

HKU-USC-IPPA Conference on Public Policy

Panel

T01P02 - Proportionality in Public Policy

Chair

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Description

In a direct challenge to incrementalism, which fosters proportionality in public policy if policy problems change gradually, the punctuated equilibrium theory suggests that policy responses will oscillate between periods of underreaction to the flow of information coming from the environment into the system, and overreaction due to disproportionate information processing (Jones and Baumgartner 2005). Motivated by this insight, recent accounts of disproportionality in public policy have linked the dynamics of underreaction and overreaction in enacting policy solutions to evaluations of risk and overconfidence by policymakers (Maor 2012; 2014a). Further studies have captured the notion of sustained overreaction or overinvestment in a policy relative to its goals and offer the concept of policy bubbles (Jones, Thomas and Wolfe 2014; Maor 2014b), as well as the notion of sustained policy underreaction or underinvestment, which is depicted by the concept of negative policy bubbles (Maor 2015).

To further advance this area of research, the panel will address the following questions: What is the role of the facts of the case as well as irrelevant information (e.g., policy and ideological preferences) in judgments by policymakers and the general public regarding the proportionality of public policy? To what extent do proportionality judgments by policymakers and the general public subject to ideologically-biased information processing? What are the conditions under which proportionality analysis is taken place during the policy design stage, and when is it less likely to occur? What are the causal mechanisms driving the design of policy over or underreaction alternatives, and why do they stimulate reforms in the allocation of authority in certain circumstances and not in others? I welcome qualitative and quantitative papers as well as single case studies and cross-country analyses focusing on different levels of government.

Reference

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