

# T02P05 / Dissecting Public Policy Making in Africa: Theoretical, Analytical, and Methodological Perspectives

**Topic :** T02 / COMPARATIVE PUBLIC POLICY

**Chair :** Michael Kpessa-Whyte (University of Ghana)

**Second Chair :** Frank Ohemeng (Concordia University)

**Third Chair :** Gedion Onyango (Dept. Political Science and Public Administration, University of Nairobi)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Although issues of socio-economic development and lack of it in Africa have arguably been overstudied, public policy as a unique multidisciplinary field of inquiry that attempts to investigate and explain the processes, dynamics, and ramifications of what governments choose to do or not to do, has been under-researched on the continent. The neglect of public policy studies on Africa is puzzling for several reasons. First, much of what is pursued in terms of socioeconomic development in the form of ideas, ideologies, principles, and programs in the region often manifest in public policies. Second, albeit characterised by a pronounced structural dualism, modern African states are legacies of western colonialism and continue to derive their logic of relevance from attempts to reflect what happens in the western world in terms of governance. Third, Africa more than any other region in the world, has been the location of copious field work aimed at understanding the choices and impacts of decisions by national and local policy makers, as well as the activities of transnational policy actors and civil society organizations on citizens. These notwithstanding, the conventional theoretical concepts, analytical frameworks, and methodological approaches from policy scholars have hardly been applied to Africa's governance processes.

This obvious gap raises several questions such as: why has the study of public policy been neglected or marginalized in the ever-growing interest in African studies? Is there a utility value for African countries, in the methodological approaches, analytical frameworks, and theoretical concepts derived from the study of public policy in other parts of the world? What will the study of governmental actions and inactions in Africa contribute to our understanding of challenges faced by countries on the continent, as well as the shaping of how public policy itself is studied?

In addition, there are substantive questions about the public policy processes in Africa that call for further analysis. For instance, given the multiplicity of policy actors and the obvious asymmetric power relations, as well as differences in resource capabilities, who actually make public policies in Africa? What is the nature of the interplay between the interests of actors and citizens as voters? Do public policies in Africa respond to urgent problems or simply reflect "solutions in research of problems"? In what ways do the policy processes in Africa converge or diverge from the existing notion of the policy cycle? How can we make sense of existing policies in terms of defining problems, framing and designing solutions, and instruments in the policy making process? What lessons can be drawn from studies that compare processes, choices, instruments, and designs of public policy in different African countries?

These questions are important because since Horowitz (1989) asked if there is a distinctive third world policy process, very few scholarly works have tackled the drought of policy-oriented research with respect to Africa. The questions open limitless possibilities for scholars interested in the study of public policies in African to include and integrate the various theoretical and analytical perspectives and insights from policy researchers. The panel is designed as a learning opportunity to engage scholars and researchers working on matters of public policy in Africa.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel is specifically interested in broad issues of policy concern in African countries. It is designed with the primary objective of understanding public policy in Africa and how various theories and analytical frameworks can be utilized or not in understanding how policies are made. In so doing, the panel attempts to answer Horowitz's question as it applies to Africa.

The panel chairs are interested in both empirical and theoretical insights and innovations of public policy

cases built around but not limited to comparative policy analysis, concerns about policy processes, policy agenda setting, framing and problem definition, the interface between politics and public policy making, the role of actors, ideas, institutions, and interests, and state capacity and policy making, utilizing the various public policy theories, analytical, and methodological approaches.

Mindful of the interdisciplinary nature of public policy, the panel considers aspects of history, governance, economics, sociology, psychology, law, and the natural sciences as components of public policy theory development, and welcomes rigorous methodological, conceptual, and theoretical analyses that focus on but not limited to any of the following broad policy areas: education; healthcare; water resources; housing; land & agriculture; mining; trade; industrialization, pensions; labour market; financial; natural resource; climate change; etc.

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## Session 1

Wednesday, June 28th 10:20 to 12:20 (KHE121)

### **(Virtual) Evidence-based policy development in Africa: What is the progress so far?**

Judith Nguli (Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis)

Maureen Muthengi (Strathmore University)

### **Evidence-based policy development in Africa: What is the progress so far?**

African states' uptake of public policy on economic and social decisions has gained more traction in Africa in the last two decades. However, the constraints from Horowitz (1989) on the capacity to develop and implement produce life-improving outcomes in the context of African governance complexities continue to pose a challenge. First, using evidence to generate policies is scarce in various countries and across issues. Some leaders are not committed to using well-researched peer-reviewed policy recommendations and instead rely on practical experience and political know-how. The low connection between the policymakers and the producers of evidence, such as universities, think tanks, and research institutes, evidences this. Second, for countries that have developed proper standards that demand a search for evidence, there has been a consistent concern about implementing such policies. For example, if adopted, Kenya has well-written and articulated policies that would generate positive development outcomes; however, many policies remain unimplemented, poorly implemented, or lack sustenance over time. Third, more often, there is no seemingly significant economic transformation for the adequately implemented policies. Fourth, the influence of Bretton wood Institutions and donor agencies in policy reforms through conditionalities and cross-conditionalities clauses have been found sometimes to have a detrimental effect on the policy-making process in Africa. Even though some interventions yield a positive influence yield, positive others are seen as a path to propagate neo-liberal agendas. For example, the countries that implemented the Structural Adjustment Policies of the 1980s continue to suffer from high poverty levels and inequalities.

In this research, we plan to ask how many African countries have established the regulation requirement for evidence-based public policy decisions. What incentives can African countries provide to academic institutions and independent think tanks to promote policy research and communication of the evidence to policymakers? Taking Kenya as a case study, what changes are needed to make policies produce significant socio and economic transformations? How can the continent of Africa re-organize itself for full representation in the decision-making structures of the Bretton wood Institutions?

The methodology we propose to use is Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). In particular, we shall use QCA to explore whether there is a connection between robust public policy-making regulations and the uptake of evidence-based policies. Secondly, we shall explore how incentives promote producers of evidence to produce policy research. Third, we shall explore the connection between governance and effective policy implementation for optimal outcomes, and finally, using case studies drawn from other successful countries, we shall examine pathways for minimizing policy interference by the international community. QCA is useful for this analysis as it helps identify patterns of causal combinations that link to an outcome and helps answer "why" the outcome occurs.

### **Food Security Policies in Kenya: Unpacking the Context of Policy Analysis**

Sheila Ashiono (University of Nairobi)

This paper examines how the approaches to food security policymaking differ at the national and county

level of government. In this paper, I argue that while the advent of devolved governance in Kenya was a window of opportunity towards developing specific and responsive food security policies, this was overshadowed by the status quo approach. The national level of government continued to formulate policies envisaged to be fit-for-all, exclusive of the county policy stakeholders. Consequently, the county policy actors sought to formulate policies specific to the socio-cultural context. Despite, the two levels of food security policymaking, public outcry for food insecurity seems to be rising each year. Therefore, this paper is to examine how the different socio-economic and political contexts influence policymaking in Kenya. The findings drawn from the literature on food security policymaking in Kenya, indicate that the factors influencing the policy process multiple, spanning from international legal frameworks to national shocks and political setups.

The analysis of food security policies in Kenya since 1980 reveals that public discourse on food security focuses mainly on causes of food insecurity, interventions and strategies to enhance food production. These discussions seem to be 'blind' to the realities of the context of policymaking at the county and national levels of governance. Since the formulation and implementation of the Constitution of Kenya in 2010, the food production function in the agricultural sector was devolved to the county level of government. However, in 2012, the national government formulated the National Food Security and Nutrition policy, based on the incremental model. The literature indicates that there was little altering of status quo of previous policies. The 2012 policy was formulated as a national policy to provide for strategies and programmes responsive to the food requirements though exclusive of the stakeholders from the county governments. As a result, policy actors in each county formulated food security policies based on the socio-cultural contexts. In some of the counties, the policymakers adopted sociological institutionalism model while in others the comprehensive rationality model was preferred. As a result, there is no unitary approach to food security in Kenya. Arguably, the paradigm shift in food security policymaking was overshadowed by the incrementalism model that was preferred by bureaucrats at the national level of government. An analysis of the current policies reflects one-fit-for-all approach to food security, where the policymaking process is centralized at the national level irrespective of the policy context. Arguably, the incrementalism approach to food security policymaking could have contributed to the 'missed window of opportunity' for Kenya to develop county responsive food security policies based on the socio-economic context of each county. This approach is likely to contribute to perennial food insecurity due to uneven food distribution mechanisms, lack of strategic analysis of production intervention measures and emergence of 'brokers' in the food sector who will drive the cost of food higher through unethical practices.

## **(Virtual) Open Government Partnership Initiatives as means for policy effectiveness in Africa: Evaluating policy implementation in Kenya**

Ondiek Japheth (University of Nairobi)

### **Open Government Partnership Initiatives as means for policy effectiveness in Africa: Evaluating policy implementation in Kenya**

A growing number of African countries have recently enhanced the adoption of open government data approaches to improve public value and improve policy effectiveness. Participating in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) requires that member states integrate regulations, laws, open data strategies and other instruments that may enlighten and empower their citizenry through open and participatory governance. While policy venues of most African governments are yet to realise these requirements, they are increasingly rolling out OGP requirements through other ICT policy frameworks to create an enabling environment for access to information by citizens, policy communication and realise practical feedback tools. The OGP declaration assumes that openness in government and public participation and involvement reinforces public confidence when citizens push for the legitimacy of democratic regimes and public service delivery. The creation of open government partnerships and the formation of national action plans will likely improve policy implementation if findings on increased people-centred approaches to policy implementation are anything to go by. This can critically enable the promotion of civic awareness, public trust and the interface between governments and citizens.

Yet, while this is less debatable, we need adequate data on the performance of OGP-focused National Action Plans on policy outputs in most African countries.

The proposed paper seeks to enlighten this gap. We focus on Kenya, which is currently implementing its fourth OGP National Action Plan 2020-2022, with increased attention on the OGP Locals to enhance people-centred local government engagements. We focus on the government's eight commitment areas to improve openness, integrity, accountability, participation, and transparency. The plan committed to creating a central register of beneficial owners of companies within Kenya, open contracting data standards (OCDS), open data for development, public participation and legislative openness, access to justice and building open government resiliency. However, there is still a dearth of knowledge on how these have been achieved and how they work. To do this, we focus on the National Social Protection Policy to evaluate how these

have been reflected in its implementation.

We assume that an ex-post evaluation of the National Action Plan IV is instrumental in producing policy-relevant knowledge for enhancing capacity for policy implementations, particularly on access to information and open government data to assert the government of Kenya and provide policymakers and public sector officials with practical advice on designing and implementing open government reform and open government partnership eligibility. Ultimately, we seek to develop a model for evaluating OGP adoption and policy effectiveness, especially at the local government levels.

**Keywords:** Open government data, policy, public service delivery, openness, evaluation, open government partnerships

## **(Virtual) Public Policy Process in Africa: The What, How, and Who? A Conceptual Analysis of Kenya Policy on Devolved Government 2016.**

Munyiva Mutinda (University of Nairobi)

Public Policy Process in Africa: The What, How, and Who? A Conceptual Analysis of Kenya Policy on Devolved Government 2016.

By

Munyiva Mutinda, PhD Candidate in Public Policy

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Abstract

Policy making in Africa has overtime taken a western replica in terms of, ideologies, principles, and methodologies without contextual consideration, yielding to more often than not costly and ineffective policies presented as solutions awaiting problems and/or vice versa. This has raised concerned on the need for contextual consideration in the policy process. Since Laswell's (1961), phased policy process cycle, a western contextualised process, the global south has adopted it without innovating and domesticating the process to fit within their context. It's on this basis that Horowitz (1989), questioned the inclusive treatment and sort for an innovative policy process divergence for the global south. Horowitz (1989) further, highlight the scholarly divide on the distinct nature of political context between the western and developing world. This divide oscillates on the similar policy making process on the one hand and the varied policy context, frameworks, scope, issues and content on the other. This divide forms the core argument of this article which is that "policy context and other socio-economic factors account for policy making process". The focus of the article is on an analysis of the Republic of Kenya Policy on Devolved Government 2016. A conceptual comparative desktop analysis of the policy and existing targeted literature review on the subject will be carried out vis a vis the Laswell's policy process and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993), to highlight what the policy contexts and issues are, how the policy process is structured and managed, and who the policy actors are, their involvement level and roles in the policy making, and find out if there is any divergence from the western ideologies and principles as well as the paradoxes thereof. In this endeavour, upon a comprehensive comparative review, the articles will offer fresh insights to Horowitz (1989), concern on whether there is a policy process way for Africa and help to further the public policy study and practice in the global south.

Key Words: Policy Process, Policy Context, Ideologies, Methodologies and Global South

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## Session 2

Thursday, June 29th 08:00 to 10:00 (KHE121)

### **Between Populism and Social Policy Impact in Nigeria: A Study of the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme**

Anthony Onyishi (University of Nigeria, Nsukka)

Gloria Olotu (Tertiary Education Trust Fund)

#### Abstract

To tackle mass poverty and general social disillusion prevalent at its inauguration in 2015, the Buhari regime launched the National Social Investment Policy (NSIP) in 2016. Amongst the four components of this policy, the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) stood out clearly as it targeted a triadic configuration of crucial social goals: improvement of primary school enrolment, reduction of the rate of school dropout – which was estimated at 10.5m by UNICEF (2016) – and enhancing nutrition intake among school children. In addition, it would collaterally provide more business opportunities for food vendors and small-holder farmers. Expectedly, the programme was greeted with euphoria. And given Buhari's well-known predilection to mass appeal, particularly amongst the Northern 'talakawas', the image of a populist politician was inevitable. So, while adopting an ideational definition of populism as a penchant for appealing to the masses, this study evaluates the NHGSFP with specific focus on political and resource commitment, sustainability and impact. It therefore seeks answers to the following questions: was intergovernmental collaboration secured for NHGSFP's planning and execution?, did institutional condition support its sustainability?, were sufficient resources genuinely committed to the programme?, what is its effect on primary school enrolment?, the population of the study includes seven (7) purposively selected key informants: one at the federal level and one each from six (6) States, each of which represents one geo-political zone. In addition, representative samples of participating head teachers across the six geo-political zones will be surveyed. Instruments include structured questionnaire, key informant interview, for primary data; while official documents, media reports and books constitute the secondary sources. The statistical tool of chi-square and content analysis will be deployed, as appropriate, for data processing. The study will conclude and make recommendations in line with its findings.

**Key words:** populism, poverty, social policy, HGSFP, FGN, impact

### **Traditional Leaders as Policy Brokers and the Promotion of Good Governance and Development in Africa: An Examination of the Ghanaian Case**

Emelia Amoako Asiedu (GHANA COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY)

Theresa Obuobisa-Darko (Methodist university college Ghana )

Kenneth Parku (Wisconsin International University College, Ghana)

The role of traditional authorities (chiefs) in national development in Africa continues to generate significant debate among academics, especially those in the political science, anthropology, and economics literature. In these fields, chiefs are seen as local developers, as well as democratic brokers, but not as policy brokers, and thus minimizing their role in the national policy making process. From this perspective, the primary role of traditional chiefs in democratic Africa is seen as brokering development projects, and in some cases as votes mobilizers for national parties and that these roles enable them to politically influence and maintain their relationship with elected officials. In this way, the chiefs' potentially constructive role in national

development, according to this view, is facilitating local development projects, with less discussion on how they influence public policies for national development. Part of this problem comes from the neglect of the study of these leaders by public policy and administration scholars, although their roles as “brokers” in national development continues to be recognised, especially in democratic Africa.

In this paper, we challenge the idea that chiefs are local development and democratic (vote mobilizers) brokers, but rather they serve as policy brokers, ensuring that policies that impact national development are developed by government for the betterment of citizens. We, therefore, argue that chiefs continue to play an important role in the process of good governance by serving as policy brokers and this role needs to be critically highlighted in the public policy literature.

Their policy brokers function can be found in their advisory role to government, as well as their participatory role in regional and local administration, their developmental role, complementing government’s efforts in mobilizing the population for the implementation of development projects, addressing archaic cultural practices, especially those affecting women and girls sensitizing them on health issues, promoting education, encouraging economic enterprises, inspiring respect for the law and urging participation in the electoral process; and their role in conflict resolutions. Thus, chiefs have played and will continue to play a role in national developmental policies to help government address wicked problems in the society.

The paper contributes to the discussion of the role of what may be described as non-state actors. Unfortunately, the study of the actors has focused more on non-government organizations at the neglect of others. Thus, it is time, we believe that we look at chiefs in the policy making as non-state actors than it has been accorded. In addition, we contribute to the discussion of the relevance of traditional institutions in good governance, especially the role of chieftaincy institutions. This is important since many believe that traditional institutions are anachronistic to the modern state. The paper is desktop research that reviews the extant literature on the role of chiefs in good governance and development.

## **Is it about the social problem or the “Sacred Promise”? Explaining the mechanisms driving fee-free policy change in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Gabriel Asante (Corvinus University of Budapest)

György Gajduschek

Attila Bartha (Centre for Social Sciences, ELKH and Corvinus University of Budapest)

This paper develops a framework to explain the factors and the mechanisms driving cost-elimination policies, popularly called fee-free education in younger democracies. Explaining policy change has been one of the major concerns of educational politics and policy development literature. In this study, we review two fee-free policies implemented in Ghana, a country in the Sub-Saharan African region, over the past seven years. These are the Progressive Free Senior High School and Free Senior High School policies adopted in 2015 and 2017, respectively. These two policies introduced within the framework of secondary education for all towards goal 4.1 of the United Nations Agenda 2030 introduced changes in financing in delivering education services at the high school level. Is it about the social problem of the low rate of school participation driving these policies? If not, what factors can explain the relatively long stability and abrupt changes, and what mechanism(s) connect these factors? We review basic assumptions of relevant policy process frameworks, including punctuated equilibrium, advocacy coalition, multiple streams, and contemporary ideational scholarship.

We concluded that the confluence of the three streams—problem, policy, and politics—with the exceptional political will of two major political parties in Ghana opened a window of opportunity for fee-free policy changes to occur. However, how fee-free education was assigned such importance in both two major political parties' policy agendas and why the parties' leaderships were so determined to implement them still need to be accounted for, given that there are a number of issues waiting to be addressed in the policy agenda. We then conducted an empirical study by conducting 18 elite interviews with relevant government officials, representatives of UNESCO, the World Bank, educational stakeholders, civil society organizations, and data from related documents. We analyzed the data thematically. Our results indicated that political parties acting as key political institutions and the beliefs and ideas of individual political actors (mostly the presidential candidates or presidents) had influenced the adoption of fee-free policies. The mechanism connecting these factors is “interest”, that is, the interest to win political power and not necessarily the social need for the policy solution per se. Explaining how political actors operating within their political parties framed problems and relied on existing policy solutions deepens our understanding of the content of fee-free policy change initiatives.

Based on this, we develop a modified framework, the “Streams of Politics Framework,” that may help to explain policy change in younger democracies. We develop the argument that the “interest” of political parties (for perceived political capital), as well as individual political actors (ideas and beliefs), have shaped the priorities and determination given to realize the adoption of fee-free policies. This framework is handy in

younger democracies where the emergence of new democracies implies that voters are often following elections more closely and citizens are increasingly viewing social policies as an integral part of their livelihood. Factors under socio-economic dynamics (for example, the problem, global influence, or the economy) can be classified as scope conditions in fee-free policy adoption.

## **Uganda health policy and epidemics containment activities**

Grace Akello (Gulu University)

Uganda has a health policy to guide service provision to her citizens. The policy takes into account routine health priorities including communicable and non-communicable diseases. Disease epidemics and pandemics however pose a complex and urgent need, and to handle them, Uganda often declares a state of emergency. Policy-wise, declaring a state of health emergency implies that a country experiencing a crisis, acknowledges that it has limited capacity to handle the event and such a country relinquishes its decision-making role in ensuring well-being of its citizens. The dynamic created through declaring a state-of-emergency gives unlimited powers and authority to humanitarians, pharmaceutical companies and some development partners to manage the crisis. Although, after several decades of seeing no concrete outcome with such humanitarian interventions, Uganda could legislate against this approach, and also work towards system strengthening, not much has been done.

In a 21 months ethnographic study assessing health policy and epidemic response activities and the extent to which it is useful in epidemics containment, and making recommendations that a deliberate effort be taken to strengthen health systems to the extent that all health issues including epidemics can be managed effectively, I found that such legislation will not happen soon. This is because there are many conflicting interests and to prioritise well-being of citizens will significantly invisibilise humanitarian work. Yet humanitarianism is global, multi-national, lucrative and dynamic industry. The humanitarian industry even influences health policy legislation, health interventions and nation-level decision making. These findings signify that there are complexities not only in legislation but also policy making in Uganda