

T12P03 / Interest Groups, Political Parties and Public Policies

Topic : T12 / Policy, Business and Interest Groups

Chair : Laura Chaqués Bonafont (Universitat de Barcelona and IBEI)

Second Chair : Darren Halpin (Australian National University)

Third Chair : Frédéric Varone (University of Geneva)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The goal of this panel is to bring together scholars analyzing the relationships between interest groups and political parties across time, countries and policy issues. Interest groups provide different types of goods of special interest to political parties and elected officials. They are among the main suppliers of expertise and technical knowledge on policy issues; they channel and represent citizens' views and policy positions regarding economic, social and political problems, and on some occasions they become interested contributors to political campaigns as well. Policy-makers grant an institutional access to interest groups as a way of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of legislation, increasing the congruence between policy decisions and citizens' preferences as represented by interest groups, reaching consensus and minimizing political conflict during the policy-making process, or maximizing their chances of re-election for the next parliamentary mandate. The goal of this panel is to bring together scholars analyzing how and why interest groups and political parties interact across time, countries and policy venues (e.g. executive, legislative and media) using quantitative and qualitative methods.

CALL FOR PAPERS

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Session 1 Interest Groups, Political Parties and Public Policies

Thursday, June 29th 08:15 to 10:15 (Oei Tiong Ham OTH 1 - 1)

The imponderability in forging compromises. Can policy design be explained with policy belief compatibility of interest groups and party politicians?

Stefan Lindow (Georg-August-University of Goettingen)

Following the advocacy coalition framework (ACF), it is proposed to investigate the development of belief system (in)compatibility of interest groups and partisan policy elites in the German Copyright policy subsystem between 2001 and 2016. With the spread of digitization, Copyright policy making moved from expert discussion to politicized negotiations and a sharp increasing of public hearings. Because the ACF theorization offers a number of hypotheses on interests-party interaction as well as expert knowledge usages, the question to be answered is: Which use of and interaction in parliamentary hearings minimizes conflict and fosters consensus?

Copyrights are state-guaranteed exclusive rights to use and exploit an object, which is difficult to possess: art and culture. Between 2003 and 2016, 10 different laws were adopted in Germany, which were to take account of the changes caused by the spread of the Internet. Once based on carrier media such as printed books, CDs, or VHS, global networks and the growing digitization allows for easy and mass copying which undermines the exclusivity and competition over usage that constitute good. Alongside this, the once technical policy making has made way for interest group conflict and party politics, (even) occupying (ever more) space in party election manifestos. At the same time, public conflict peaks in 2009 and 2012 while large, consensual reform packages have been replaced by (many) smaller reforms of short succession.

Following Christopher Weible's typology of policy subsystems, it can be hypothesized that such change involves that growing belief incompatibility leads to competitions over access to venues and institutional authority. Here, interests succeed when interest groups and party politics ally along the lines of policy core beliefs, which are supposed to produce a certain win-lose style of policy designs. It is hypothesized, too, that expert knowledge in such a competitive constellation is used differently than in a collaborative subsystem. Therefore, a conflictual situation should bring about the exchange of different types of goods between interest groups and party politicians than a collaborative situation.

The proposed papers analyses the expression of beliefs around issues of copyright policy before and during parliamentary hearings and its effects on the policy output. The analysis draws on a dataset of written statements and consecutive testimonies of 15 parliamentary hearings in the leading committee of legal affairs of the German federal parliament (2001-2016). We look especially for congruence of interest group preferences and the policy makers' choice as well as successful/failed attempts to find consensus and minimize conflict. The most valuable indication comes from changes in draft bills in the aftermath of and with explicit reference to expressed beliefs/position in the public hearing. Ultimately, our ten individual cases will update our confidence in the stated ACF hypotheses and lead to better understanding on the role of political parties in policy subsystems.

Why Political Parties give access to the decision making process to some interest groups, but not others? A comparative approach across issues, time and sub-national governments

Laura Chaqués Bonafont (Universitat de Barcelona and IBEI)

Muñoz Luz (University of Barcelona)

Political parties do not give equal access to the policy-making process to all interest groups. According to the information logic approach, policy makers decide whether to invite interest organizations taking into account their capacity to provide high quality technical information about policy problems. In contrast, the exchange approach suggest MPs give access to interest organizations that may be more rewarding in electoral terms, either because

they represent the interests of large constituencies, or because they can make large money contributions. This paper builds in an alternative theoretical framework –the persuasion approach—, according to which policy-makers are especially willing to invite their allies, avoiding their enemies as a means to reinforce their negotiation capacity in the parliamentary debate. We argue access to interest groups to the parliamentary arena is explained not only by their expertise, reputation and representativeness, but their capacity to reinforce MPs policy positions about policy issues. The analysis relies on a unique database, about interest groups appearances in the Parliament of Catalonia and the Basque Country, which contains detailed information about which political party invites which interest groups to discuss a policy issue from the late 1990 to present.

Policy evaluations in Parliament: Do interest groups influence information processing by MPs?

Frédéric Varone (University of Geneva)

Members of parliament (MPs) ask for policy evaluations and use the related findings to inform law-making and to hold the government accountable. Many elected representatives have developed strong ties to specific interest groups and these privileged relationships may have an influence on their parliamentary search for policy-relevant information. This study considers the ties between MPs and interest groups and investigates the following research question: What is the impact of interest groups on MPs behavior related to evaluation request and use? This question is not only relevant from an empirical and theoretical point of view. It is also highly sensitive from a normative stance. If interest groups do have a significant impact on the parliamentary evaluation practice, then this could also have major implications for the democratic accountability of policy processes (i.e. interest- or evidence-based policy-making?) and elected officials (i.e. responsiveness towards sectional or electoral constituencies?).

The theoretical framework, which is based on the "legislative subsidy" approach developed by Hall and Deardroff (2006), claims that interest groups do matter for MPs' evaluation practice and information-processing. They function almost like a "service bureau", delivering technical expertise and procedural advice to MPs. Interest groups are likely to contribute to the use and demand of evaluation evidence. However, we also postulate that citizen groups are more willing than business groups to offer what could be called "evaluation subsidies" to elected representatives.

Preliminary findings from a representative survey of Swiss MPs shows that, regardless of their respective political party and individual characteristics, MPs having ties with citizen groups display a higher attention for policy evaluations than representatives linked to business groups. The former foster the parliamentary evaluation practice and work as catalysts, whereas the latter act rather as inhibitors, probably substituting public evaluation with private expertise.

Interest Groups and Campaign Networks: Policy Influence and Organisation within the Australian Labor Party

Anika Gauja (University of Sydney)

Michael Vaughan (University of Sydney)

This paper analyses the relationship between interest groups and the Australian Labor Party. Looking at three policy areas: the environment, refugees and LGBTI rights, the paper presents a comparative qualitative case study of three campaigning networks within the ALP – the Labor Environment Action Network (LEAN), Labor for Refugees and Rainbow Labor. This study is based on original interviews with group members, observation of campaigning and policy-making events, as well as documentary and website analysis. These three groups are organised around the party's national conference (the primary forum for policy debate), but present a unique challenge to traditional policy-making structures within the party because they work beyond the geographic norms of branch-based representation. Each has had varying degrees of policy success in their respective areas. We explore this variation by comparing the organisational structures of all three networks, specifically the extent to which they establish connections to interest groups outside the party and rely on these groups for personnel and/or expertise, and secondly, the extent to which these intra-party networks have employed the organising strategies more commonly associated with interest groups in their campaigns and dealings with the party's policy-making processes. In this way, we argue that the boundaries between parties and interest groups are increasingly blurred – not only in the connections between these two entities, but also in the organising strategies and tactics they adopt.

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Session 2 Political parties, elected representatives and interest groups

Thursday, June 29th 10:30 to 12:30 (Oei Tiong Ham OTH 1 - 1)

Action and Reaction in Interest Group Advocacy

Beth Leech (Rutgers University)

Amy McKay

Patrick Bernhagen (University of Stuttgart)

Much of the interest group literature focuses solely on the actions of the groups themselves, attempting to measure their assumed influence over public officials. Viewing interest group advocacy in its political context, however, demonstrates how often those interest groups are actually reacting to the activities of parties and officials, rather than causing the actions of those entities. In this first public paper from the Agendas and Interest Groups project, a four-country analysis involving hundreds of policy issues, we document this phenomenon using data from more than 100 interviews in each country. In the US case, we are able to compare the agendas of these interest groups before and after the election of Donald Trump as president.

I have two other coauthors, but I am having trouble entering them in the system. They are: Joost Berkhoot and Adam Chalmers.

Interest Groups and Political Responsiveness

Anne Rasmussen (University of Copenhagen and Leiden University)

Existing studies of political responsiveness have largely ignored interest groups even if it is well-known that policy-making venues may be crowded with special interests that are not necessarily representative of public opinion. The paper analyzes the conditioning impact of interest groups on the linkage between opinion and policy in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK on 50 policy issues. It examines whether and how a number of characteristics of the groups active on an issue affect the public opinion-policy linkage controlling for additional variables at the issue and the country level. The samples of public opinion items are drawn from national databases and include public opinion items on specific issues stratified in such a way that they include variation in media salience, policy type and across time. Possible policy changes and interest group activities occurring up to four years after the public opinion item was asked are recorded. The data collection includes media content analysis, expert interviews with civil servants working within the policy portfolio of the issues as well as surveys of active lobbying Groups.

Gentlemen's agreements? Insiders and outsiders in the shaping of Swiss financial regulation

Roy Gava (University of St. Gallen)

This paper focuses on the involvement of regulatees and other interest groups in the production of legislative norms and regulatory rules. Empirically, it focuses on policy-making in relation to Swiss financial regulation, an area that has been traditionally associated with technical complexity, low issue salience and high levels of private self-regulation. In particular, the paper focuses on the a) the intensity and diversity of regulatees and “outsiders” participation in the different stages of the policy-making process; b) the congruence of policy positions between financial industry groups, between insiders and outsiders, and between regulatees and the regulator; and c) the extent to which participation and congruence levels affect regulatees’ preference attainment. By means of an

issue-tracing approach, this paper analyzes the involvement of regulatees and outsider groups in policy-making at three distinct levels: primary legislation (i.e. enacted by Parliament), secondary legislation (i.e. enacted by the government) and rules enacted by independent regulatory agencies. Analyses rely on the quantitative assessment of consultations and hearings before and after the Global Financial Crisis, allowing the contrast between periods of relatively low and high issue salience. In order to capture the variance existing within a single policy sector, the article takes into consideration the entire financial regulatory production.

The Puzzle of Interest Group Involvement in National Elections: Why, how and when?

Darren Halpin (Australian National University)

Here we examine the ways in which groups prepare themselves and then seek to take advantage of a regular system-wide window of political opportunity, namely elections. Alongside annual budget submissions or processes, national elections are perhaps the only juncture at which all national interest groups are single-mindedly focused on the national political debate. National elections offer rare junctures where the attention of the entire polity – including parties, legislators, the media, and citizens - are focused on political debate. Interest groups are likely no different. Yet while we assume that groups would see such junctures as important opportunities to push their agendas, there is precious little systematic analysis of group involvement. There is a longer tradition examining relations between parties and groups (see Allern and Bale 2012; Witko 2009), but election participation has figured less prominently (but see Binderkrantz 2015).

In this paper we present initial findings from a study of Australian interest groups in the 2016 federal election. We utilize data from a systematic collection of the policy priority documents of 200, complemented by elite interviews with policy staff at key national interest groups, to shed light on this important but understudied dimension to group lobbying activity.

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Session 3 Interactions between public officials and groups in policymaking processes

Thursday, June 29th 13:30 to 15:30 (Oei Tiong Ham OTH 1 - 1)

Policy Reform, Political Parties and Organized Interests: Universal Healthcare in Latin America

Zoila Ponce de Leon (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

A key feature that defines healthcare in Latin America is inequality: between those citizens who use the public health sector's services and those who can afford private services, and also between citizens with formal jobs and those within the informal economy (over 50% of the Latin American population) who are usually unprotected. Over the last decades, Latin America has witnessed major attempts to tackle healthcare access disparities. These healthcare reforms, however, have been different: some more expansive than others, with more or less planning behind them, some more sustainable than others. What determines the different types of reforms implemented and their different degree of success?

An important body of literature has focused on the role of left-wing political parties and the organized interests linked to them (i.e. labor unions). Expanding the study of healthcare reforms to cases in which right-wing parties promoted and carried out the reforms can allow us to identify other features of political parties that can influence the policymaking process apart from ideology. I trace the policymaking process of the reforms that took place in Mexico (Seguro Popular), Chile (AUGE) and Peru (Aseguramiento Universal) during the 2000s. I find that features such as the programmatic nature of political parties (whether parties are organized around a policy program or mainly on the basis of personal loyalty to a charismatic leader or around a clientelistic machine) and how disciplined they are impact the policymaking process, the quality of the legislation and its further implementation. The programmatic nature of the parties is highly relevant during the debate process of the reforms as it determines the specifications of the bills regarding implementation and funding, which in turn defines the feasibility and sustainability of the reforms.

Power to resist: Services Liberalization in Greece, 2006-2016

Francesco Stolfi (UNMC)

Natalia Papamakariou (Greek Ministry of Economy and Development)

Over the past decade the liberalization of services provision has been at the center of political conflict around the world. Competition in services has as a rule been much more limited than in manufacturing, and opening them up to competition goes against the entrenched interests of providers, not to speak of long-standing societal expectations on the reach of markets.

This paper assesses whether and how services providers have been able to resist the implementation of services liberalization and deregulation in Greece since 2006. Greece's entrenched closed shop system protecting professions against competition has come under attack by the European Union and other international actors, first with the EU's 2006 Services Directive and, since the onset of the country's fiscal and economic crisis in 2010, with several Memorandums of Understanding the Greek government signed in order to maintain access to credit, all of which included strict requirements to liberalize services provision in several sectors.

Although the legal transposition of these requirements has been made easier by the immediate pressures facing the country, transposition is only the first step in the liberalization process. Implementation remains uncertain, as it is the phase where services providers can attempt to protect themselves from liberalization. However, interest groups differ in the resources they can muster to resist reform, and this paper aims to assess if, and through which strategies, more powerful groups have indeed been able to defend by thwarting the implementation of liberalization measures.

The power to resist liberalization, and the strategies actors use to wield it, is the focus of our paper. We have chosen four professions that differ in terms of their political, legal, and technical resources: lawyers, engineers,

taxi drivers and tour guides. The first two are powerful actors that can draw on their legal and technical expertise as well as on their established links with political parties, a fundamental resource in the Greek system, characterized as it is by a politicized and poorly skilled public administration. The last two, taxi drivers and tour guides, are weaker actors in that they lack the legal and technical skills of lawyers and engineers. Between these two interests, the former are however more powerful than the latter, since taxi drivers, contrary to tour guides, have political power: not only do they, like lawyers and engineers, have strong partisan connections, but they also have the ability to launch disruptive strikes.

Empirically, the paper is based on primary documents and interviews with interest group associations and unions in the four sectors as well as with public administrators and representatives of parties and of the international organizations (European Commission and International Monetary Fund) tasked with overseeing Greece's reforms. At a time of increasingly bitter conflict between winners and losers of globalization, the paper aims to provide a political economy contribution to the literature on implementation, both broadly and specifically with regard to the European Union, by analyzing the politics and the actors' strategies surrounding the implementation of reforms that increase competitive pressures on different groups in society.

Re-evaluation of The Cinematograph Films Act of 1927 as a bottom-up cultural policy by Interest Groups

Takao Terui (King's College London)

This paper aims to re-evaluate the first governmental support for the British film industry by the Cinematograph Films Act (CFA) of 1927 as an example of bottom-up cultural policy and analyse how and why such bottom-up movements by several actors outside the circle of the political elite successfully influenced the CFA of 1927 even though it was realized as a top-down national policy.

In the case of the CFA of 1927, the bottom-up characteristics of cultural policies are identified in several ways especially in the phases of policy problem defining and agenda-setting. The important point is that, although there are some overlaps, each actor which realized bottom-up influence has focused on different aspects of film, which resulted in a variety of political discourses. As an interest group of the British industry, the Federation of the British Industries(FBI) mainly focused on the industrial and economic aspect of the British film and made proposals about governmental support and the necessity to encourage the British film industry. In contrast, intellectual movements by film critics and artists focused on the aesthetic aspect of film and tried to promote film as a serious form of art. At the same time, public media such as quality newspapers as independent actor tried to spread the recognition of the film as culturally and socially valuable medium and made articles about such aspect of films. Even though the CFA of 1927 mainly focused on the industrial aspect of British film, the identification of several expected roles and the potential of the British film had a certain impact on attracting the interest of political elites and triggering the discussion of the governmental legislation in the 1920s.

It is partly because of the characteristics of film itself that several actors can feature in several aspects of film. Compared with other established high art, film can be able to recognized as both popular culture and serious art, and because of its huge scale industrial scale, its social and economic impact will inevitably be seen as important by the federation of the British industries and political elites. Such characteristics accelerated the bottom-up influencing by private actors on British film policies in the 1920s.

The analysis of the CFA of 1927 implies that even national cultural policies can be designed and influenced by bottom-up movements. This is because of the ambiguity of the values of cultural objects themselves and difficulty to design cultural policies to promote them without policy ideas or information from outside actors such as public media, intellectuals and interest groups. These actors are able to attend the phase of agenda-setting and policy problem defining by presenting their own understanding of the definitions of culture and persuade the policymakers to reflect them on policy-making.

The complementary role of interest-driven policy actors in the process of British energy policy change

Seyed Mohamad Sadegh Emamian (GPTT, Sharif University of Technology)

Drastic changes have taken place in UK electricity policy over recent years as government has sought to address the challenges associated with energy security, affordability and commitments to reduce carbon emissions. This paper investigates the underlying policy changes between the year 2000 and 2012, particularly the Electricity Market Reform (DECC 2011, 2012), as the most fundamental transformation in the British power market since liberalisation, almost three decades ago. Arguably, EMR had revised the long legacy of market-based and technology-neutral British electricity policymaking, while, as of 2012, it still suffered from a form of paradigm ambivalence and socio-technical lock-in.

Building upon such an in-depth empirical case study, this paper analyses the complementary relationship between different groups of policy actors with diverse forms of policy capacity throughout the process of policy

change. It shows how the process of energy liberalization and de-politicisation in 1990s derived from a combination of Conservative politicians, neo-liberal economists and fossil fuel business lobbies led to the dominance of 'policy-reluctant' civil servants in relevant departments. In the early 2000s, this study points to the growing influence of the coal industry lobby in the process of redesigning the electricity market. It then highlights the crucial role that environmental NGOs and political parties played in the context of re-politicised and securitised energy governance during the last years of 2000s. Finally, it explains how the emergence of technology-specific and delivery-oriented policymaking in the early 2010s revealed the lack of 'in-house expertise' within the Government and, in turn, opened up a huge space for business lobbies, technical consultancies and financial bodies to frame the complex policy package of EMR.

The paper draws relevant approaches within policy studies that attend to address continuity and change in policy frameworks, in particular the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier 1999) and Policy Paradigm (Hall 1993) perspectives. The study contributes to this literature in two distinctive ways. Firstly, this research moves beyond simplistic explanation of policy change in the ACF on the basis of merely ideational advocacy coalitions and highlights the role of interest groups and commercial and political lobbyists throughout more than a decade of evolution in UK energy policy. Secondly, inspired by the Institutional Change theory (Mahoney & Thelen 2010), it proposes that negotiated and compromised policies (Sabatier & Weible 2007) are often at the risk of policy reversibility and retrenchment, subject to any shift in the contextual conditions and coalitional balance they have originated in.