Administrations of Memory

Call for papers deadline July 15 2016

Interdisciplinary workshop, December 9 2016
Paris – University Paris West Nanterre La Défense

Organization
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Abstract
Please send no more than a two pages abstract to engsdm@cc.au.dk and sgensbuger@yahoo.fr, addressing both methodological and theoretical issues and including a short biography. We welcome papers from a large range of disciplines (political science, sociology, anthropology, political economy, history, cultural studies).

Since the beginning of the 1990s, an increasing number of governments have been implementing public policies to do with « memory ». Strangely enough, considering the rapid rise of « memory studies », political scientists have so far shown little interest in these public actions that have to do with evoking the past. At the same time, memory studies scholars have yet to engage with commemorative practices as policy processes. This study day wants to engage in a comparative examination of 'administrations of memory'.

The study day aims to encourage the development of theoretical and methodological contact points between 'Memory Studies' and 'Policy Studies' in examinations of local, national and supranational processes of contending with the past. In this, we take it as a point of departure that studying the 'Politics of Memory' should also be studying the 'Public Policy of Memory'. Beyond the agenda setting part of policy, we are further interested in the delivery and the evaluation of policy and how those processes are constituted by and constitutive of collective memory concerns. Here we should include the technocratic conduits and conveyors, between governors and governed (e.g. example steering mechanisms, funding bodies, and hosting procedures). The specific sites of policy implementation which is shaped by and reshaping agendas. In other words, this study day pleads for the analysis of public policies of memory as a way to foster better understandings of how contemporary societies deal in distinct and overlapping ways, with difficult histories and unsettled heritage – including our understanding of dynamics of legitimation, and its limits, in contemporary societies.

At an overarching level it engages with the transformation of the bureaucratic practices of the state in examining the relationship between the 'tandem' rise of Memory Politics and the rise of New Public Management administrations in the past 30 years. Developing the contact points between memory studies and policy studies, this research adds at once, a new set of lenses to the dimensions of the 'memory boom' as well as recent conceptualizations of the changes in public policy and the State.

Further, the research explores the governance roles of NGO's and CBO's, who in the absence of overarching national frameworks for dealing or contending with the past, sometimes act to fill political vacui. Such actors are often funded by highly bureaucratic donors and embedded in cosmopolitan frameworks and must as such negotiate interpellations of local, national, and supranational discursive paradigms, practices and policies.

In investigating both these nexuses of 'memory politics' we open up a new field for the sociology of policy instrumentation and public administration. This would entail investigations into: who are the actors with in the State and society organizations who happen to be in charge of "memory" but also what kind of policy processes are explicitly engaging, and engaged in, the field of memory (e.g. education, museums, state commemorations and reparations) as well as policy processes where memory dimensions are more implicitly engaged (e.g. geography/urban planning, immigration).

So the starting point for this research collective is to develop and apply a methodology for studying formations of collective memories and public policies together, and moreover to incorporate institutions seriously into the analysis – to analyze how policy becomes practices, is produced by practices, or co-produces practices (in relation to complexes of collective memory).

Proposal dealing more specifically with the following issues will be encouraged:

- Historical examinations of, the dual rise of ‘Memory Boom’ and ‘New Public Management’ as they impact each other in new practices of state and society.
- Diverging convergences of Memory Studies and New Public Management
- Explorations of the governance roles of civil society organizations, in policy processes of evoking and invoking the past.
- Methodologies reflexions for studying administrations of memory
- Theoretical dialogue between memory studies and policy analysis
- From Competitive Commemoration to Commemorative Commiseration: European comparisons, especially about the evocation of WW1 and WW2.
- The articulation of the contemporary transformations of the State and the evolution of memory, notably in relation to post-colonial societies and to multiculturalism
- Migration, multiculturalism and multidirectional memory policies
- Partition between explicit and implicit public policies of memory
- The instruments of public policies of memory
- The estimation of publics policies of memory success or failure
- What are the publics of public policy of memory ?
- Bureaucracy, politics of affect and politics without policy
- Memory policies and polities of the Future : what about time ?