# P133 / Analysing the emotions of policy design and implementation

**Topic :** Implementation/Street-Level Bureaucracy

**Chair :** Imrat Verhoeven (University of Amsterdam)

**Second Chair :** Eva M. Hejzlarová (Charles University Prague)

**Third Chair :** Sonja Blum (Universität Bielefeld)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

**Research on emotions in public policy**

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that emotions influence attention to policy problems, advocacy, judgment, and policy change (Pierce, 2021). At the same time, policy scholars have argued that policy process theories have yet to fully integrate insights about emotions and affect into explanations of policymaking (Cairney & Weible, 2017). Calls have therefore emerged for a deeper understanding of emotional dynamics in public policy (Maor & Capelos, 2023). Extant studies have examined emotions in policy formulation and policy design (Boossabong 2025; Durnova & Hejzlarová 2018; Verloo 2026), policy implementation by street-level bureaucrats (Levitats 2024), policy conflicts (Verhoeven & Metze 2022; Fullerton et al. 2025), policy responsiveness and protests (Kuhlmann & Starke, 2025; Wenzelburger, 2026), as well as policy communication and narratives (Blum et al., 2026; Habelitz et al., 2026).

In all these studies, a broad range of approaches and methods have developed, ranging from quantitative analysis of emotions expressed by advocacy coalitions, to more qualitative approaches, employing the narrative policy framework or interpretive policy analysis. In summary, research on emotions in public policy has predominantly examined communicative and deliberative aspects of policy processes, including agenda-setting, policy conflicts, public consultations, and advocacy activities (Stempel, 2025), while emotions in policy design and implementation remain comparatively underexplored. By focusing on these dimensions of policy processes, this panel seeks to advance our understanding of emotions in policymaking and governance.

**Panel objectives and questions**

As knowledge on methods for how to study emotions in policies has advanced considerably, our objective with this panel is to shift the focus to the substantive, procedural and relational aspects of policy processes. More specifically, we aim to bring together theoretical, conceptual, and empirically-informed work on processes of policy formulation and design, policy implementation, and the interplay between the two. Policy design processes may for instance not take into account citizens feelings about implementation of a policy, or policy designs may be very politicized and emotional while citizens are pragmatically looking for a good solution. Many of the misfits between policy design and -implementation may also relate to the role that emotions play in translating policy goals into real life practices. Also, we would like to focus on how emotions interact with the intricate interplay between collaboration and conflict (Boon & Wolf 2025) that may affect policy formulation, -design, - implementation and their interplay.

Against that backdrop, guiding questions for the panel are:

· How do emotions play into processes of policy formulation and policy design?

· In which ways do emotions affect processes of policy implementation?

· What is the role of emotions in the interplay between policy design and policy implementation?

· How do emotions involved in collaboration and conflict affect policy formulation/design, implementation, and their interplay?

## CALL FOR PAPERS

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Studying emotions has become central for understanding public policymaking. In this panel, we particularly focus on how emotions play into processes of policy formulation, policy design, and policy implementation, as well as their interplay. The panel is open to theoretical, conceptual and empirical studies that address these issues. We particularly invite papers focusing on theoretical and conceptual advancements coming from different approaches such as MSF, ACF, interpretivism, and so on. For empirical papers any use of methods is welcome. We welcome scholars at various stages of their careers