

Network Policy Making within the Turkish Health Sector

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Network Policy Making within the Turkish Health Sector: Becoming Collaborative

BY

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Contents

List of Tables and Figures	<i>vii</i>
List of Terms and Abbreviations	<i>ix</i>
Acknowledgments	<i>xi</i>
Foreword	<i>xiii</i>
Chapter 1 Introduction: Extending the Study of Policy Networks Beyond their Original Context	1
Chapter 2 Setting the Stage: An Integrated Framework for Assessing Network Collaboration Across Country Cases	17
Chapter 3 Tracing Origins: The Context of Network Formation in a Least Likely Policy Environment	41
Chapter 4 Becoming Collaborative: Policy Networks within the Turkish Health Sector in Turkey	63
Chapter 5 Tackling the Root Causes: Inherited Structural and Cultural Barriers to Policy Collaboration in Turkey	95
Chapter 6 Conclusion: Leveraging Networks to Achieve Policy Collaboration	113
Appendix	<i>127</i>
References	<i>131</i>
Index	<i>147</i>

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List of Tables and Figures

Table 1. Network Structural Capacity.	26
Table 2. Network Relational Capacity.	33
Table 3. Network Institutional Capacity.	38
Table 4. Results of Content Analysis.	66
Fig. 1. General Satisfaction with Health Care Services (%), 2003–2010.	58
Fig. 2. Cross-Sectoral Arrangements within the Turkish Health Sector.	97
Fig. 3. Three Stages of Network Institutional Resilience.	120

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List of Terms and Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
ATO	Ankara Chamber of Commerce (Ankara Ticaret Odası)
BLT Model	Build Lease Transfer Model
CHP	Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
CMHC	Community Mental Health Centers
ÇPSSGP	Program for Improving Multi-Sectoral Health Responsibility (Çok Paydaşlı Sağlık Sorumluluğunu Geliştirme Programı)
DEİK	Foreign Economic Relations Board (Dış Ekonomik İlişkiler Kurulu)
EU	European Union
EVSAD	Home Healthcare and Social Services Association (Evde Sağlık ve Sosyal Hizmetler Derneği)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly
HTA	Health Technology Assessment
HTP	Health Transformation Programme
IT	Information Technology
MHSA	Ministry of Health and Social Affairs
MoFSP	Ministry of Family and Social Policies
MoH	Ministry of Health
NCC	Network Collaborative Capacity
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGS	Network Governance School
NHIS	National Health Information System
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
RDA	Regional Development Agencies
SATURK	Health Tourism Coordination Council (Sağlık Turizmi Koordinasyon Kurulu)
SHÇEK	Social Services and Child Protection Agency (Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu)
SME	Small and Medium Size Enterprises

x List of Terms and Abbreviations

SPO	State Planning Organization
SRDC	Software Research and Development Consultancy Limited
SSI	Social Security Institution
SYDV	Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Vakfı)
TAPDK	Tobacco and Alcohol Market Regulatory Authority (Tütün ve Alkol Piyasası Düzenleme Kurumu)
TİKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Başkanlığı)
TMMDA	Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency
TMMOB	Turkish Chamber of Engineers and Architects (Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği)
TOBB	The Union of Chamber and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği)
TÜİK	Turkish Statistical Institute (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu)
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
YÖK	The Council of Higher Education (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu)

Acknowledgments

To understand matters rightly we should understand their details; and as that knowledge is almost infinite, our knowledge is always superficial and imperfect. (La Rouchefoucauld, *The Maxims*, 1678)

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Foreword

Little is known about network policy making in less advanced democracies. This is particularly the case in low- and middle-income countries. In the latter countries, little effort has been made to come up with systematic and cross-national studies of policy networks. In the process, the networks in such places have generally remained only as metaphors and “theoretical” perspectives.

Turkey is a middle-income country. Despite its “structural and cultural constraints” the country has made an effort to join the club of developed economies, basically through adopting the latter’s policy models. This has been the case particularly in the health sector, public health, health tourism, and the medical industry.

The present book examines the conditions under which said policy networks have emerged and thrived in Turkey by, not unexpectedly, drawing upon the health policy sector. While recent policy studies in Turkey have employed macro-level institutional analysis, this book has adopted a micro–meso level analysis of policy processes, focusing on the investigation of the (policy) networks within the health policy sub-areas.

As the present author has pointed out elsewhere (Heper, 1993), in Turkey while both societal and political elites have been expected to play an active role toward policy making in the name of “general interest,” studies on the Turkish case have shown that societal actors have traditionally had minimal or no impact on public policy making due to the impediments such as populism, clientelism, and opportunities (Heper & Yıldırım, 2011).

More recently, the networks in Turkey have turned out to be the effective channels of societal participation. Lately, the expert involvement in the said policy making processes and the tools that provide legitimacy to those processes, have been at the heart of public policy issues.

In her book, Julinda Hoxha has skillfully traced the past and present odyssey in question.

In essence, in solitude.

Prof. Dr. Metin Heper
Bilkent University

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Extending the Study of Policy Networks Beyond Their Original Context

Abstract

This book is aimed at extending the study of network collaboration beyond the context of advanced democracies through the exploration of policy networks in Turkey – a country with statist policy style and authoritarian political culture. The focus here will be on cross-sectoral collaboration taking place within the Turkish health sector – a policy area that has been steadily improving with the initiation of the Health Transformation Programme (HTP) in 2003. To date, many scholars have studied the outcomes of the HTP reforms on the healthcare system including indicators such as healthcare access, health insurance coverage and healthcare services. However, despite the transformative nature of the program, a limited number of studies have assessed the impact of HTP reforms on changing policy and governance patterns in Turkey. Considering this gap in the literature, the aim of this book is to empirically examine the context, capacity and consequences of cross-sectoral collaboration within the health sector in Turkey through a micro- and meso-level investigation of policy networks developed in the sub-areas of public health, medical industry, and health tourism covering the years between 2011 and 2015. Furthermore, this book provides an account of those factors that impede cross-sectoral arrangements from turning into venues of policy collaboration. Such juxtaposition is designed to enhance the understanding of policy networks as conceptual devices and practical tools of collaboration in public policy.

Keywords: Authoritarianism; expert interviews; governance; middle-range theory; policy networks; Turkey

Unpacking Networks: Redundant Conceptual Devices or Practical Policy Instruments?

When I commenced writing this book, I contemplated the renowned work of Theodore J. Lowi, whose legacy continues to guide contemporary debates and scholarly research in the fields of political science and public administration to this day:

[...] prevailing fashions in political science have put heaviest stress on the politics rather than the government side of the field. In many dimensions of politics there are well-developed vocabularies, indicating indeed where the major theoretical interests have been. Students of politics do occasionally turn to policy and government, but the tendency has been to do so only because the interesting conflicts are around issues, and many issues involve basic policies. But the issue of policy was not the part of these issues that came in for serious analysis. (Lowi, 1972, p. 299)

Two issues are being emphasized in this paragraph with insights on the interplay of policy and politics. First, over the years politics has been overestimated at the expense of policy. Secondly, policy is perceived as a function of politics under the commonly known expression that “politics determines policies.” As a result, policy has remained in the shadow of politics, especially in those countries where authoritarian politics is considered to be omnipresent through its impact on all spheres of society from the state apparatus to individual lifestyles. The link between politics and policy is undeniable. Hall and Jenkins (2003) argue that “[p]ublic policy cannot remain independent of the political process and cannot be value free” (p. 3). However, the mission of this book is to expand the policy horizons beyond the confines of political orientations, by bringing policy to the attention of policy makers, policy practitioners, researchers, and students as a separate sphere of influence that can change the lives of individual citizens independent of political pressures and incentives. Policy processes and outcomes might be less noticeable, yet, they turn out to be more durable compared to abrupt political, economic, and social transformations. Pierson (2000) maintains that policy effects are accumulated over time in a steady fashion and turn out to be “remarkably durable” especially when they are “grounded in law” (p. 259).

Following this logic, policy analysis has focused its attention toward legal decision-making in policy processes and the formation of the *policy regimes* as relatively stable institutional arrangements. According to Sabel and Simon (2012), policy regimes “engage a diverse variety of participants” including coalitions of public, private, and voluntary actors and “do not have the top-down, command-and-control structure” observed in government regulations (p. 1267). Moreover, “neither do they arise spontaneously” which contributes to their relatively long-term nature (Sabel & Simon, 2012, p. 1267). According to this

definition, policy regimes are influenced by politics; but, they are less prone to politicization. Therefore, they constitute a relatively autonomous sphere of policy making. Acknowledging their importance, scholars focus on the role of exogenous shocks leading to the formation of these regimes, political coalitions that contribute to their preservation, or the effectiveness of these regimes through macro-level policy analysis.

Conversely, less attention has been paid to the operational side of the policy making within these regimes or the ostensible practice of policy making through micro- and meso-level policy analysis. The practice of policy making includes daily activities and relations among actors at different levels of governance which represent what Freeman, Griggs, and Boaz (2011) identify as the “often unexplored elements of policy” (p. 131). In an attempt to tackle different policy related problems, policy practice may naturally result in cooperation, competition, and even conflict among actors. In the presence of all possible outcomes, the practice of policy making that takes place among professionals within and outside the government is inherently less prone to conflict compared to debates that take place in political arenas. Laws and Hajer (2006) affirm that eventually the policy practice is more conducive to cooperative tendencies among involved actors who are willing to overcome policy challenges in a collaborative fashion through tools of policy innovation and improvisation.

These cooperative tendencies within the practice of policy making can be studied through the lenses of the network approach which has become increasingly popular, attracting significant attention among scholars in the fields of political science and public administration. *Networks* entered the political vocabulary in the 1980s and played a central role among scholars ever since. Networks were initially considered to be ground-breaking phenomena due to their primary concern with the involvement of non-state actors in policy making processes. Mayntz (1993) explains that they manifested as “partly autonomous societal subsystems ... that enjoy some degree of autonomy” (p. 2), which seemed to bring the glory of impartial and non-politicized policy making back to the scholarly agenda. Some scholars have argued that policy networks constitute a substantial break from the traditional governing mechanisms and represent a new pattern of governance besides hierarchical bureaucracies and competitive markets (Rhodes, 1996, 1997, 2007; Sørensen, 2002, 2005, 2006; Sørensen & Torfing, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2016; Stoker, 1998, 2006). Due to their growing significance, many governance-related phenomena have been revisited and redefined considering the network concept to the extent that policy networks have often been perceived as equivalent to the concept of governance itself. Following this logic, Stoker (1998) argues that governance is ultimately “about autonomous self-governing networks of actors” (p. 23). As a result, a massive collection of literature exists which examines policy networks as a discrete mode of governance compared to hierarchical bureaucracies and competitive markets.

4 *Network Policy Making within the Turkish Health Sector*

At the conceptual level, Rhodes (2007) defines the term “network” as “sets of formal and informal institutional linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared interests in public policymaking and implementation” (p. 1244). According to the above definition, network is a concept used to investigate non-centralized, horizontal, and interdependent relationships among various actors with a stake in policy making. The network approach has gained an increasingly significant position in public policy analysis for a minimum of two reasons. First, at the epistemological level, networks serve as tools to analyze the relational dimension of governance by investigating the practical or procedural side of policy making at the micro- and meso-level of analysis. Arguably, networks are particularly appropriate at the meso-level of analysis (Rhodes, 1990), which focuses on inter-organizational dynamics such as the relations between the government and interest groups, business organizations, or civil society organizations. At the ontological level, networks provide avenues to examine the collaborative side of policy by highlighting notions such as “joint governance,” “shared experience,” “joint problem solving,” “joint action,” “trust,” and “reciprocity” (Laws & Hajer, 2006, p. 414). Within this framework, the network approach provides an opportunity to “deepen the account of cooperation” in public policy analysis compared to the other approaches in the literature that focus on “negotiation, conflict resolution and consensus building” (Laws & Hajer, 2006, p. 414).

Kenis and Schneider (1989) argue that policy networks were originally conceived as an inevitable response to contemporary political reality witnessed in advanced industrialized countries. Despite the extensive research done on the issue, following studies adhered to this axiom without heeding the mechanisms or conditions that lead to the preliminary emergence of networks. Isett and Provan (2005) assert that many scholars in the literature acknowledge the idea that networks emerge in turbulent policy environments in order to “manage uncertainty” and “smooth out operational flows” (p. 150). There is a general perception that networks are formed in policy areas characterized by dispersed costs and benefits, complexity in terms of the challenges being faced, innovation in terms of policy design, and uncertainty in terms of the outcomes. However, the specific ways through which networks emerge and influence policy processes have not been systematically evaluated through empirical research. As a result, starting from the second half of the 1990s, several key aspects of policy networks have been called into question and have come under increasing scrutiny.

One challenge addressed by Howlett (2002) has been to understand whether networks matter “in the sense of being a significant variable helping to understand, explain and predict policy outcomes” (p. 236). Moreover, since the 2000s, increasingly more scholars have called for case studies with findings translatable across research contexts, through the examination of the causal pathways that make network collaboration possible. Subsequently, there has been a soaring interest on the contextual conditions under which policy networks flourish and thrive in different policy settings across countries and even across policy sectors at the sub-national level. According to one account recorded by Kjaer (2011), a fully-fledged contextual analysis of networks should take into account the

“social, economic and political parameters, including the nature of central and local state bureaucracy, strength of civil society, the organization of interests, and the traditions of state-society interaction” of the case under investigation (p. 111).

Following the rising criticisms in the field, the most recent research trends have been toward examining the contextual conditions favorable to the emergence, durability, and effectiveness of networks within policy processes that take place at the supra-national, national, and sub-national levels of governance. As a result, discussions in network research have developed in the direction of contextualization which implies generating systematic and thick descriptions about policy networks that can be extracted from countries other than the mature cases of network governance. In an attempt to contextualize networks, scholars have moved away from macro-level analysis toward more meso- and micro-level networks analysis. An increasing number of studies suggest that policy networks should no longer be treated as analytical tools to explain state-society or state-business relations at the macro-level of analysis. This approach leads to terminological confusion rather than clarity and provides no policy implications for practitioners. Instead, networks should be treated as policy tools relevant to policy processes and outcomes. According to Börzel (1998), network relevance to the practice of policy making can be constructed by empirically demonstrating the conditions that maximize network impact on policy processes and/or outcomes (e.g., effectiveness-driven policy). As described by DeLeon and Varda (2009), network relevance to policy may also be constructed by investigating the mechanisms that allow different stakeholders from the public, private, and voluntary sectors to participate in policy making processes (i.e., participation-driven approach). Despite the difference, these two approaches both suggest taking networks to the policy level of analysis.

This being the case, the main methodological challenge becomes adding explanatory power to the main methodological challenge explanatory power to the network concept so that it can be used to study those real world practices of policy making through empirical research. This entails constructing a network measure that would contribute to the operational dynamics of the concept. In their attempts to empirically investigate networks, Lewis (2011) asserts that researchers should combine “the structural and the processual aspects of networks [in order to] provide research space for interpretation without giving away causality” (p. 1232) through a synthesis of formal methods and interpretive methods. This logic brings us to middle-range theory which is particularly attentive to bridging empirical findings extracted from case studies, particularly with theoretical debates through a combination of inductive exploration and deductive explanation of the topic under investigation. According to Howlett (1991), middle-range theory is the most appropriate and reasonable approach in policy studies “subject to national variation and to broader conceptions and theorizations of national and international political life” (p. 13). Moreover, middle-range theory provides a set of practical tools to study forms of administrative responsiveness which, among others, include collaboration.

When applied to networks analysis, middle-range theory employs micro- and meso-level analysis of networks through the exploration of inter-personal and inter-organizational relationships, with the purpose of exploring the conditions

favorable to the network mode of policy making. The findings generated through micro- and meso-level analysis can then be situated within a broader macro-level analysis that helps us explain the existing network categories within a given policy environment. This methodological choice sits well within Rhodes' approach according to which, "[p]olicy network is a meso-level concept which needs to be, and can be, located within very different macro-theoretical approaches" (1990, p. 309). Macro-level analysis seeks to identify dominant network policy making patterns at the system level which is neither possible nor useful considering that this approach prevents scholars from drawing variations within one country case (Rhodes, 1990). According to micro-analysis, on the other hand:

Networks ... are constituted on the basis of informal relationships regulated by obligations of trust and reciprocity. Networks are frequently grounded in individual relationships that transcend organisational boundaries and even organisational agendas. They ... are fluid relationships that may grow up in response to a particular policy or service issue and will continue to operate for as long as the need exists and the network members are willing to sustain the relationship. (Sullivan & Skelcher, 2017, p. 5)

Micro-level analysis provides detailed accounts of policy networks as fluid actor configurations. The problem with this approach is that it "gives considerable weight to the role of individuals and individual personality; and raises the (perennial) problem of generalizability" (Rhodes, 1990, p. 310). Overall, integrating micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of analysis is useful to observe and compare network variations and offer middle-level generalizations. Considering the above discussion, this study seeks to formulate a middle-range conceptual framework for theorizing policy networks beyond Western liberal democracies.

Introducing Turkey to Network Research

Despite efforts to contextualize networks, not much is known about the practice of network policy making outside the context of advanced democracies, especially in low- and middle-income countries with perceived authoritarian predispositions. Scholars have highlighted the lack of and the need for the systematic and cross-national study of policy networks, including policy settings outside the context of advanced democracies (Kjaer, 2011; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000; Klijn & Skelcher, 2007; O'Toole, 1997; Robichau, 2011). Limited empirical evidence and an absence of variation in terms of case selection have unquestionably hampered scholars from yielding broader generalizations concerning policy networks. Networks have often been criticized for remaining mere metaphors and theoretical notions rather than empirical tools (Börzel, 1998, 2011; Dowding, 1995, 2001; Dupont, 2006; Knox et al., 2006). More recent studies have reemphasized the lack of clarity in terms of network conceptualization and operationalization (Dal Molin & Masella, 2016; Lecy, Mergel, & Schmitz, 2014). In response to such criticisms, it becomes imperative to incorporate cross-national comparisons into the

new research agenda on policy networks with a particular emphasis on empirical research in the context of low- and middle-income countries with governments that are increasingly likely to endorse an authoritarian attitude in policy making. Such comparisons are essential for laying out the theoretical foundations of networks as policy making instruments applicable across country cases.

Against this background, this book introduces Turkey as a middle-income country that has not been explored hitherto through the network perspective. Turkey has aspired to join the club of developed economies by emulating their policy models since 1980s, a goal that was more strongly restated after 2003 with the Justice and Development Party's (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) rise to power. From a policy perspective, middle-income countries such as Turkey represent fertile ground for research considering that they have fast developing economies, dynamic societies, and governments that introduce major reform projects. Within the last 15 years, Turkey has undergone major structural transformations, particularly within the domain of health including the Health Transformation Programme (HTP) introduced in 2003.

Since the introduction of the HTP reforms, the Turkish health sector has made considerable progress. According to Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI), health policy in Turkey displays a relatively high score compared to other social policies including education, social inclusion, family policy or pension policy (Genckaya, Togan, Schulz & Karadag, 2018). Relatively high levels of policy performance in the area of health have contributed to an improved health status among Turkish citizens. Recent OECD data show that Turkey has a relatively high score in terms of citizen health status, leaving behind other areas such as income and wealth, social connections, education and skills, jobs and earnings, subjective well-being, environmental quality, work-life balance, housing and personal security (OECD, 2017). Based on the above data, Turkey qualifies as a relatively high performer in the area of health.

From a governance perspective, the policy initiatives within the HTP reform package involve (a) multiple actors with a stake in policy making (e.g., multiplicity of actors in health tourism development); (b) various complex issues that require high levels of expertise and information sharing in terms of policy design (e.g., challenges in the context of public health policy development); and (c) high levels of risk both in terms of the cost of policy implementation as well as the impact of the policy outcomes (e.g., risks involved in huge health construction projects). In the period from 2003 onwards, cross-sectoral arrangements that involve actors from the public, private, and voluntary sectors with a stake in health policy have increased significantly. Presently few descriptive studies have turned their attention toward cross-sectoral arrangements with the purpose of health policy making in Turkey (Dündar, 2018; Özkan, 2018; Pala, 2018). Even though these studies are informative of the current state of cross-sectoral collaboration taking place within the health sector, they do not examine the practical effectiveness and theoretical significance of these cases as novel policy instruments from a broader governance perspective.

The hesitation to study cross-sectoral collaboration from a broader governance perspective can partially be explained by emphasis put on authoritarian politics

in Turkey. Recent political developments have sparked a scholarly interest toward *conflictual politics* with an emphasis on phenomena such as polarization of politics, populism, nationalism, and authoritarianism. Actually, in the last 10 years, there has been a growing debate on authoritarian or semi-authoritarian inclinations in Turkish politics. Hence, numerous studies have focused on the intersection between politics and authoritarianism mostly through the prism of political economy or state-society relations producing various hybrid categories such as competitive authoritarianism (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2016, 2018a; Özbudun, 2015), electoral authoritarianism (White & Herzog, 2016), hegemonic electoral authoritarianism (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2018b), new authoritarianism (Somer, 2016), authoritarian neoliberalism (Tansel, 2018), neoliberal populism (Akça, Bekmen, & Özden, 2014; Demiralp, 2018), illiberal governance (Öktem & Akkoyunlu, 2016), state capitalism, or authoritarian neo-developmentalism (Öniş, 2019). These accounts, to varying degrees and forms signal that the political regime is relapsing toward some sort of authoritarianism. Even though these studies paint a gloomy picture of Turkish politics, they should not preclude researchers from investigating the policy processes, particularly in those policy areas that involve new instruments and platforms of policy making.

The assumption here is that the presence of (semi)authoritarianism, even though is often presented as a linear regression back to more undemocratic and illiberal regime types, does not exclude participatory practices of policy making. This is especially the case in those formal yet unconsolidated democracies where governments come to power through elections, yet, demonstrate authoritarian predispositions mostly due to “the rapid rise of authoritarian-minded populist leaders” (Esen & Yardımcı-Geyikçi, 2019, p. 445). These countries, which do not fall in the diametrically opposed categories of western liberal democracies and the autarkic state, comprise of highly complex institutional and policy environments that remain largely undertheorized. Hence, new research should focus on explicating the dynamics of policy making within the broader political system in countries such as Turkey, particularly in the context of cross-cutting issues that require some degree of joint action manifested through various forms of cross-sectoral collaboration such as policy networks. Actually, Mahoney and Goertz (2004) would qualify Turkey as a negative case study, which can, and should be selected for comparative network research due to the possibility of network formation amid various cross-sectoral arrangements taking place within the health sector.

Despite its prominence, only a few studies have examined the new policy making patterns in Turkish politics (Atıyas & Bakış, 2015; Bölükbaşı & Ertuğal, 2018; Bölükbaşı, Ertuğal, & Özçürümez, 2018), but, even these studies are based upon macro-level institutional analysis which prioritizes the political and economic structures that shape policy making. One of the most ground-breaking studies in the field of public policy is the article published by Yıldız (2007) on e-government policy processes and actors. This study offers promising ground for advancing policy studies by linking “e-government research with those of newer research areas such as non-profit organizations, (policy) networks, third party government, governance, and globalization” (Yıldız, 2007, p. 661).