

Ideological Policy Discourse and the “Unruly Politics” of Contemporary Publics

In *Evaluating Public Policy* (1995), a key foundational text of the Critical Policy movement, Frank Fischer writes that policy argumentation extends to ideological commitments and values, at a discursive level that makes explicit the relationship between ground-level policy projects and the (alternate) social order. In this perspective, those engaging in argumentation at the level of social choice reflect on alternative types of social orders in their capacity to legitimately resolve conflict, and such reflections are deemed to be the starting points for specific kinds of policy actors, such as political philosophers and ideologists (155) who may not normally be seen as such. This panel seeks to more centrally locate facilitators of ‘direct public action’, as those engaging in ideological policy discourse, departing from the view that such argumentation is the domain of high political philosophy. Actions against displacement, imperial occupation, women’s exploitation, oppression of workers (all through normative policy commitments and concrete public policy programs) in both advanced and developing nations suggest that engaged citizens and a range of professionals inside and outside the academy through direct intervention in public mobilizations on policy conflicts involve themselves in the very public and deliberative construction/articulation of alternative social orders. This claim can be seen in the furthering of specific aspects of the social order such as ‘the unruly politics’ (Khanna et al 2013), the occupy movement (David Graeber), the Maoist movement against the coercion of the neo-liberal state in India (Arundhati Roy), resistance to and escaping from the state on a range of counts (James Scott) for instance. While disparate in the contexts of their spheres of action these exemplars point towards the critical connections between engaged public action and the crafting of alternative social orders, and quite often visible practices of organizing intended to realise those alternative ideological commitments. Based on this initial understanding, the questions this panel seeks to engage with are the following – how does engaged citizenship become embodied in the practice of ideological discourse and contention that intersects with the academy? How do statist and status quo-ist forces seek to discipline and control the imagining of alternative social orders by acting upon these engaged citizens? What do the experiences of public-academic dissenters tell us about voice and representation of particular publics in contemporary political and policy conflicts?

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exploitation, workers oppression (through normative policy commitments and concrete policy programs) suggest that citizens and professionals inside and outside the academy through direct intervention in public mobilizations on policy conflicts involve themselves in deliberative construction/articulation of alternative social orders. This claim can be seen in the furthering of specific aspects of the social order such as ‘the unruly politics’ (Khanna 2013), Occupy (David Graeber), the Maoist movement against the coercion of the neo-liberal Indian state (Arundhati Roy), resistance to and escaping from the state (James Scott). While disparate in contexts these exemplars point towards the critical connections between engaged public action and the crafting of alternative social orders, and the practices of organizing to realise those alternative ideological commitments. This panel seeks to then engage with questions such as – how does engaged citizenship become embodied in the practice of ideological discourse and contention that intersects with the academy? How do statist and status quo-ist forces seek to discipline and control the imagining of alternative social orders by acting upon these engaged citizens? What do the experiences of public-academic dissenters tell us about voice and representation of particular publics in contemporary political and policy conflicts?