W05 / Shaping Policymaking from the Ground Up: Activism and Governance in Multi-Level Institutional Settings

Topic : Policy & Politics

Chair : Raffaele Bazurli (Queen Mary University of London)

Second Chair : Walter Nicholls (University of California, Irvine)

CALL FOR PAPERS

This workshop aims to offer a fresh theorisation of activism's impacts on policymaking in multi-level jurisdictional contexts. Its ambition is to attract, and promote meaningful dialogue among, policy scholars with diverse:

- Disciplinary backgrounds (e.g. political science, sociology, geography, anthropology, history)
- Epistemological perspectives (e.g. interpretative, post-positivist)
- Scientific aspirations (e.g. empirical, theoretical, methodological)
- Methodological approaches (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, network analysis)
- Research design (e.g. comparative, single-case)
- Geographical provenance and focus (Global North and South)
- Sectorial interests (e.g. environment, immigration, urban, welfare, etc)

The following is a non-exhaustive list of topics that this workshop seeks to address:

§ Multi-level governance, federalism, and authority dispersal: How do different institutional settings influence activists' chances to shape policymaking? What is the role of different government systems (federal, unitary, other) in affecting activists' success and failure? What are the opportunities and constraints that authority dispersal across multiple policy venues offer to those mobilising from the periphery of power relations? How does activists' influence vary across different policy sectors?

§ Social movements' organisation, strategies, and outer environment: How do activists navigate opportunities, constrains, and dilemmas in different jurisdictional landscapes? What is the role of institutional allies in empowering and/or co-opting social movements? How sustainable is activists' influence over time and how does it vary across different stages of the policy process? Are social movements seeking policy change more/less influential than those seeking to maintain the status quo?

§ Cities, space, and scale: How can activists harness the urban scale to produce policy change, locally and beyond? What is the role of geographical settings in shaping activists' influence? How can coalitions involving activists and local officials prevent or redress unwanted policies adopted by regional, national, or supra-national authorities? What are the possibilities and limitations of municipalism for the pursuit of transformative policy change?

Bridging insights from complementary yet so-far disconnected theoretical perspectives, the workshop will push the boundaries of the scholarly debate on policymaking and activism.

ABSTRACT

Social movements often mobilise to produce or prevent policy change. The question of their power is ever more relevant in today's divided societies. With political contention on the rise, fresh forms of activism have emerged around the defining issues of our time, such as climate change, immigration, race, social welfare, and LGBTQ+ rights. These highly politicised policy domains, moreover, stretch across multiple geographical scales and government levels, urging both activists and policymakers to navigate opportunities and constraints in complex, fragmented, and uneven institutional landscapes.

The aim of this workshop is to understand when, why, and how activism can shape policymaking processes in multi-level institutional settings. This question has animated extensive research in the fields of public policy analysis, social movement studies, and political geography, giving rise to a vibrant yet siloed debate. First, scholarship on multi-level governance and federalism highlights that the devolution of policymaking powers to assorted sites of authority has led to a greater involvement of grassroots organisations in the production of public goods, offering them notable opportunities to change policies from below. Second, social movement scholars stress that grassroots demands are more likely to make political headway when

sympathetic office holders work as access points to the institutional space, but often conceptualise mobilisations as unfolding within jurisdictional containers. Third, geographers and urban scholars emphasise that cities are strategic sites for the mobilisation of marginalised groups, allowing them to produce policy outcomes far beyond the immediate local contexts in which activism originated.

Bringing together experts and insights from these different scholarships, the workshop will make a path-breaking contribution to the study of public policy in times of political polarisation and institutional rescaling.

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Session 1

Wednesday, June 26th 10:15 to 12:00 (AULA 11)

Adapting to protest as a form of public policy restructuring.

Charlotte Halpern (Sciences Po Paris - Centre d'Etudes Européennes (CEE))

(Virtual) Fighting Italian Labor Exploitation from the Ground Up

Isabella Clough Marinaro (John Cabot University)

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Session 2

Wednesday, June 26th 14:00 to 17:15 (AULA 11)

(Virtual) Interests without implementation; implementation without interests: Land policy in Amazonia

Gabriel Suchodolski (University of California, Los Angeles)

Addressing the political influence of non-contentious and emerging social movements: the case of energy communities in Barcelona

Marta Tramezzani (Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po))

Climate Justice Curtailed: Examining the Role and Influence of Local Community Stakeholders in California's Transformative Climate Communities Program

Emma French (University of California, Los Angeles)

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Session 3

Thursday, June 27th 09:00 to 12:15 (AULA 11)

(Virtual) Scalar Inversion of Movement-Countermovements: A Case Study of Pro- and Anti-Immigrant Mobilizing in the United States

Walter Nicholls (University of California, Irvine)

Marieke de Wilde (University of Amsterdam)

Working two states: Status for All organizing in Quebec and the cultural politics of regularization

Jessie Stein (CUNY Graduate Center, USA)

(Virtual) From borders to courts: The politics of litigation of sea rescue organisations

Federico Alagna (Scuola Normale Superiore)

Socio-Legal Interventions: Clearing Centres and Health Activism for Uninsured Migrants in Germany

Ilker Ataç (Hochschule Fulda)

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Session 4

Thursday, June 27th 14:00 to 17:15 (AULA 11)

Deportation Defense Funds: Innovative or Continuing Inequalities?

Blanca Ramirez (University of California, Los Angeles)

Empowering public impact on policy-making and the role of public managers as gatekeepers

Emanuela Savini (University of Technology Sydney - Institute for Public Policy and Governance)

The Ambivalence of Government Decentralisation for Poor People's Politics: The Case of Infrastructural Upgrading in a Buenos Aires' Informal Neighbourhood

Raffaele Bazurli (Queen Mary University of London)

Sam Halvorsen (Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London)

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Session 5

Friday, June 28th 09:00 to 12:15 (AULA 11)

(Virtual) New municipalism and the limits of local government: municipal contestation in the case of rent regulation under Barcelona en Comú

Iolanda Bianchi (Universitat de Barcelona)

Dismantling municipal autonomy through water: a pragmatic genealogy of Polish remunicipalization and its perils

Borys Cieslak (Gran Sasso Science Institute)

(Virtual) Activists facing the implementation of housing policies in two European metropolises

Julie Pollard (University of Lausanne)

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Session 6

Friday, June 28th 14:00 to 16:00 (AULA 11)

Conclusive Remarks and Prospective Projects

Raffaele Bazurli (Queen Mary University of London)

Walter Nicholls (University of California, Irvine)