

T08P09 / Emotions, Narratives and Policy Change

Topic : T08 / POLICY DISCOURSE AND CRITICAL POLICY RESEARCH

Chair : Nathalie Burlone (University of Ottawa)

Second Chair : Anne Mevellec (University of Ottawa)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

This panel builds on the recent work stemming from the *emotional turn* that considers emotions as a promising angle of analysis for the renewal of policy research. Although emotions are not totally absent from the policy analysis classics, they are commonly understood as a limit to individual rationality. Adopting a different standpoint, our panel postulates that emotions (both positive and negative ones) are rather integral to rationality and, by extension, are agents of policy change. Moreover, emotions are embedded in policy discourses. If emotions play this central role in policy making, how can they then be captured in policy research? This panel proposes that narrative analysis is well equipped to do so because of its attention to the structure and content of language, the latter being one vehicle for the expression of emotions. If some policy scholars have promoted policy narratives as keys to understand the policy process, only a few have studied their emotional structure, although latent in any policy narrative. On the other hand, emotion studies, an expanding research field across social sciences, have not paid great attention to public policy processes. This panel aims at contributing to both literature by questioning the role of emotions for policy analysis methodologically, theoretically and empirically.

Our panel is guided by the following research questions:

- 1) From a methodological perspective, how can narrative analysis reveal the role of emotions** (how to locate emotions from the lexical sources? How to document emotions? How to classify emotions?)?
- 2) From a theoretical perspective, how can a focus on emotions complement theoretical approaches to public policy** (are emotions direct or indirect influences of problems framing or are they frames themselves? What influence do emotions have on other policy processes such as individual or collective behaviors, information processing or solution developments?)?
- 3) From an empirical perspective, how do emotions participate in the transformation of public policy** (what kinds of emotions are involved? What spectra do they cover? How and by whom do they manifest themselves?)?

By taking stock of the role of emotions for policy analysis, this panel will expand our understanding of the different forces at work in the policy process and explore how turning to the emotional structure of policy discourses can enriched narrative analysis itself. By doing so, this panel provides an opportunity to assess the relevance of the *emotional turn* for policy studies.

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel builds on the recent work stemming from the emotional turn that considers emotions as a promising angle of analysis for the renewal of policy research. Although emotions are not totally absent from the policy analysis classics, they are commonly understood as a limit to individual rationality. Adopting a different standpoint, our panel postulates that emotions (both positive and negative ones) are rather integral to rationality and, by extension, are agents of policy change. Moreover, emotions are embedded in policy discourses. If emotions play this central role in policymaking, how can they then be captured in policy research? This panel proposes that narrative analysis is well equipped to do so because of its attention to the structure and content of language, the latter being one vehicle for the expression of emotions. If some policy scholars have promoted policy narratives as keys to understand the policy process, only a few have studied their emotional structure, although latent in any policy narrative. On the other hand, emotion studies, an expanding research field across social sciences, have not paid great attention to public policy processes. This panel aims at contributing to both literature by questioning the role of emotions for policy analysis methodologically, theoretically and empirically.

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3) From an empirical perspective, how do emotions participate in the transformation of public policy (what kinds of emotions are involved? What spectra do they cover? How and by whom do they manifest themselves?)?

Our panel invites papers studying emotions (both positive and negative ones) present in diverse policy issues. Although the panel has a special interest in submissions using narrative analysis, papers focusing on the sociopolitical dimensions of emotions and the role of emotions in knowledge making through other methods are also welcome.

T08P09 / Emotions, Narratives and Policy Change

Chair : Nathalie Burlone (University of Ottawa)

Second Chair : Anne Mevellec (University of Ottawa)

Session 1 Emotions, institutions and stigmatization

Wednesday, June 26th 14:00 to 16:00 (MB 5.215)

Discussants

Imrat Verhoeven (University of Amsterdam)

Elizabeth Shanahan (Montana State University)

Health hopes and fiscal fears: Emotions, narratives and policy change in post-socialist healthcare

Karel Cada (University of Economics Prague)

The paper explores the relationship between emotions, narratives and institutional change in the post-communist transformation of Czech health care. In the paper, based on discourse analysis of the Czech health care since 1990, two dominant discursive imaginaries are identified: (1) the discursive imaginary of health hopes connected with promises of better care, medical innovations, shifting away from an outdated and inefficient care, and increasing life expectancy and quality of life and (2) the discursive imaginary of fiscal fears connected with concepts such as increasing government debt, healthcare spending, insecure fiscal future and economic responsibility. With respect to Laclau, these imaginaries are defined as a horizon or an absolute limit which structures the field of intelligibility or, with respect to Williams, structures of feeling. Both discursive imaginaries can produce different narratives based upon their relation to broader cultural systems of rules and values of community solidarity.

Narrative perspective is ideal for studying the dynamic of health policy, which is characterised by a tension between citizens' rising expectations, on the one hand, and the imperative of permanent austerity, on the other hand. Using the cultural theory developed by Mary Douglas, narratives can be defined according to how they articulate societal constraints for individual members and how they defy or circumvent the rules and boundaries of their particular social environment. Different regulatory codes construct different types of disorder. Whereas a crisis in the individualist code is connected with a lack of incentives, a crisis in the hierarchist code is associated with a lack of reputation.

After 1989, the first period of transformation was characterised by a dominant individualist code, focusing mostly on basic market-oriented reforms such as a pluralistic health insurance model to guarantee up-to-date treatments. It resulted in a growth of total health care expenditure. In the context of accession to the EU in 2004, as reforms of public administration and transposition of European norms were being conducted, a hierarchist code stressing the need to consolidate rules prevailed. The last complex reform was proposed after the parliamentary elections in 2006. The reform plan corresponded with a global shift towards a neoliberal paradigm in health care, focusing on consumer-oriented services obtained in the market and patients as responsible and rational actors.

In the Czech context, the individualist code served predominantly to articulate a combination of the health hopes imaginary and the fiscal fears imaginary. On the contrary, the hierarchist code was often employed to express the fiscal fears imaginary only. This historical configuration marked significantly the character of post-socialist welfare because the emotionally positive imaginary of modernisation of health care was always associated with the individualist discourses of market-driven reforms. Efforts to strengthen rules and hierarchies, on the contrary, were much more underscored by fiscal doomsday scenarios.

The combined force of Emotions and Ideas: emotional beliefs, emotional contestation and the European Defence Community

Trineke Palm (Utrecht University)

How does "emotional contestation" shape policy-making? Against the backdrop of research that has

examined learning and external shocks as key mechanisms, this paper focuses on the understudied interaction between emotions and ideas as critical mechanism for understanding the outcomes of policy making. While the role of emotions has been studied in relation to social movements and election campaigns, little research has been done on identifying the way in which emotions constrain and/or enable policy making.

Building on the work by John Mercer on “emotional beliefs”, this paper aims to conceptualize the relationship between emotions and ideas. The role of emotions in the policy process cannot be understood without considering ideas. They are in a constitutive relationship. Without ideas, emotions have no object, and without emotions ideas lack power. Emotions are not an addition to ideas, but are an essential component for understanding their meaning.

Moreover, following from this observation, the paper introduces the mechanism of “emotional contestation” to explore the way in which emotions can change the meaning of policy beliefs and as such enable policy change to occur.

To substantiate this argument, the paper will present evidence of “emotional contestation” in the early years of European integration. The analysis consists of an Emotion Discourse Analysis (EDA) of debates about the European Defence Community in the 1950s. The EDA-framework that is developed for this paper, distinguishes between two dimensions: negative vs. positive emotions, and forward- and backward looking emotions (e.g. fear and hope vs. anger and trust). It examines different forums in which the EDC is discussed to show how the institutional setting matters for “emotional contestation.”

This way the paper engages with the need to connect ideational and emotional scholarship to the literature on policy analysis.

Governing Through Emotion: The Discursive Framing of Dangerous Offenders in Canada

Mussell Linda (Queen's University)

Michael Orsini (University of Ottawa)

The criminal justice system is a theatre for the performance of emotion. Using the case of dangerous offender designation in Canada, this paper examines the emotional terrain and discursive frames that govern the constitution of offenders who received the “dangerous offender” (DO) designation. Focusing on three key emotions (remorse, forgiveness and disgust), we draw on four case studies involving individuals who went through the DO hearing process (Lance Blanchard, Leslie Black, Marlene Carter, Tara Desousa). Indigenous offenders are of particular focus in this paper, as they are highly overrepresented among the prison population, including DOs, in Canada. Asking what role Indigeneity and other factors play in how the media discuss the emotional comportment of DOs, we are interested in the persistence of particular discursive frames, despite robust acknowledgement of the complexity of criminal behavior. Further, we discuss the counter-frames that have emerged in which other actors (e.g., non-profit organizations) seek to challenge or disrupt dominant understandings of what it is appropriate to feel. The expression of emotion, and its interpretation by others (e.g., judges, the media) can be critical in the outcome of cases, and may also motivate community mobilization and prompt policy change. Yet, emotion, and how it may be performed/interpreted differently according to identity (e.g., gender, Indigeneity) and ability (e.g., cognitive ability/mental illness), is not well understood or discussed in this context. Throughout the paper we illustrate who gets to emote, when, and how, as well as some of the silences of emotions (e.g., court actors).

The Effects of Anger in Policy Framing

Vandna Bhatia (Carleton University)

This paper analyzes the role of political emotions, particularly moral emotions, which can motivate political action. It proposes a framework for the analysis of political emotion that understands emotion as an important element in persuasive policy narratives, and builds on the premise that in order to compel allegiance, motivate actors, and guide action, narratives must offer both cognitively and emotionally resonant explanations of and solutions to complex public problems. Following Haidt (2003), who suggests that anger is “the most prototypical moral emotion,” because it is often related to perceptions of moral injustice or incorrect behavior, I argue that anger is central to understanding the power of public policy to compel action. However, anger is an unpredictable emotion – as Burkitt (2014) notes, manipulating emotion to direct behaviour in a particular direction can have mixed success, and may produce the opposite of the intended effects. In this paper, I explore the ways in which anger interacts with other emotions and complex social relations to effect unexpected and unpredictable outcomes.

Drawing on a case study of policy changes made to refugee health benefits programs in Canada, this paper

demonstrates that, on the one hand, policymakers relied on the language of morality and socially acceptable behaviour to frame their policy narratives, especially when their preferred policy prescriptions propose significant departures from the status quo. In this particular case, the government composed a narrative about opportunistic, 'bogus' asylum claimants consuming health services they did not deserve. This narrative was imbued with 'feeling rules' that cued righteous anger toward asylum claimants for perpetrating the injustice of exploiting generous, hard-working, taxpaying Canadians. The narrative focused on the moral violations of asylum claimants, thus foreclosing discussion of their pressing health care needs or legitimate human rights claims. On the other hand, a plethora of health providers, refugee advocates, and legal activists coalesced to oppose the government's policy changes, directing their anger toward the government rather than asylum claimants. A combination of anger and compassion cued their responses, and these emotions are traced to the particular network of professional and personal social relations in which individuals were embedded. Opponents drew attention to the rights claims and health needs of asylum claimants because these issues directly engaged their own professional emotions associated with duties of care and compassion.

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Session 2 Emotions and identity

Wednesday, June 26th 16:30 to 18:30 (MB 5.215)

Discussants

Trineke Palm (Utrecht University)

Michael Orsini (University of Ottawa)

The development of policy narratives after collective experiences of trauma

Bethany Waterhouse-Bradley (Ulster University)

Bethany Bradley (Ulster University)

The concept of trauma, and in particular collective trauma, is becoming more prominent outside of psychology and psychoanalytic disciplines. The conceptualisation of cultural trauma (Alexander, 2014; Smesler, 2014) provides a useful framework for examining the social impacts of traumatic experience on a population. It does not, however, examine in depth how policy elites might respond to these events. While there is increasing discussion around trauma and emotion in political science, international relations, and peace and conflict studies, academic exploration of these issues appears to be confined to discursive and speculative work. There remains an absence of primary data on the relationship between collective trauma and policy development. Given the clear relationship between collective trauma and identity formation, claims-making and the apparent conservatism/nationalism evoked by narratives surrounding collective trauma (Hutchinson, 2010), the propensity for abuse of trauma narratives by political elites to justify unpopular or hawkish policies, and the obstructive nature of competitive victimhood (Sullivan and Young, 2016), there is a need for this void to be filled. Using a review of studies examining political responses to collective trauma, this paper will critically examine the development of policy narratives surrounding experiences of collective trauma.

Remembrance as a policy : Emotional framings, policy narratives and public memory shaping in a former slave trade port

Renaud Hourcade (CNRS)

The interpretive approach of the policy process generally emphasizes how much values, arguments, beliefs and subjective preferences shape public policy decisions and policy implementation. Scholars in this tradition hold discourses and narratives around policy making (accounts of problems, causes and solutions) as key vehicles for power (Fischer 2003). They are, for instance, resources for the formation of advocacy coalitions (Shanahan, Jones, McBeth, 2011). But while this tradition has put great efforts into emphasizing how much policies are dependent on socially constructed values, knowledge and arguments conveyed through narratives, scholars have generally paid much less attention to the way emotions can pervade the policy process. Yet, policy actors (and their contenders alike) build meanings about things - problems, goals, instruments - in a way that is permeated by affects : a shocking situation, a proud identity, an enviable future or a feeling of fear, contempt, anger, etc. As a consequence, efforts are needed to explore the various ways in which emotions intersect with policy discourses.

I propose such exploration taking as a case study the local public policy of memory set in place in the early 1990s by the city of Nantes, France, formerly an important hub for the Atlantic slave trade. Since this public policy of memorialization was launched following decades of comfortably avoiding or silencing the past, strong arguments and a renewed, convincing, narrative about the « duty to remember » were needed to support the city's decision. Relying on an analysis of press coverage, various public and private archives

and a dozen semi-structured interviews with key actors (2007-2012), I argue that emotional framings have played a major role in the conception and structuration of this new account. Emotions have been instrumental to the personal interpretation of the situation by key policy makers. They have been instrumental to construct the slave trade past as a public problem, with the help of the media. And they have been instrumental to maintain support for this policy over time and despite changing contexts.

However, while one may expect shame, regret, compassion or sympathy with the victims to structure policy discourses, my argument is that the underlying narrative frames have rather been associated with positive emotions : place-based pride, attachment to local identity and a desire for distinction. Although this strategy has been globally effective in terms of gathering popular support to Nantes' policy of memory, attracting favorable press coverage and silencing political competitors, it didn't totally suppress alternative accounts of the local memory problem. Opponents regularly voiced discontent by putting forward their own, individual and collective, emotional narratives : interiorized stigma and shame, sympathy for the victims, affliction, anger. As a consequence, an important part of the argumentative efforts of Nantes political leaders and their supporters has then been to try and reduce the influence of these rival emotional framings, or even wholly discredit them.

The paper confirms that discourses are a major vehicle for political power and the legitimation of policies. In this respect, Nantes policy debate around public memory can be described as a long (successful) struggle to impose and maintain one legitimate discourse regarding the city's desirable attitude toward the past. But this article also explains how and why embarking emotions can add persuasive strength to policy discourses.

Love and Fear in the Neighbourhood: Emotions and Ontological Security in Foreign Policy Analysis

Vincent Della Sala (University of Trento)

Viktorina Akchurina (TRENDS Research and Advisory)

Love and Fear in the Neighbourhood:
Emotions and Ontological Security in Foreign Policy Analysis

Viktorina Akchurina and Vincent Della Sala

Edmund Burke wrote, in *A Philosophical Enquiry*, that, "No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear." We want to examine and challenge this claim, looking to the ways in which emotions can indeed be the basis for action and meaning in social relations. Our paper will explore the ways in which the Russia and the European Union use emotions to generate "a sense of self". We argue that each side has a narrative of "love" and solidarity —towards their shared neighborhood—that generates fear in the other. The EU projects an order based on solidarity, rule of law, shared interests and respect rather than the use of hard power. Russia also has a similar construction of solidarity but rooted in the "fraternity" of states and nations. The politics of love for each side is the target of the politics of fear of the other.

The aim of this paper is two-fold. First, it wants to contribute to the growing literature on the role of emotions in international relations by using arguments about ontological security exploring how emotions—in this case love and fear—can turn from being instrumental to become fundamental to ontological security. We explore the extent to which love and fear are part of the practices and routines that give the EU and Russia ontological security and shape how they relate to each other. Second, we argue that narratives at the heart of the conceptual and normative maps that guide their actions and behaviour create a sort of (ontological) security dilemma; that is, behaviour aimed primarily at enhancing confidence in the identity and continuity of a political community raises alarms for the ontological security of other actors. We argue that each feels threatened by the other's narratives that are aimed at generating emotions. We want to contribute to the growing literature on emotions and narratives in international relations as well as that on ontological security. We will argue that emotions do not necessarily rob the mind from the power to act. Rather, they can provide actors the ontological security that provides them the capacity to act and the reasons why.

We achieve this goal by examining the narratives of the EU and Russia, both towards one another and in relation to what they call their "shared neighbourhood", which includes the disputed territories of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and parts of Central Asia. While Russia's territorial politics seems to follow the classical *realpolitik* logic, the reasoning about it goes beyond the notions of sovereignty, if at all. They are about emotional bonds, responsibility and protection that makes them paradoxically similar to the EU's normative reasoning beyond sovereignty. We address this paradox by combining the methodology of narrative analysis and the genealogy of love and fear in the post-Cold War period. This combination allows

for a processual and relational ontology in foreign policy analysis.

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Chair : Nathalie Burlone (University of Ottawa)

Second Chair : Anne Mevellec (University of Ottawa)

Session 3 Emotions, risks and policy controversies

Thursday, June 27th 08:00 to 10:00 (MB 5.215)

Discussants

Karel Cada (University of Economics Prague)

Renaud Hourcade (CNRS)

Fear, anger and contempt about gas quakes: an exploration of how local politicians translate/transform emotions between citizens and national government in policy controversies

Imrat Verhoeven (University of Amsterdam)

Tamara Metze (Wageningen University)

Recent research on policy controversies challenges us to rethink classical distinctions between anxious or angry citizens on the one hand and rational politicians on the other. Empirical studies – often in an interpretive tradition – ranging from health policies (te Molder, Durnova 2018); to contested processes of municipal amalgamation (Verhoeven & Duyvendak 2015), and energy controversies (Metze 2018) point out that politicians also engage in the framing of emotional appeals, and that citizens use rational arguments. This demonstrates that policy controversies are not meaning contests between rational politicians and emotional citizens; nor that it are (solely) emotional citizens that need to be contained through communication strategies of experts and politicians. Such insights challenge us to (a) develop a more complex and dynamic account of the role played by emotions in policy controversies; and (b) further develop the notion politicians as emotional translators and transformers during policy controversies.

This study is based on a framing analysis of emotional appeals made by politicians in 1308 newspaper articles from 6 journals. We empirically show that in the case of the gas quakes in Groningen, the Netherlands – where gas production induced earth quakes - politicians deal with emotions in two ways. First of all, by appealing to emotions in combination with cognitive arguments, local and regional politicians support or criticize controversial policies toward citizens. Second, local and regional politicians transformed and translated the feelings and arguments of the Groningen population towards national politicians, thus putting pressure on contested decision-making and striving for policy change. As such, politicians 'represent' these emotions – and make them part of the decision making and policy making processes. We will end the paper with a reflection on what these insights contribute to theories on emotional governance.

Literature

Durnova, A. (2018). *The politics of intimacy. Rethinking the end-of-life controversy*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Metze, T.A.P. (2018). Visual framing for policy learning: internet as the 'eye of the public', in: Dotti, N.F. (ed.) *Knowledge, Policymaking and Learning for European Cities and Regions*. Edward Elgar, p. 165-180.

Verhoeven, I. & J.W. Duyvendak (2015). Enter emotions. Appealing to anxiety and anger in a process of municipal amalgamation. *Critical Policy Studies*, 10 (4): 468-485.

Versteeg, W., te Molder, H., & P. Sneijder (2017). "Listen to your body": Participants' alternative to science in

online health discussions. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine*, 22 (5): 432-450.

Biting Into Emotions: Narratives of the Montreal Pit Bull Crisis

Nathalie Burlone (University of Ottawa)

Anne Mevellec (University of Ottawa)

Our research focuses on emotions as agents of policy change, particularly the role they play in framing public problems. Our study analyzes the pit bull crisis that took place in Montreal in 2016. Following the death of a young woman by a pit bull attack, the “dangerous” behaviour of this breed was built into a public problem leading to the adoption (and later, amendment) of a municipal animal control bylaw. During this process, divergent interpretations were expressed regarding the characteristics of this breed (how is a pit bull defined?), the reasons given for its dangerousness, the owner’s responsibility or the proposed solutions to solve this problem. Various actors put forward different framings: local politicians, victims, dog owners, animal protection associations, etc. The construction of this problem also took place in a dense emotional context, fuelled by a series of incidents involving these dogs and victims - especially children.

This public problem is examined from an emotion-focused perspective, breaking away from approaches that regard public policy as goal-oriented and fundamentally evidence-based. Here, emotions are not only elements of context, but are also fundamental to structuring discourses, which in turn contribute to shaping the policy process. A discourse analysis was carried out using media sources from 2016 to 2018, seeking to identify both the argumentative logic and the emotions mobilized in these discourses. Categorized under four emotions (anger, fear, sadness or joy), the “pit bull problem” narratives retrieved from the media sources shed a different light on the policy process.

Assessing the Power of Narratives Through Affective Responses

Elizabeth Shanahan (Montana State University)

Narratives are purported to transport the audience into the story. As *homo narrans*, we both reflect and understand reality based on stories. Despite significant efforts to communicate with people about natural hazards, audiences routinely ignore government and expert messages about risk. Using the Narrative Policy Framework, this paper examines the effectiveness of narrative-based science communication treatments and science messages by examining participants' affective responses to the treatments. We expect that people would respond differently to alternate types of character-driven narrative language and that such responses would also differ from reactions to scientific or expert language. We applied human coding and natural language processing to transcripts of semi-structured citizen interviews about flooding in order to identify hero and victim language. We then used the identified language to develop congruent, character-driven narratives. We tested affective response to eight different messages using dial response technology. In all, we find that use of heroes is a resoundingly effective narrative mechanism in terms of producing a positive affective response. Victims, on the other hand, are not effective in the way anticipated. Interestingly, comparisons between probability-based science messages and certainty-based science messages yield no affective difference.