P02 / Bad Policy: Identifying the Ignoble (Sides of Governance)

Topic : GOVERNING CRISIS

Chair : Ian Roberge (York University)

Second Chair : Malcolm Campbell-Verduyn (University of Groningen)

Third Chair : Heather McKeen-Edwards (Bishop's University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

This in-person panel is interested in the study of bad policy. Public policy scholars have long been interested in the study of policy successes and failures, as well as government mistakes, yet they have been reluctant to label policy as either good or bad. References to bad policy, however, abound in everyday parlance, in the popular press and even in other academic disciplines. Policy scholars are called upon at times to pass judgment on policy. There is limited guidance, however, within the discipline on how to do so. What is bad policy? Why should we study it? What theoretical and methodological approaches are best suited to provide a greater understanding of bad policy? What can scholars learn from studying examples of bad policy? As a starting point for the discussion, we define bad policy as a policy that is consciously developed, adopted and/or sustained even though it can be shown to cause harm, is ineffective, or generates serious unwanted or undesirable negative outcomes, as evidenced by extensive research which is available to the policy maker. The objective of this panel is to develop a full-fledged research program of comparative study into bad policy. The panel will flesh out theoretical and methodological approaches as well as opportunities and challenges to address the central normative considerations to studying and acting on bad policy. Papers will conceptualize and operationalize the concept of bad policy; consider how best to study it while recognizing the normative constraints attached to the concept; and develop bad policy case studies. The panel presupposes that bad policy is a scientifically worthwhile topic on which to conduct socially relevant research. Bad policy warrants separate attention distinct from related existing concepts in the field such as failed policy. After all, it is possible for a policy to be successful and meet its objectives, yet still, be undesirable. In an era of declining trust in institutions, including governments, the prominence of bad policy further undermines the state. As such, the study of bad policy is also a requisite for a greater understanding of what constitutes good and desirable policy and better governance.

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel is interested in the study of bad policy. Public policy scholars have long been interested in the study of policy successes and failures, as well as government mistakes, yet they have been reluctant to label policy as either good or bad. What is bad policy? Why should we study it? What theoretical and methodological approaches are best suited to provide a greater understanding of bad policy? What can we learn from studying examples of bad policy? As a starting point for the discussion, we define bad policy as a policy that is consciously developed, adopted and/or sustained even though it can be shown to cause harm, is ineffective, or generates serious unwanted or undesirable negative outcomes, as evidenced by extensive research which is available to the policy maker. This panel presupposes that bad policy is a desirable and worthwhile topic on which to conduct research and that it warrants attention of its own separate from other concepts in the field such as failed policy; after all, it is possible for a policy to be successful and meet its objectives, yet still, be undesirable. We also suggest that the study of bad policy is a requisite for a greater understanding of what constitutes good and desirable policy and better governance. As such, this panel invites papers that are interested in the development of a theoretical framework for the study of bad policy; papers that focus on methodological approaches to the study of bad policy, with references to opportunities and challenges to normative considerations to research; as well as case studies in bad policy. The topic of bad policy provides for a rich research agenda and case studies can come from diverse policy fields including, among others, economic and financial policies, environmental policies, healthcare policies, and policies relating to emerging technologies. Authors of case studies should consider the drivers of bad policy, their delineated impact – whom they harm, and how – as well as options for redress. Papers may also consider the broader impact of bad policy on practices of governance and/or trust in governments.

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Session 1

Wednesday, June 28th 10:20 to 12:20 (KHE323)

(Virtual) Satoshi Meets the State: Bad Policy in Uncle Sam’s Initial Encounters with Bitcoin and Distributed Ledger Technology

Malcolm Campbell-Verduyn (University of Groningen)

Time Taxes and Avoidable Structural Injustice

Gah-Kai Leung (University of Warwick)

“What a Bad Policy Idea!”: Exploring Views on Offshore Wind Farms in Italy

Alberto Asquer (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London)

(Virtual) Understanding the adoption of military equipment by local law enforcement agencies in the US

Keith Baker (College at Brockport)

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Session 2Sessions 2

Wednesday, June 28th 15:50 to 17:50 (KHE323)

Borrowing money from the fringes: Regulatory efforts for payday loans in Canada and the US

Heather McKeen-Edwards (Bishop's University)

Policy narratives of moral panic, folk devils, and straw men as drivers of bad policy: The case of Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Nevbahar Ertas (University of Alabama at Birmingham)

Andrew McKnight (University of Alabama at Birmingham)

Toronto’s Failed Smart City: Intellectual Property, Data, and Bad Governance

Natasha Tusikov (York University)

Canada’s Covid Alert App: Designed for Privacy, and Not Much Else

Blayne Haggart (Brock University)