

T02P12 / Analysing Knowledge Policy Coordination for the 21st Century

Topic : T02 / Comparative Public Policy sponsored by Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis

Chair : Martina Vukasovic (University of Bergen)

Second Chair : Jens Jungblut (Department of Political Science, University of Oslo)

Third Chair : Meng Hsuan Chou (Nanyang Technological University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Achieving effective and efficient coordination is at the heart of good public policymaking. This panel proposes to examine the multi-faceted coordination challenges and opportunities by looking at the case of knowledge policy domain through an explicit framework emphasising its multi-issue, multi-actor, and multi-level nature. The global shift towards knowledge-based societies has placed knowledge at the core of contemporary public policy. However, the governance of knowledge requires collaboration across multiple policy sectors, e.g. higher education, research, and trade. While this brings forward the multi-issue aspect of policy coordination, it also points to the presence of state actors (e.g. different ministries and agencies), businesses, as well as non-state actors (interest groups and stakeholder organizations), adding a multi-actor aspect. Extant research has revealed how these two features already contribute to several coordination challenges – duplication, inconsistencies, clashing priorities, and potential bureaucratic and political conflict (Braun, 2008; Peters, 2015). So far largely missing from these analyses of policy coordination is a consideration of multi-level governance aspects. This includes ‘new’ actors increasingly involved in the design, implementation, and/or evaluation of policy which are operating across governance levels (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2000; Olsen, 1988), but also transnational and sub-national governance layers, given that devolution to regions—both supranational and subnational—is an important feature of contemporary governance (Chou & Ravinet, 2015; Jayasuriya & Robertson, 2010; Piattoni, 2010). So far, these multi-issue, multi-level and multi-actor dimensions have largely been studied in isolation from each other, preventing a full(er) understanding of the nuances and complexities of policy coordination. This panel invites researchers from diverse disciplines interested in knowledge policies to examine “the three multi’s” in a systematic and explicit manner, including explorations of interactions between them. All accepted papers must have a clear conceptual approach, supported by empirical examples, preferably beyond a single case study. We propose three sections, each giving primacy to one of the three multi’s, while at the same time highlighting interactions with the other two.

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Session 1

Wednesday, June 28th 14:00 to 16:00 (Block B 2 - 3)

Discussants

Martina Vukasovic (University of Bergen)

The politics of higher education policies: an introduction to multi-level, multi-actor and multi-issue dynamics

Meng Hsuan Chou (Nanyang Technological University)

Jens Jungblut (Department of Political Science, University of Oslo)

Pauline Ravinet (Université de Lille)

Martina Vukasovic (University of Bergen)

Using the case of higher education policies from around the world, we highlight the multi-level, multi-actor, and multi-issue—‘multi-s’—nature of public policy in areas of growing international and political attention.

The global shift towards knowledge-based economies and societies has placed ‘knowledge’ at the core of contemporary public policy and policymaking. The governance of knowledge, however, is not a neatly contained policy coordination exercise: it requires collaboration across multiple policy sectors that may have previously experienced very little or less interaction. A non-exhaustive list of relevant policy areas includes higher education, research, trade, foreign policy, development, and home affairs (migration). Higher education policy coordination is thus permeated with respective sectoral concerns, with discussions taking place across distinct policy arenas, sometimes in silo, both inside and outside of formal government channels. While this brings forth the multi-issue aspect competing for attention in higher education policy coordination, it also points to the presence of multiple actors: state actors from different ministries and agencies, representatives from universities and businesses, other non-state actors (interest groups, stakeholder organizations), as well as consumers of such coordinative outputs (concerned parents and students). The multi-issue and multi-actor features of higher education policy coordination often result in duplication, competition, inconsistencies, clashing priorities, and even potential bureaucratic and political conflict (Braun, 2008; Peters, 2015)—all symptoms of horizontal policy coordination challenges (Gornitzka, 2010). Adding to this is the fact that actors involved in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of higher education policy (Gornitzka & Maassen, 2000; Olsen, 1988) often operate, and ‘shop’ for better policy solutions, across several governance levels. While the rise of the regions—both supranational and subnational—in the higher education policy domain has garnered some academic attention (Chou & Ravinet, 2015; Jayasuriya & Robertson, 2010), this multi-level dimension of policy coordination needs to be brought into sharper relief. Indeed, international knowledge policy coordination stretches across many levels, including the macro-regional (e.g. European Union—EU, Association of Southeast Asian Nations—ASEAN), the meso-regional (Nordics, Baltics—bilateral or multilateral cooperation among states sharing specific geographical features), sub-regional (also bilateral or multilateral cross-border cooperation between distinct territories of different states), as well as the state/national (in federal systems), sub-national, and organizational (see e.g. Piattoni, 2010 concerning multi-level governance in the European context).

These observations of the many ‘multi-s’ reveal that the higher education sector is an exceptionally rich domain for acquiring further insights into contemporary public policymaking where the demarcation between the public and private is increasingly blurred. Indeed, the case of higher education policy coordination encourages the investigation of multi-issue, multi-level, and multi-actor facets of policy processes, both individually and when they interact.

The Quality of Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa – Comparing Intra-regional Inequalities in Higher Education

Jens Jungblut (Department of Political Science, University of Oslo)

Peter Maassen (University of Oslo)

Higher education is a central institution of modern societies. While it traditionally fulfilled a number of societal functions within its specific institutional domain, recent years saw an increase in higher education's political salience and relevance in relation to other policy areas. This trend is not confined to the OECD but also encompasses Africa where a growing focus on higher education and research is used to foster development and overcome existing inequalities. This can be illustrated by the 'Agenda 2063', a joint political set of actions which was signed by all African heads of state in January 2015 and which, amongst others, prioritizes the goal of strengthening higher education and scientific research as the foundation for building an African knowledge economy. While the commitment to this increased relevance of higher education is a common phenomenon across the continent, one can at the same time observe significant cross-country inequalities concerning the level of development and growth rates.

This paper starts from the assumption that a well-functioning bureaucracy and political-administrative order are a pre-condition for societal progress, economic growth, and knowledge production. Combined with the enhanced political commitment to the importance of higher education for national development, this poses the question in how far there is a relation between the quality of governance and the effectiveness of the higher education sector of a given country.

This paper aims at contributing to a better understanding of the 'Quality of Governance' (QoG) in Africa by discussing in how far current development trends in African countries can be related to changes in national public sector governance structures and practices. We will not use aggregated measures for discussing comprehensively, that is, at all governance levels and for all services and policy areas, the QoG of the selected countries as a whole. Instead, the paper will be focused on the national and organizational governance level and on one specific service, that is, the provision of higher education. For this purpose, the paper will introduce an analytical scheme for studying: 1) the dynamics of Sub-Saharan African higher education systems and institutions; 2) cross-national variations in the structural characteristics of state bureaucracies involved in the public governance of higher education; and 3) the relationship between 1) and 2).

To study this relation the paper analyzes survey data from key administrators in several flagship universities in Sub-Saharan Africa and combines this with quantitative results on higher education outputs from a multi-year research project. This paper assumes that the inter-country variations in Sub-Saharan Africa concerning the dynamics of the national higher education systems and institutions can be explained, at least partly, by variations in specific features of the state bureaucracies.

National Policy and Market Forces: Using the German Model of Transnationalisation of Higher Education to Redefine the Role of the Nation State in a Marketised Education Field

Nadin Fromm (University of Kassel/ Chair of Public Management)

Alexander Raev (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen)

National Policy and Market Forces: Using the German Model of Transnationalisation of Higher Education to Redefine the Role of the Nation State in a Marketised Education Field

Transnational (higher) education (TNE), understood as program and provider mobility, is a highly dynamic and fast growing field within higher education internationalisation. Since the 1990s, when TNE became a relevant element of the constantly internationalising tertiary education sector a massive growth of different TNE-projects can be observed worldwide (British Council/DAAD 2015). Based on the idea of a globalised knowledge society and increasingly globalised knowledge markets, TNE can be seen as the consequence of an expanding demand for internationalised education. Drivers of this demand are nation states and individuals alike trying to address political and socio-economic challenges of the emerging 21st through accessing TNE (Ziguras/McBurnie 2015).

Regarding the current research on TNE (e.g. Knight/McNamarra 2016), a fuzziness of the term itself and its various modes of delivery ranging from distance learning concepts and small study programs to full-grown branch campuses or bi-national universities become apparent. Consequently, scientific research on TNE remains challenging, often being reduced to (single) case studies concentrating mainly on simplified "science market" assumptions (Wildavsky 2010; Knight 2012) and overlooking the role national actors play (Fromm 2013) which makes comparisons or attempts at theorisation rather difficult.

Based on that assumption, our paper aims at contributing to the discussion of the role nation states play for TNE

provision by questioning various functionalities of TNE across national contexts (profit or market orientation versus TNE as a political instrument). We try to show that those functionalities are based on specific structural factors leading to different modes of policy coordination. Based on a literature review and empirical findings we focus on the most active provider countries (Australia, Germany, UK, USA) differentiating various functionalities of TNE (e.g. creating revenues for individual US universities, strengthening the whole higher education sector in Australia and the UK and “political” rationales beyond education in Germany), which are directly linked to different modes of policy coordination.

We will then take a closer look at the so-called “German model” of TNE provisions for the time period 2001-2016. In contrast to other provider countries, German TNE is seen as a policy priority being regulated by state actors, intermediate agencies and higher education institutions on the domestic side while increasingly depending on the demand for TNE by national governments abroad (Knight 2011). To explain the rationales behind German TNE-provision, we use an actor-centred perspective (Scharpf 2000) as a heuristic device. We describe the German TNE approach as a complex policy coordination problem with conflicting areas of interest and politically charged rationales (Haus 2008/Zürn 2013) by a multitude of actors across sectors and levels of governance initiating and implementing TNE projects.

To analyse the German TNE sector regarding policy priorities and modes of policy coordination we will generate data using mixed methods, combining qualitative interview data with information won by an analysis of documents published by relevant ministries and intermediary organisations. By reconnecting the specific “German” model of TNE to the demand of internationalised higher education by foreign governments and academic entrepreneurs abroad, we will be able to conceptualise a model of TNE provision, which displays a fascinating entanglement of a multitude of actors, interests and issues.

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Global aspirations and local alignments: Investigating university strategies and roles

Iyad Abualrub (University of Oslo)

Romulo Pinheiro (University of Agder)

In this paper we set out to investigate how university systems align education and research on the one hand, and how they articulate relations between local demands and global aspirations on the other. Recent policy developments in Norwegian higher education (HE) have tended to focus on the need to strengthen teaching quality and research excellence, the latter with the aim of nurturing world-class environments. Yet, at the same time, institutions are increasingly pressurised to make a local contribution (‘impact’), e.g. in the form of job creation, technology transfers, local economic developments, etc., and this leads to a series of tensions and dilemmas at multiple levels. In this paper, we, first, identify such tensions and dilemmas, and second, investigate how they are being handled as regards to strategic planning (including resource allocations) both at the central (university) and sub-unit (faculty) levels. Theoretically, we draw on a combination of seminal contributions ranging from the notions of universities as ‘multiversities’ (Kerr, 2001), the ‘interplay between local excellence and global relevance’ (Perry & May, 2006) and the intersections, interactions, and mutual determinations between global, national, and local levels and domains, i.e. ‘glonacal agency heuristic’ (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002). We adopt a qualitative, case study research design and compare developments across two distinct HE institutions, one classic research-intensive university and one university-college, both located in the greater Oslo region, in Norway.

Abstract

In this paper we set out to investigate how university systems align education and research on the one hand, and how they articulate relations between local demands and global aspirations on the other. Recent policy developments in Norwegian higher education (HE) have tended to focus on the need to strengthen teaching

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Session 2

Wednesday, June 28th 16:15 to 18:15 (Block B 2 - 3)

Discussants

Meng Hsuan Chou (Nanyang Technological University)

Jens Jungblut (Department of Political Science, University of Oslo)

Follow the money: How Australian universities replicate national performance-based funding mechanisms

Peter Woelert (University of Melbourne)

Lachlan McKenzie (The Australia and New Zealand School of Government)

Recent decades have seen significant changes to the way universities' research activities are governed. One particularly striking development in this regard has been the proliferation of performance-based research funding (PBRF) systems (Hicks 2012). The proliferation of PBRF systems marks a significant shift in research policy, reflecting both the increasing political salience of university-based research and demands for the most effective use of public funds to foster processes of innovation. Given the multiple governance challenges posed by an activity as complex and unpredictable as research (see Woelert 2015), PBRF systems are increasingly seen by government to be legitimate policy tools for effectively allocating research funds.

While the policy approaches to and variation between national PBRF systems have received some attention over the years, it is only recently that the effects such systems have on the internal organization and governance of universities themselves have been scrutinized in more detail. In this context, a number of recent studies have found evidence both for isomorphism as well as for variation in how universities respond to national PBRF systems (Hammarfelt, Nelhans, Eklund, & Åström, 2016; Aagaard, 2015). Yet these studies focus on national settings in which indicator-based PBRF systems have only been introduced relatively recently and where they also have remained limited in terms of the scope of funding they control.

Addressing the resulting lacuna, this paper investigates institutional adaptations to national PBRF mechanisms across the entire Australian university system. The specific focus is on the extent to which Australian universities replicate national PBRF performance indicators in their performance management frameworks for academic staff. Australia is particular interesting case since it was one of the first countries internationally that established an indicator-based PBRF system for its universities (in 1995), and where such system has seen relatively little change over the years up until 2016. Also, in Australia, the entire recurrent research funding (as opposed to the competitive research grant funding) has been awarded to universities through a formula directly linking funding allocations to selected research outputs.

Drawing on detailed data from 29 Australian universities (out of 39 eligible institutions), this paper finds that universities of all types have overwhelmingly resorted to isomorphism in response to the national PBRF system, with only very little evidence of variation. The Australian case thus provides compelling evidence that under specific conditions PBRF systems eventually lead to a reduction in diversity and ultimately also innovation in the formal organization and governance of universities.

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Universities' Third Mission: Global Discourses and National Imperatives

Mitchell Young (Charles University)

Romulo Pinheiro (University of Agder)

Khoutek Jan (Charles University in Prague)

James Karlsen (University of Agder)

The advent of globalization combined with the rise of a knowledge-based economy has catapulted the university to the forefront of policy debates. Universities are increasingly pressurized to contribute to the socio-economic development of their societies. Supranational agencies, like the EU Commission, identified universities as central actors. Following multiple “calls for action”, in the form of bold modernization agendas, national governments across Europe embarked on a series of reform initiatives aimed at making universities more responsive to external dynamics, including the needs of various stakeholders (i.e. multiple actors). Given that knowledge in general (and knowledge spillovers in particular) has an important geographic dimension, and that fast growing industries tend to be concentrated in the vicinity of knowledge production organizations and vibrant knowledge/technological ecosystems, policy makers (on global, national and regional levels) tend to look at universities as critical pillars for advancing local economic development.

This has led to increasing calls for stronger societal engagement around the third mission (TM). In this paper we contextualize developments surrounding TM by comparing policy approaches in Norway and the Czech Republic. We seek to understand: 1) To what extent are systemic higher education policy efforts in Norway and the Czech Republic aligned with universities' third mission? 2) What are the similarities and differences in the policy approaches of the two countries? 3) What can be learnt by comparing higher education policy initiatives and governance approaches in Norway and the Czech Republic? Our analysis is structured around two hypotheses: 1) In light of the new social compact and the prominence of new governance approaches that emphasize a cooperative approach among stakeholders (multiple actors), we expect to find parallel cooperation between sectorial policy areas (multi-issue and multi-ministry) when it comes to the universities' third mission. And 2) Given the increasing policy emphasis put on aspects like excellence and socio-economic relevance (impact), we expect new governance arrangements to affect the ways in which the third mission of universities is conceived and operationalised (policies).

The investigation of Norwegian and Czech policy discourses and designs regarding universities' third mission put forward in this paper is based on process tracing, building on a review of relevant literature sources centered on research publications, research reports, policy analyses and documents (laws, by-laws, strategies, annual reports) whose subject matter was the role and positioning of the state as regards sector wide dynamics and the establishment of an enabling environment for universities' third mission. Our analysis of policy documents spans a 60-year period (1950s-early 2010s), more than sufficient for investigating long-term policy change. Our comparative analysis shows similarities as well as differences, and points to the importance of assessing TM developments in the light of wider policy dynamics and priorities.

Regional policy coordination and policy convergence in higher education

Martina Vukasovic (University of Bergen)

Mari Elken (NIFU - Nordic Institute for Studies on Innovation, Research and Education)

ICPP proposal – FINAL

Despite extensive number of studies that examine the relationship between higher education processes unfolding on (1) organizational, (2) national and (3) intergovernmental or supranational governance levels, there appears to be limited systematic explanation of why these studies frequently observe surface convergence, but persistent diversity with regards to interpretation and implementation. Some of the suggested explanations of the 'surface convergence, persistent diversity underneath' puzzle have thus far focused on similarities and differences between countries which have cultural, economic and political similarities, as well as historical legacies. However, analysis of policy convergence in higher education has not explored the role of other governance layers, nor has it been sufficiently clear with regards to which aspects of policy are actually becoming more similar. The key aim of this paper is to provide a research agenda that can address these gaps.

The paper builds further on the empirical conclusions of a study of four distinct regions in Europe: (western) Balkans (former Yugoslavia + Albania), Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Benelux (Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) and the Nordics (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden). The study analyses approaches to policy coordination and extent of policy convergence (1) within these regions and (2) in relation to overarching policy coordination on the European level, thus exploring to what extent the specific patterns of convergence and divergence can be linked to regional policy coordination. The study is designed as a qualitative one, involving multiple comparisons of policy coordination and convergence across three levels of analysis in order to (a) assess the degree of coordination and (b) identify measures and types of policy convergence. The study specifically focuses on three inter-related policy issues: quality assurance, qualification frameworks and recognition of qualifications.

The proposed paper will very briefly present the theoretical and methodological design of the study, as well as the summary of the results. The main focus will be on the critical appraisal of the conceptual contributions to higher education research, but also more generally to the literature on policy coordination, policy convergence and regional/European integration. Such critical appraisal will also be used as a basis to suggest a research agenda for the future.

Coordinating Canada's Innovation Agenda – Strategies Used by Ontario Vice-Presidents Research

Merli Tamtik (University of Manitoba)

Policy coordination to support coherent research and innovation policy has become a major governance puzzle for most countries. In decentralized governance systems such as in Canada, there is a documented lack of policy coordination across sectors, stakeholders and jurisdictions (Sharaput 2012, Doern et al. 2016). Innovation policy is an example of policy area with limited coordination between actors and policy sectors (Industry Canada 2011). Higher education administrators need to navigate this fragmented landscape to facilitate knowledge production. The following research question guides the study – What strategies are being used by higher education administrators to coordinate the Canada's innovation policy?

The objective of this paper is to examine the role of Vice Presidents Research of major research universities and colleges in Ontario in coordinating the multidimensional setting of research and innovation policy in Canada. The study draws on the empirical evidence collected through 1) document analysis of institutional and governmental innovation plans; and 2) interviews with 35 administrators involved in Canadian innovation policy. The following stakeholder groups were represented: 10 Vice Presidents Research from the universities/college sector in Ontario; 5 Federal level policy-makers (Industry Canada); 10 Provincial level policy makers across units, 5 experts from the national granting councils (NSREC, SSHRC, CHFI, CFI, NRC), and 5 stakeholders from the private sector.

Multi-level governance theory is used to frame the study. The core aspects that characterize this approach are 1) the authority of collective decision-making; 2) interdependence among stakeholders; and 3) mutual learning (Hooghe & Marks, 2003; Börzel & Heard-Lauréote, 2009; Zito, 2015). This framework allows examining the dynamics of policy coordination in multi-actor, multi-sector and multi-level contexts. As a result of collective decision-making local actors (VPs Research) and non-governmental networks (e.g. university networks) have the capacity to influence governmental policy outcomes (Capano, 2015). Ongoing inter-dependence between sectorial stakeholders whereby one cannot advance one's interests without the help and support from the others (Börzel & Heard-Lauréote, 2009) becomes crucial for policy coordination. Policy coordination is connected to policy learning where stakeholder interactions lead to learning (Radaelli 2009; Zito, 2015). Stakeholders expand their worldviews, which have the potential to lead to radical shifts in how policies get to be framed, programs developed and policies implemented (Bennett & Howlett, 1992).

The findings demonstrate that while typically the VP's Research are seen as the implementers of knowledge policy, they play a central role in actively shaping and coordinating innovation policy at the national scale. Strategies involving multi-actor and multi-sector engagement include 1) utilizing personal contacts for lobbying provincial and federal governments; 2) taking leadership positions in university networks (U15, AUCC); 3) finding strategic alliances among private sector; 4) having institutional academic representation in expert panels and 5) interacting with treasury boards, labor policy units, immigration and human resource development divisions. The media channels are typically avoided. The findings demonstrate that policy coordination across levels, sectors and stakeholders becomes a web of interactions with a focus of developing approaches that are beneficial to the broadest levels of stakeholders.