holistic concept integrating key issues such as environment, health, justice, regenerative economies, and security. The concept promoting the health and well-being of all has gained increasing attention over the past decade particularly in academic spaces, and renewed interest in the principles underlying this concept was led by a contemporary definition and framing by the Rockefeller Foundation – Lancet Commission in 2015. However, bridging the discourse between academia and action requires both governance and diplomacy. Integrating the planetary health perspective into governance schemes has the potential to bring fragmented policies together under a connected vision of the interdependence of human-environment well-being. The planetary health global movement has an underlying principle of harmony that favours a diplomatic approach. It encourages strong leadership, effective partnerships between state and non-state actors, and the empowerment of policy entrepreneurs. **This paper contributes to understanding the nexus between public policy and diplomacy by discussing the potential and usefulness of planetary health as a concept to be translated into a policy framework for effective climate partnership between state and non-state actors.** This is carried out through A) review and analysis of the Planetary Health Roadmap and Action Plan 2024 and B) a focus on the Southeast Asian region of environmental governance through the case analysis of the development of the National Planetary Health Action Plan in Malaysia. The planetary health roadmap and action plan is a document that provides an important link between concept and policy. A critical analysis of the roadmap in relation to the region opens the discussion for the concept's potential and limitations in diplomatic diffusion and the empowerment of non-state actors. The planetary health community acknowledges the need for context-specific policy applications and the thorough involvement of communities, and cultural and indigenous knowledges to form informal diplomatic networks. The case study illustrates how planetary health can gain traction at the local level and has demonstrative potential to be scaled up. The paper goes further to also examine what are the factors that drive/help the translation from ideas to policy and the challenges that come with it. Finally, this paper also helps to address the gap of underrepresentation of international relations scholarship in the planetary health community, which is needed to provide more insights into the translation of planetary health knowledge for policymaking and effective global governance. **The research suggests that advancing the planetary health approach in policymaking, whereby the survivability of humans is positioned as inevitably tied to the sustainability and well-being of the planet, will strengthen Southeast Asia's regional efforts for environmental action and addressing SDGs.**