

Spatial Policy and Analysis Laboratory



Boundary spanning policy regime of urban health in England

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Scene setting

- UN Sustainable Development goals
- the WHO has relaunched its Healthy Cities project in 2018, thirty years after its inception in 1986
- COVID-19 pandemic and the Marmot review
- Policy concerns around urban health and health inequalities are spanning the boundary across different organisations, jurisdictions, geographical scales and functional areas
- *Fragile relationship between public health and spatial planning*

Research focus

- adopt boundary spanning policy regime theory to examine ideas, interests and institutional arrangements to trace the alignment and divergence of urban health issues across the two policy subsystems of public health and spatial planning
- examine the contours of the urban health policy regime in the Greater Manchester City-Region

Boundary-spanning policy regime

- proposed by Jochim and May (2010) and May and Jochim (2013)
- spills over more than one policy area and engages actors, resources and information from the associated policy sub-systems, which acts as ‘an attention-focusing mechanism and an integrative force ... [that] garner attention of relevant actors in multiple policy subsystems and create demands for cross-subsystem responses’ (Jochim and May, 2010: 311)
- institutions and governance arrangements in fostering integration
- sub-systems are viewed as artificial constructs and that coordination across multiple boundaries includes geographical, organisation and multi-level governance structures
- a need to align ideas, interests and institutions across policy sub-systems, known as ‘the contours of a given regime’ (May and Jochim, 2013: 434), as proxies for analysing the legitimacy, coherence and durability of policies
- to unravel the policy process, from the con/di-vergence of issue attention to agenda setting and policy actions, as well as the institutional conditions and the ways actors in multiple subsystems behave
- echoes Mouffe’s (1999) claim of ‘agonistic pluralism’

boundary spanning theory+ spatial planning

- a relatively new theoretical proposition
- the evolving framework being loosely applied to analyse different policy fields
- mainly focused on inter-policy coordination at the national level and largely neglected the multi-scalar and spatial dimensions of policy processes
- Policy integrative literature of spatial planning (e.g. Kidd, 2007)
- Sociological institutionalist perspective: institutional design at macro, meso and micro levels (Alexander, 2006)
- SPATIAL dimension

		Institutional Linkages	
		Weak	Strong
Engagement of Publics	Strong	<i>Fractured Policymaking</i>	<i>Allied Policymaking</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High salience • Disintegrative politics • Partial resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High salience • Coalition politics • Unstable resolution
	Weak	<i>Anemic Policymaking</i>	<i>Bureaucratic Policymaking</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low salience • Seemingly apolitical • Lacking resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low salience • Turf politics • Deferred resolution

Figure 1 Policymaking patterns and their limits (source: May et al., 2013:110)

- ‘New Public Health’ and regional governance: anemic to bureaucratic policymaking: mid 1980s to 2000s
- Localism and city-region devolution: from fractured to allied policymaking? 2010s
- What happened in the city-region: the case of GM

Thank you for listening

