

T10P02 / Relational Approaches to Policy Analysis

Topic : T10 / Methodologies

Chair : Nick Turnbull (University of Manchester)

Second Chair : *****

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Relational, non-dualist, approaches to policy analysis offer a new way of addressing some of the most vexing issues in our field. In aiming to find a way beyond individualist and holist epistemologies, relational social scientists claim to support new theories and methodologies that will uncover significant insights into the operation of social forces. In particular, they claim that relational approaches are most appropriate for revealing the scope and dynamics of network society. A central feature of relational approaches is also that they operate in close interaction with the everyday world of public policy and society. Cultivating such a politically and socially relevant policy analysis both involves revealing the often taken-for-granted, cognitive and practical horizons of policy issues, and enabling and facilitating groups to free themselves from oppressive conditions or practices by jointly designing workable alternatives. This implies that the methodological and ethical imperatives of relational approaches are to engage in theoretically innovative and empirically grounded research that is both appreciative and critical of daily policy practice, as well as the practical and discursive processes that constitute it. Relationality also aims to integrate an analysis of power relations within policy networks and fields.

Relational approaches to policy analysis are especially important in a world that is characterized by dynamic complexity, urgency and unpredictability. Problems such as climate change, migration, the erosion of democracy and the ascent of relatively successful non-democratic forms of governance, the rise of the giant transnational corporation, the difficulty of global governance, mass surveillance and the demise of privacy, the governance of pluralist and conflicted urban spaces, and large private and national debt, are not only beyond the remit of traditional policy approaches and instruments but also do not allow much margin for error nor procrastination. While diagnoses of the antecedents of these issues abound, and many have been linked to the dominance of a neoliberal world order, we lack a framework that ties critical analyses to a clear and consistent conceptual vision that inspires practical transformations. We believe that relational approaches to policy analysis promise to take us in this direction.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The use of relational approaches is increasingly common in organization studies, international relations, development studies, cultural Marxism, urban studies, and planning. However, they have been less frequently used in policy analysis and public administration. In this panel, we invite scholars to propose papers dealing with relational approaches to policy analysis and public administration. Papers may treat either theoretical or methodological questions, or demonstrate an applied relational analysis in an empirical study. The aim is to facilitate, widen and deepen understandings of the theoretical, empirical, and methodological ways in which relational approaches to policy analysis enable us to understand, intervene in, and transform the world.

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Session 1 Conceptualizing relational approaches to public policy

Wednesday, June 28th 14:00 to 16:00 (Block B 4 - 3)

Discussants

Nick Turnbull (University of Manchester)

Relational Public Administration

Nick Turnbull (University of Manchester)

Koen Bartels (University of Birmingham)

What is a Policy Field? A Relational Approach to Policy Theory.

Seeing Ahead -- Relationally

Amanda Wolf (Victoria University of Wellington)

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Session 2 Applied relational policy analysis

Wednesday, June 28th 16:15 to 18:15 (Block B 4 - 3)

Holding a referendum or not? Analyzing the decision process in the case of Stuttgart 21

Heike Brugger (University of Konstanz)

Antje Witting (University of Konstanz)

Melanie Nagel (University of Tuebingen)

Applying Text Mining to Improve the Interpretation and Analysis of Network Subgroup Effects in Urban Environmental Governance Assessments

ROGER S. CHEN (Chinese Cultural University, Taiwan)

A relational analysis of a public policy implementation tool: the Brazilian Single Registry for Social Programs

Natalia Koga (Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA) and ENAP)

Denise Direito (Ministry of Social Development-MDS)