

## **An Interdisciplinary Workshop on Politics and Strategy in Medical Associations**

August 28, 2019

Omni Shoreham Hotel

2500 Calvert St NW, Washington, DC 20008

Organized by Sorcha A. Brophy (University of Chicago) and Veena Sriram (University of Chicago)

Professional medical associations around the world have historically been conduits for channeling physician interests into policy. Today, these associations remain powerful national stakeholders despite increasingly crowded policy arenas and threats to their power by populist movements, the privatization/corporatization of healthcare and the fragmentation of organized medicine. Critical analysis of professional medical associations' role is necessary to better understand how they continue to impact debates about the future of healthcare and to assess the extent to which their interests and values are translated into nation-state policies.

Research on professional medical associations has emerged from several disciplines, including political science, sociology, anthropology, history, and global health. However, there are few spaces for researchers from diverse backgrounds to have constructive dialogue about the different theories and methods that inform their work. In this workshop, we bring together a global, interdisciplinary group of scholars to share research, draw comparisons, discuss methods, and consider future directions for research on the politics and strategy of professional medical associations.

This workshop is divided into three panels. The first two panels explore thematic concerns around the coordination and strategy of creating health policy in and through medical associations. The third panel will bring together interdisciplinary scholars for a conversation about future methodological directions and collaborations.

For our first two panels, panelists prepared short 2-page précis that were circulated to all workshop participants in advance of the conference. The précis contained a summary of panelists' research findings, and posed questions for discussion. During the panels, we began with discussion of panelists' research, directed by the questions posed in the précis. We then moved to a group discussion of the broad themes of the panels, led by the panel chair. In our third panel, the chair led all workshop participants in a brainstorming session to develop methodological insights and determine next steps. In order to help direct discussion, participants were encouraged to consider a number of questions about their research in advance of the workshop.

The learning objectives of this workshop are threefold:

1. To enumerate shared themes in research from diverse contexts/disciplines
2. To identify methodological tools and theoretical concepts that can be exported from other disciplines

3.To formulate an interdisciplinary, globally-oriented research agenda on professional medical associations and policymaking

*Panel 1: Internal Coordination*

In our first panel, we explored questions about the internal coordination of policy stances and strategy in medical associations. How do associations manage dissent? How do they address foundational questions about the association's priorities and who they represent? How do they negotiate shifts in organizational stances and membership over time?

Panel Participants: Peter A. Swenson (Yale University), Isabel Perera (University of Pennsylvania), Sorcha A. Brophy (University of Chicago), Veena Sriram (University of Chicago)  
Chair: Christy Chapin (University of Maryland Baltimore County)

*Panel 2: External Engagement*

In our second panel we discussed the relationship of professional medical associations to the external health policy environment. How should we broadly categorize the way that these associations manage relationships with other policy-makers? How do they negotiate their relationship to the state? How do different national political environments shape their strategies?

Panel Participants: Arima Mishra, Lars Thorup Larsen (Aarhus University), Adam Koon (Johns Hopkins), Joseph Harris (Boston University)  
Chair: Eric Patashnik (Brown University)

*Panel 3: Future Methodological Directions for the Investigation of Organized Medicine*

In this panel, participants worked together to set an agenda for future investigations of medical associations. We assessed the challenges we face in conducting research in and about medical associations and discussed the next steps of our interdisciplinary project.

Sample prompts:

- 1.What are the most pressing methodological issues that arise in your investigation of medical associations?
- 2.What concerns do you have about access?
- 3.How might interdisciplinary research fill gaps in knowledge about medical associations?

Chair: Sorcha A. Brophy