

CALL FOR PAPERS

4th International Conference in Interpretive Policy Analysis: Discourse and Power in Critical Policy Studies

Dates	June 25-27, 2009
Location	University of Kassel, Germany
Call for Papers Deadline	January 12, 2009
Inquiries to	IPA2009@uni-kassel.de
Abstract submission	via the conference website
Conference website	www.ipa2009.uni-kassel.de

<i>Organizing Committee</i>	Christoph Scherrer, University of Kassel (Germany) Helen Schwenken, University of Kassel (Germany) Christian Möllmann, University of Kassel (Germany) Frank Fischer, Rutgers University (USA), University of Kassel
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Keynote Speakers

Mary E. Hawkesworth
Ngai-Ling Sum
Bob Jessop
John Dryzek

The interpretive orientation in the social sciences is a methodological perspective that has evolved to challenge mainstream empiricism and scientism. It is, as such, the basic cornerstone of a critical approach to policy analysis. Attentive to human subjectivity and social meaning, it places policy research in its relevant political and historical contexts. This 4th conference (following the Birmingham, Amsterdam, and Essex conferences) will focus broadly on discourse and interpretive methods in critical policy analysis, with particular emphasis on the relationship of discourse to power.

Conference papers might engage one or more of the following themes:

- Analytic and empirical case studies of discourse and power, especially in relation to policy practices, deliberation, and governance, both local and global.

- Interpretive case studies from particular policy issue arenas, both local and global (e.g., political economy, global policy, global inequalities, gender relations, environmental policymaking, governance, bio-politics, and immigration policy).
- Interpretive methodological issues in doing critical policy analysis (e.g., reflexivity in policy-analytic practices; issues in using new recording technologies; getting, and using, feedback from ‘informants’ evaluating software programs).
- Clarification of interpretive approaches such as discourse analysis, narrative analysis, deliberative policy inquiry, framing, rhetoric, and metaphor.
- The contribution of a particular theoretical or philosophical approach to policy discourse, power, and critical policy analysis, including the emerging focus on global policy.

Although the conference is open to all topic relevant to discourse and interpretation in policy-oriented research, special attention will given to power through a range of substantive topics, such as participatory governance and deliberative policymaking, gender relations and cultural politics, social and political inequalities, political economy and global policy. As a theme, discourse and power will be the prominently featured in the plenary sessions and numerous panels.

Discourse refers fundamentally to historically specific systems of meaning that interpret the identities of subjects and objects. Discourse theory starts from the assumption that all actions, objects, and practices are socially meaningful and that the interpretation of these meanings is shaped by the social and political struggles in specific socio-historical contexts. Through a range of linguistic and non-linguistic materials—verbal statements, historical events, ideas, political programs, policy documents, and interviews, among others—the goal of a discourse perspective is to show how these actions and objects are interpretively constructed and what they mean for social and political interaction, as played out through organizations, institutional practices, argumentation and deliberative processes.

Insofar as the discursive constitution of society is rooted in social structures and ideological practices, and thus the social tensions and political conflicts they reflect, it is always connected to the practices that constitute – naturalize, sustain, and change – basic social and political signification. Politically, such discursive practices not only construct but also support and alter specific power relationships between collective entities – classes, groups, communities, and so on – through which they are expressed. The ideological significations of these entities are generated within power relations as part of the struggle over the control of society. Discourse in politics and policymaking is thus not only an activity in a power struggle, but also a stake in it as well.

This relationship of discourse to power operates on a number of levels. On the broadest level, it involves the contest to establishment and maintains an ideologically hegemonic discourse capable of governing the basic operations—political, social and economic—of society. Toward this end, discursive analysis focuses on the discourse coalitions that develop, maintain, and manage these coalitions, as well as the counter discourses that challenge them. It also examines the ways in which these discourse become imbedded the specific institutional and organizational practices that influence more instrumentally oriented policy decision processes. Particularly important, in this regard, is an examination of the technically-oriented expert discourses of these institutions and their relationships to the ordinary language discourses of citizens. Such discourses specify what knowledge is, who has it, as well as who is included and excluded from participation in policy deliberations. In debates and arguments about political goals and strategies, discourses will influence which items can legitimately be placed on the political or policy agenda. At the same time, academic discourses, including theoretical

discourses about deliberative democracy, participatory governance, gender relations, and globalization, also compete for attention.

Because multiple social meanings co-exist, often in tension with one another, critical policy analysts ask how and why specific practices govern in particular contexts. The regular actions to which these interpretations give rise are referred to as ‘practices,’ with discourses being language, narratives and texts employed to maintain and reproduce them. Given the inter-subjective nature of these relationships, interpretive methods require to investigate them. As such, they are featured in the program in two ways. First, and most generally, the focus is on the range of innovative methods and research strategies that have emerged to challenge mainstream neo-positivist and empiricist approaches to social scientific inquiry. Such approaches emphasize the role of reflexivity and subjectivity in the analysis of social and political processes. Some focus on the role of self-interpretations or the beliefs and desires of individual agents; others emphasize the subjective dimension as a factor in explaining policy change; and yet others have turned to discourse theory and rhetorical analysis to critically analyze policy processes and their outcomes. Underlying these considerations is also the more fundamental question of the relationship of interpretive methods to quantitative investigation and how they might be productively integrated in the research process.

Second, and more specifically, the organizers are looking for presentations that explore these issues in terms of the relationship of discourse and discursive practices in the exercise of power. Interpretation plays an especially important role in the analysis of power. With the exception of military interventions and police actions, power in modern societies usually does not present itself in visible form. It is lodged in official routines, institutional practices, various forms of expertise, or symbolic references and, as such, seldom directly available to the empirical observer. Power can typically only be inferred by gathering related pieces of information and interpretively drawing inferences about it. How is that done by both social actors and social researcher? And how does discourse and power shape and influence these processes?

Methodology Workshops

A number of the sessions will be devoted to methodological workshops. The 90-minute workshop sessions feature specialists in different aspects of interpretive policy analysis. The workshop sessions, following the approach employed in Essex, build on the idea of a “master-class” in musical studies, where two senior analysts will meet a small number of early career researchers and doctoral students using a particular methodological strategy or technique. The emphasis will be on questions raised by researchers, and their research will be treated as case studies to generate and engage relevant methodological issues. The workshops seek to create a setting where younger scholars can benefit from focused interaction with more senior experts in their field. The goal is to discuss questions about interpretive research and to exchange experiences on a range of relevant topics, such as discourse analysis, interviewing and participant observation. The sessions will be facilitated by fellow early career researchers, and the discussants will be established and renowned names in the field of interpretive policy analysis, such as Dvora Yanow, Maarten Hajer, Henk Wagenaar, Frank Fischer, Jacob Torfing, and Navdeep Mathur. The sessions are fully incorporated into the regular conference program; and, as part of an effort to create a collaborative learning environment, the sessions are open to all conference participants.

In order to take part in a workshop session, early career researchers invited to present their work in one of these will be asked to introduce their research project in a 2-3 page summary, pointing to the particular difficulties or methodological questions that arise from their research and/or field experience that they would like to explore in the workshop. *If you wish to be*

considered for inclusion in a Methodology Workshop, please follow the procedure for submitting proposals as described below and choose “Methodology Workshop” from the list of possible proposals. For additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Methodology Workshop Advisory Board by sending an E-Mail to ipa2009@uni-kassel.de.

Proposals for Papers, Panels and Roundtables

The conference organizers welcome proposals for individual papers; full panels (with papers); and roundtables (focused on discussion of a common theme rather than the formal presentation of papers). For submitting a paper, panel, and roundtable proposals (short abstracts) please create a user account on the conference website:

www.ipa2009.uni-kassel.de

Upload your abstract via the website section “Call for Papers”

no later than 12 January 2007.

For inquiries send an E-Mail to the following address:

IPA2009@uni-kassel.de

For those paper proposals that are accepted, full papers will be due one month prior to the conference date. There will be a pre-conference dinner for all doctoral students who wish to attend the evening before the conference. Please indicate if you would like to participate in this ‘no host’ event.

Papers from the conference may be considered for a special issue of the Routledge journal *Critical Policy Studies: Theory, Methods, and Practice* (General Editor, Steven Griggs (s.f.griggs@bham.ac.uk); North American Editor, Frank Fischer (ffischer@rutgers.edu), Form Editor Navdeep Mathur (navdeep@iimahd.ernet.in).

Plenary Sessions

Plenary sessions will be organized around a number of key themes, including:

Plenary 1: Discourse and Deliberative Politics

*Presenter: John Dryzek, Australian National University,
Deliberative Politics and Global Inequalities*

Plenary 2: Discourse and Power in Gender Relations

*Presenter: Mary E. Hawkesworth, Rutgers University,
Sanctioned Ignorance: Theorizing the Erasure of Feminist Knowledge in National and
Transnational Policy Discourses*

Plenary 3: Discourse and Power in Global Political Economy

*Presenters: Ngai-Ling Sum, Bob Jessop, University of Lancaster,
Cultural Political Economy*

Conference Site

The University of Kassel is located close to the city center and it is only a few minutes walk to the beautiful bank side of the river Fulda. It is about 20 minutes tram ride from the University to the famous Herkules monument where one can catch a great view over the city. Kassel itself is about 1,5 hrs train ride from Frankfurt Airport, with a direct train leaving at the Airport and arriving at the train station Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe in regular intervals. There are direct local trains (trams) from Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe to Kassel University every few minutes. For more information on traveling, accommodation and tourist activities visit the conference website.