Call for papers

“The Construction of Public Problems: When Emotions Transform Territorial Policy”

Workshop W18

International Workshop on Public Policy (International Public Policy Association)
University of Pittsburgh
June 26th to 28th 2018.

The workshop focuses on the role of emotions as an agent of policy change. More specifically, it will explore the function of emotional intensity in the construction and transformation of public problems and their treatment by public authorities. While studies on the role of emotions are rather abundant when it comes to studying political behavior, little research can be found from a policy perspective. Nonetheless, a new literature that seeks to shed light on public policy through emotional inputs is emerging, also known as the “affective turn” present in several social science disciplines such as geography (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Bondi, Davidson and Smith, 2005), political science (Brader, 2011; Marcus, 2002) or sociology of collective action (Aminzade and McAdam, 2001; Latté, 2015; Groenendyk, 2011). The workshop theme is guided by the general research question of how do emotions participate in the construction and transformation of territorial public problems? The role of emotions in public policy can be seen as central to the problematization process because of its association with values and beliefs. These generate reactions, either underreaction or overreaction (Maor, 2016), which in turn contribute to the transformation of public problems. Through the contributors’ work, we intend to explore how citizens’ emotional reactions to specific events transform certain public issues into public problems, both in nature and scope.

The workshop has three objectives: 1) examining how the emotional dimensions in the public policy process fit into current theoretical discussions in political science and public administration; 2) generating knowledge on the emotional construction of public problems with an important territorial dimension. This will fill gaps in urban and regional public policy literature, while at the same time creating more explicit links between public policy analysis and urban and regional studies; 3) working toward submitting a special issue for publication in Policy and Society.

Papers submitted are expected to explore the contribution of emotional input in the construction and transformation of public problems through case studies or theoretical reflections on existing approaches to public problems. Papers focusing on methodological considerations linked to the study of emotions in public policy are also welcome. Although open to other levels of analysis, the workshop will prioritize contributions at the territorial scale as a relevant, accessible and relatively underexplored laboratory for observation and analysis. Indeed, although it would
make it possible to better understand the narration of local and regional policy issues, very few studies focus their analysis on the emotional dimensions that shape local and regional public policies. The territorial angle helps to delineate an otherwise very broad topic. This workshop will provide an opportunity to engage in a discussion with both public policy analysis and urban and territorial studies to document the inescapable link between public problems, emotions, and territory. It is meant to be a place for international and multisectoral exchanges.

Submit your paper until January 30\textsuperscript{th} at:

For more information, please contact the co-chairs:
Nathalie Burlone (nburlone@uottawa.ca) or Anne Mévellec (mevellec@uottawa.ca)