Policy design overlaps and straddles policy formulation, decision-making and policy implementation and involves actors, ideas and interests active at each stage of the policy process (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 2009). Most conspicuously, though, is its effect and impact on policy formulation. While most policies contain some intention or result from some effort to consciously match means and goals in a ‘design’ process, in some circumstances, policy decisions will be more highly contingent and ‘irrational’ than others, that is, driven by situational logics and opportunism rather than careful deliberation and assessment, than others (Cohen et al. 1979; Dryzek 1983; Kingdon 1984; Eijlander 2005; Franchino and Hoyland 2009). These formulation ‘styles’ and spaces’ are little investigated.

Effective policy design consists of considering alternative arrangements deemed potentially capable of resolving or addressing some aspect of a policy problem, one or more of which is ultimately put into practice by a supportive political order. This style of formulation however is a very specific one involving a very specific kind of interaction between the political and technical components of policy-making; one driven by knowledge and evidence of the alternatives’ potential and limitations in achieving policy goals rather than by other processes such as electioneering or bargaining among key policy actors. Non-design, on the other hand, refers to policymaking bereft of either an instrumental technical or political logic. It occurs when policymakers are unable to understand the nature of a problem and/or are unable to specify the root causes of the problem they seek to effect. In such formulation and decision processes, “design” considerations may be more or less absent and the quality of the logical or empirical relations between policy components as solutions to problems may be incorrect or ignored (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1979; Dryzek, 1983; Eijlander, 2005; Franchino & Hoyland, 2009; Kingdon, 1984; Sager & Rielle, 2013). Other possibilities, however, exist between these two extremes, such as politically-motivated design or purely technical design. This set of panels is intended to delve into the mechanisms and modalities of these different design spaces, their causes and consequences. Special attention will be paid in this to the role of different orders and types of ‘policy capacity’ in affecting both design spaces, styles and outcomes.

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Papers in this panel will delve into the mechanisms and modalities of these different design spaces, their causes and consequences. Special attention will be paid in this to presenting empirical and theoretical materials linked to the role of different orders and types of ‘policy capacity’ in affecting both design spaces, styles and outcomes.

**Reference**


