

# T03P04 / Uncovering Politics in Public Policies for Agriculture and Food

**Topic :** T03 / Policy and Politics sponsored by Policy & Politics Journal

**Chair :** Eve Fouilleux (CNRS/CIRAD/University of Montpellier)

**Second Chair :** Jessica Duncan (Wageningen University)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

*In this panel a selection of papers may be considered for the Policy & Politics journal.*

While policy-making is an inherently political practice, formal and informal governance arrangements that coordinate contemporary policy debates and processes are often organised in ways that have de-politicising effects. In western countries for example, there is evidence of an increasing disconnect between, on the one hand, election-based politics and, on the other hand, public policy decisions, leading to the rise of what The Economist has called “post-truth” politics. More generally, the globalisation of governance has accentuated this disconnection, with debates dominated by experts and technocrats and political decisions taken increasingly further away from the person in-the-street/citizen-voter. The increasing weight of private regulations in contemporary forms of governance adds another dimension to this phenomenon.

These trends are particularly acute in the field of food and agriculture, with a clear tendency towards the internationalization of crucial policy processes, global multi-stakeholder platforms, mushrooming of global private voluntary standards, data-driven indicators with related monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and consensus-based decision-making processes. In different ways, these practices serve to conceal relations of power and the agendas of particular actors in the name of consultation, participation, and democracy. Alongside these broader trends, the dominant logic that has informed agriculture and food policy since the end of the Second World War has come under attack. The green revolution model of agriculture (i.e., the specialisation of agriculture dependent on fossil-fuel based inputs industrialization and uniformisation of consumption habits) has been the dominant approach advanced to grow food and feed people. This model has systematically informed agri-food public policy-making and in return public policies have tended to facilitate its implementation. However, this model has now come under scrutiny worldwide. Critics argue that structural changes to practices, rules, and institutions are needed to ensure a transition towards just and sustainable agri-food systems. To do so requires recognition of the diverse political dynamics that operate across agri-food policy spaces.

Given the context, **this panel proposes to explore the extent to, and the conditions under which, policy processes are being influenced by these critics, and reversely how critics are resisted and neutralised.** More specifically, the panel aims at understanding the diverse ways in which politics are inserted or hidden in agri-food policy spaces, by exploring debates and controversies, their interconnections at various scales of governance, and their (dis)connection to policy-making.

The panel will include papers that focus on the actors that are engaged in policy debates and controversies, the visions they promote, the resources they have to influence the discussions, and how they engage in political struggles and legitimization processes of different models for agriculture and food. Papers will focus on the dynamics of policy debates, including the role of scientists, media coverage, civil society, and the private sector. Papers will interrogate and elucidate spaces where policy decisions are taken, paying attention to practices that either depolitize the inherently political process of public policy-making for food and agriculture, or seek to re-politize public policy-making spaces and debates.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The objective of the panel is to advance understanding of, and theorization on, the political dimension of public policies (i.e., policy debates, policy-making processes, policy instruments) in the field of agri-food policies, in line with a growing body of literature claiming the emergence of a post-political era.

At a time when more than one billion people are obese and almost another one billion are under-nourished, industrial agri-food systems are increasingly criticized worldwide, for not only their failure to feed people, but also for their significant contribution to increased natural resource scarcity and pollutions, loss of

biodiversity, and a diversity of social problems. Critics argue that structural changes to practices, rules, and institutions are needed to ensure a transition towards just and sustainable agri-food systems. To do so requires recognition of the diverse political dynamics that operate across agri-food policy spaces.

**This panel proposes to explore the extent to, and the conditions under which, policy processes are being influenced by these critics, and reversely how critics are resisted and neutralised.** We aim at understanding the diverse ways in which politics are inserted or hidden in agri-food policy spaces, by exploring debates and controversies, their interconnections at various scales of governance, and their (dis)connection to policy-making. Papers should aim to:

- Identify and analyse ways in which actors insert or mask politics and issues of power into public policy debates and processes;
- Reflect on similarities, differences and interconnections across the practices, tactics and strategies used by actors to politicise policy spaces in a globalized world; and/or,
- Comment and advance theorizing on emerging trends across the debates of food governance and the potential of different categories of actors to envisage alternative scenarios and affect the policy process.

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## Session 1

Thursday, June 29th 13:30 to 15:30 (Block B 5 - 3 )

### **Discussants**

Jessica Duncan (Wageningen University)

Eve Fouilleux (CNRS/CIRAD/University of Montpellier)

### **The Governance of Food System in sub-Saharan Africa: a preliminary outlook of the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition**

Haja RAJAONARISON (Center for the Promotion of Interdisciplinary Education and Research, Kyoto University)

Shuji Hisano (Graduate School of Economics, Kyoto University)

### **Food Sovereignty as a Coalition Magnet**

Puspa Sharma (The Australian National University)

Carsten Daugbjerg (University of Copenhagen)

### **The politics of agri-food policies: moving beyond the dichotomy of neoliberalism and neomercantilism**

Belesky Paul (International Environment and Development Studies (Noragric), Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU))

### **Follow-up of the Agenda 2030: options for politicizing the review process**

Matheus Zanella (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS))