

Emotional governance? New geographies of social policy and state intervention

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Recent commentators on social policy have started to draw attention to the emotional and relational nature of much service delivery work (eg Hunter, forthcoming). Often taking a cue from feminist approaches but also more recently non-representational geographies of affect, such accounts challenge straightforward accounts of the working of the state and other agencies, showing how spaces of interventions often frame much 'more than' (Horton and Kraftl, 2009) policy rationalities, producing 'enlivened' (Smith et al, 2010) accounts of encounters between citizens and the state and its agencies. Yet this new sensibility in analysis sits alongside a new mood within governmental practices themselves which explicitly seek to capitalise on emotional labour and therapeutic interactions or govern through affective, non-rational behaviours, raising questions about the role of the state and its relationships to citizens. Examples would include new interests in 'emotional intelligence' and 'mindfulness' within education, and new paradigms of 'co-production' and localism in public services and community or neighbourhood interventions. Such practices potentially demand new forms of investment and capacity from citizens, and frame new relationships and forms of emotional work around dynamics such as trust and reciprocity.

This session seeks to bring together accounts of 'emotional governance' in geography and related disciplines. We will explore how these contribute to understanding the contemporary conditions of governing, and also what the political implications of different theoretical approaches might be, whether embedded in Foucauldian inspired critiques of governmentality, feminist work on emotional labour or geographies of materiality and affect. Ultimately we seek to work through what the rapprochements (Colls, 2012) and divergences between these accounts might be.

We invite papers which might address the following questions, through empirical analysis and/or more theoretical contributions:

- What insights and political trajectories arise from accounts of governance and service delivery focusing on emotional and affective dynamics?
- What forms of knowledge and expertise are mobilised by states in new forms of explicitly governing emotions?
- More specifically what are the rationalities and emotional geographies of new paradigms in social policy including co-production and personalisation in services, volunteering and new forms of localism and civic involvement?
- How far are the emotional and affective registers of governance projects ever fully governed and what might be the unintended consequences of emotional governance?
- What is politically at stake in the slippage between a language of (expressed) emotion and (non-cognitive) affect in accounts of governance?
- How are time, space, place and locality being reconfigured in emotional forms of governance?
- Do emotional governance practices add up to a broader therapeutic culture through which neoliberal subjects are reproduced?

- What are the democratic implications of emotional governance in terms of the relationship between state and citizen, and how is this relationship mediated?

Please send abstracts to Eleanor Jupp (Eleanor.Jupp@open.ac.uk) by December 15th.

Refs:

Colls, R. (2011) "Feminism, bodily difference and non-representational geographies" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37, 430-445

Hunter, S. (forthcoming) *Power, Politics and the Emotions: Impossible Governance?* Routledge, in press

Horton, J. and Kraftl, P. (2009) "What (else) matters? Policy contexts, emotional geographies", *Environment and Planning A*, 41, 2984-3002.

Smith, F., Timbrell, H., Woolvin, M., Muirhead, S., Fyfe, N. (2010). "Enlivened Geographies of Volunteering: situated, embodied and emotional practices of voluntary action". *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 1126, 258-274.