W01 / Overreaction in Politics and Policy

Topic : Policy Process , Policy & Politics, Policymaking, Policy implentation

Chair : Moshe Maor (Reichman University)

Second Chair : Bryan Jones (University of Texas at Austin)

CALL FOR PAPERS

A critical aspect of political life is the inability or unwillingness of individuals and decision-makers to respond proportionally to new information. One manifestation of this phenomenon is overreaction (Maor 2012) or overinvestment (Jones et al. 2014). The premises underlying this workshop is that the study of overreaction in politics and policy is theoretically meaningful because it contributes to our basic understanding of fundamental processes, such as the oscillation of policy between periods of under- and overreaction to the flow of information coming from the environment into the system (Baumgartner & Jones 1993), and it is practically important because, under certain conditions, such a policy response creates substantial value for policymakers (Maor 2017a). But we still lack a thorough understanding of the processes by which this type of elite decision-making occurs and is managed, and we still lack clarity regarding how that value is created.

Although research examining overreaction in politics and policy remains at an early stage, it is clear that it largely develops along three paths. The first path comprises psychological explanations which put all overreactions down to errors derived from cognitive biases and constraints on information processing, as well as socio-psychological dynamics in small decision-making groups (Janis 1982, 1989; Jervis 1976; Jones & Baumgartner 2005; Maor 2012; Mintz & Wayne 2016; ?t Hart et al. 1997; Walker & Malici 2011). The second path comprises newly-emerging institutional explanations which put all overreaction down to errors derived from institutional values, procedures, myths, and routines (Peters et al., 2017). The third path comprises newly-emerging strategic explanations which revolve around the idea that at times overreactions in politics and policy reflect intentional choices which may be carefully developed, meticulously debated, executed as planned, and successful in achieving the intended goals, especially during crises involving panic and public fears (Maor 2017a,b,c,d,e).

This workshop aims to advance the study of overreaction in politics and policy by building on the disproportionate policy perspective as well as on advances in the study of endogenous disjoint change, framing, emotions, social contagion, policy bubbles, elite decision-making, and new institutionalism. We are seeking conceptual, empirical and methodological papers that revolve around the following questions: What are the conceptual foundations, analytical anatomy, and the conceptual reach of these explanations? What models could be developed in order to understand endogenously produced disjointed change in public policy? What are the implications of the disproportionate policy perspective for better understanding intentional overreaction in politics and policy? To what extent can individual cognitive processes help us understand changes at the aggregate level? What is the role of emotions and emotional entrepreneurs in overreaction? How can institutional and strategic explanations of overreaction blend findings from studies of human cognition and decision-making? How do policymakers balance between overreaction rhetoric and doctrine, and between selective and non-selective modes of policy overreaction, and what are the implications of such choices? How are policy issues framed in policy overreaction speeches in order to reach out to the targeted audience? What rewards do politicians and bureaucrats receive from overreaction?

ABSTRACT

A critical aspect of political life is the inability or unwillingness of individuals and decision-makers to respond proportionally to new information. One manifestation of this phenomenon is overreaction. The insight of the punctuated equilibrium theory—that policy responses oscillate between periods of underreaction to the flow of information coming from the environment into the system and overreaction due to disproportionate information processing—implies that policy overreaction is the norm rather than the rarity. Although research examining overreaction in politics and policy remains at an early stage, it is clear that it largely develops along three paths. The first path comprises psychological explanations which put all overreactions down to errors derived from cognitive biases and constraints on information processing, as well as socio-psychological dynamics in small decision-making groups. The second path comprises newly-emerging institutional explanations which put all overreaction down to errors derived from institutional values, procedures, myths, and routines. The third path comprises newly-emerging strategic explanations which

revolve around the idea that at times overreactions in politics and policy reflect intentional choices which may be carefully developed, meticulously debated, executed as planned, and successful in achieving the intended goals, especially during crises involving panic and public fears. This workshop aims to advance the study of overreaction in politics and policy by building on the disproportionate policy perspective; studies of endogenous disjoint change, as well as on advances in the study of framing, emotions, social contagion, policy bubbles, elite decision-making, and new institutionalism. We aim to advance the disciplines of political science and policy sciences by highlighting a conceptual turn whereby the concept of overreaction reenters the policy lexicon as a type of intentional policy choice rather than a policy error, and by suggesting ways by which strategic and institutional explanations of overreaction can incorporate behavioral findings.

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Session 1Opening workshop

Tuesday, June 26th 10:15 to 12:15 (Posvar Hall - 4913)

Introduction

Moshe Maor (Reichman University)

Bryan Jones (University of Texas at Austin)

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Session 2

Tuesday, June 26th 13:45 to 17:00 (Posvar Hall - 4913)

Overreaction in Politics and Policy

Moshe Maor (Reichman University)

Detecting positivity bias and negativity bias in public decision-making

Böhme Mirijam (University of Bamberg)

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Session 3

Wednesday, June 27th 09:00 to 12:15 (Posvar Hall - 4913)

The valley of forsaken youths: vulnerability, human rights and overreaction in Brazil's anti-violence policy

Andrei Suárez Dillon Soares (Brazilian Government)

The U.S. Congressional Tax Reform of 2017 is a political overreaction increasing the likelihood of U.S. hospital closures.

Zigmond Kozicki (University of Detroit Mercy)

Stephanie Baiyasi-Kozicki (Central Michigan University)

A DRAMATURGY OF AUTHORITARIAN POPULISM AND PUBLIC POLICY IN 'NEW INDIA'

Neil Lincoln Tannen (St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru)

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Session 4

Wednesday, June 27th 13:45 to 17:00 (Posvar Hall - 4913)

Unreliable Protection: Proportionality Judgments in War

Raanan Sulitzeanu-Kenan (Hebrew University)

Can Evidence-based Policy Contribute to Correcting Overreaction? ?Considering Democracy and Rationalized Policy Making?

Kazuya Sugitani (Iwate Prefectural University)

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Session 5

Thursday, June 28th 09:00 to 12:15 (Posvar Hall - 4913)

Excessive Policy Volatility: A Framework with Some Applications from the field of Pension Reforms

Achim Kemmerling (Willy Brandt School of Public Policy - University of Erfurt)

Disproportionate Policy Response by Design: Towards a Conceptual Turn

Moshe Maor (Reichman University)