P02 / The Role of Policy Actors in the Territorialization and Regionalization Processes of Healthcare Systems

Topic : HEALTH POLICY

Chair : Patrick Hassenteufel (Université Paris-Saclay)

Second Chair : Nils Bandelow (Technische Universität Carolo-Wilhelmina Braunschweig)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Recent developments in health policy literature have increasingly highlighted the substantial role that local, regional, and national actors play in the structuring and adaptation of healthcare services (Terlizzi, 2019; Terlizzi & Esposito, 2021; Bandelow et al., 2024). These policies include not only the classic objectives for healthcare such as affordability, quality and equal access and provision of services for the entire population. They also address new health policy issues like shortage of skilled healthcare workers and strengthening of public health. Public health is especially of interest with the integration of the health system not only with regard to different parts of the health sector but also to other policy sectors such as education, food, environment, housing or transport, for which local authorities have some competencies. The perspectives of integrated care and public health also address the recent multiple crises such as the COVID 19 pandemic, populism and climate change.

Using the notion of territorialization to analyze these transformation processes is a way to go beyond the dominant comparative perspective on subnational dimensions of health systems based on the more institutional notions of regionalization, decentralization and federalism and less bottom-up oriented. Current research on regionalization in healthcare is dominated by health sciences and not by policy process research. The aim of this panel is to contribute to the development of policy process research on how territorial reforms are designed, circulate and are implemented.

This panel focuses on how policy actors—including political entrepreneurs, advocacy coalitions, and programmatic groups—drive the territorialization of health systems. Such policy studies perspectives offer insights into the conditions and processes shaping health reforms to address the unique social, economic, and political landscapes of different regions.
Programmatic groups, typically comprised of specialists and policymakers, can play an essential role in the design and implementation of local healthcare strategies. These groups leverage specialized expertise and resources to craft programs tailored to regional needs. Programmatic groups also facilitate the adaptation of national health directives by designing solutions specific to diverse political and social settings (Bandelow et al., 2021; Hassenteufel & Genieys, 2021). Policy entrepreneurs emerge as key actors in health policy, often driving regional reforms by capitalizing on "windows of opportunity" to adapt existing systems to better align with local demands. Entrepreneurs build coalitions and secure the backing of local authorities, making use of regional resources and aligning with interest groups to support their objectives (Petridou & Mintrom, 2020; Hand & Birkhead, 2023; Herweg et al., 2023). The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) serves as a valuable lens for understanding cooperation and competition among interest groups advocating for regional health reforms (Bogumil-Uçan & Klenk, 2021; Nohrstedt et al., 2023).

This panel also aims to delve into both the substantive aspects and the contextual conditions underpinning the territorialization of health systems. Regarding the content of territorialization strategies, an important focus is on the discursive and narrative framing. Examining the conditions that frame territorialization processes, we also consider the institutional contexts of both political and healthcare systems.

CALL FOR PAPERS

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healthcare delivery. Furthermore, do these discourses address external factors, such as regional autonomy movements?
Examining the conditions that frame territorialization processes, we consider the institutional contexts of both political and healthcare systems. How do territorialization strategies unfold within federal or centralized states? Are there differences between types of health systems?
These themes bridge the study of health system territorialization with broader public policy debates and allow for interdisciplinary inquiry that incorporates welfare state research and comparative politics.

This panel examines the complex interplay among diverse actors and theoretical perspectives related to health system territorialization. Policy process research delivers essential insights into how regional health policies are designed and implemented. These perspectives aim to deepen our understanding of actor dynamics and analyze how subnational bottom-up processes impact health system development across various territorial contexts.
We invite submissions to explore the territorial and regional aspects of health systems all over the world. Papers focusing on the role of programmatic groups, policy entrepreneurs, interest groups, political parties, advocacy coalitions, narratives and institutional dynamics as drivers or obstructors of regional health policy development are especially welcome. This panel seeks to understand how these actors shape the processes that allow healthcare systems to adapt to the distinct health, social, economic, and political realities of various regions.

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Session 1

Wednesday, July 2nd 16:00 to 18:00 (SME-G4)

Territorialization as reframing and alignment: the case of primary care in France

Patrick Hassenteufel (Université Paris-Saclay)

Daniel Benamouzig (Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po))

Belonging to a landscape of care supporting exiles - A self-analysis of a programmatic group in Brussels

Céline Mahieu (Université Libre de Bruxelles)

Jennifer Foucart (Université Libre de Bruxelles)

Ana Bengoetxea (Université Libre de Bruxelles)

Obstacles to multisectoral maternal and child healthcare financing in Uganda: insights from policy bureaucrats

Maureen Sylvia Kusiima (University of Pretoria)

Gerda Van Dijk (University of Pretoria)

The territorial policies of healthcare coordination facing ageing issues in France

Marine Boisson (Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po))