P171 / Securitising the policy process: Re-orienting and re-structuring public policymaking and policy processes?

Topic : Policy Change/Continuity/Dynamics

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

National security has become a fundamental concern around the world, which influences multiple policy areas. After the 9/11 in 2001, security and survival emerged in political and policy agendas both in the Western countries and elsewhere. More recently, the dominance of security in policy discourse and policy actions have grabbed the headlines: securing access to critical minerals, enforcing border control such as against adversary ships or migrant boats, exerting control over chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz or the Panama Canal, attaining digital sovereignty, and intensifying domestic extraction and mining (Calvo et al. 2025; Edwards 2026), among others, have (re-)ignited the economic and political survival instincts and logics.

Security, as a theme and the way policy problems are framed and approached, is increasingly occupying governmental agendas. The gradual dominance of security in governmental and political agendas is shaping policymakers' approach to policy problems, including how they frame problems and which policies and policy instruments are offered to address security concerns. In other words, policymaking and the policy process are becoming increasingly securitised. For instance, surveillance instruments (e.g., algorithms, face recognition, AI) tend to securitise state-society relations (Cugurullo and Xu 2025), social policy can be approached from a security logic than its welfare-oriented tenets (Ragazzi 2017), and global security and defence firms re-structure state-business relations, whilst leading to collaborative arrangements between states and security or technology firms (Khanal et al. 2026), not only for domestic security concerns, but also to address those at the international level by suspending global firms' operations due to security concerns.

As a result of the increasingly securitised policymaking and policy processes, actors' ideational and material positions and their influence over the policy processes are re-defined: new actors may emerge and exert influence over public administration and public policymaking (Batora and Konikova 2025), the rise of military as an influential actor over public administration in different parts of the world through appointments in civil bureaucracy and policy implementation among other roles (Cunha et al. 2026), public procurement processes are subject to lobbying and/or processual changes in line with securitisation, public expenditure priorities and policies can transform states (Kruck and Weiss 2023), and can even cause conflicts within cabinets. This Panel invites manuscripts that contribute to our understanding of the drivers and consequences of securitisation of policymaking and re-orientation and re-structuring of policy processes.

References

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The current state of the global politics is marked by rapid and unstable global geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts. In this context, national security has become a fundamental concern around the world, which influences multiple policy areas. After the 9/11 in 2001, security and survival emerged in political and policy agendas both in the Western countries and elsewhere. More recently, the dominance of security in policy discourse and policy actions have grabbed the headlines: securing access to critical minerals, enforcing border control such as against adversary ships or migrant boats, exerting control over chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz or the Panama Canal, attaining digital sovereignty, and intensifying domestic extraction and mining among others, have (re-)ignited the economic and political survival instincts and logics.

While securitisation has become more pronounced and there is evidence in changes in the policy processes (Migone et al. 2023; 2025), there is still a gap in our understanding of the following non-exhaustive list of questions with global relevance:

- How can we conceptualise securitisation of public policymaking? What are the key drivers and conditions that enable or constrain securitisation of public policy?

- How does security dominance re-orient and re-structure the policy process, power relations, and/or institutional arrangements? And what are the implications for public policies?

- Whether and how does securitisation empower or decapacitate different actors (e.g., business, government, civil society), policy ideas, and institutions?

- Are there differences across policy sectors (such as AI, regulation of disruptive technologies, social policy, immigration, defence, fiscal or monetary policy) that are more or less securitised? And how could we theorise those differences?

To address this non-exhaustive list of questions, this Panel invites manuscripts, which employ individual or mixed methods (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, mixed), contribute to our understanding of the drivers and consequences of securitisation of policymaking and re-orientation and re-structuring of policy processes. Theoretical, conceptual, and/or empirical contributions are prioritised, including analytically and conceptually rich descriptive studies.

References

Migone, Andrea, Alexander Howlett, and Michael Howlett. 2023. The politics of military megaprojects: Discursive struggles in Canadian and Australian naval shipbuilding strategies. Policy and Society 42(2): 226-244.

Migone, Andrea et al. 2025. “Is lobbying for losers?”: Corporate behavior and Canadian military procurement contracting. Regulation & Governance 19(2): 558-582.