P01 / Bureaucratic Autonomy and Public Policy

Topic : POLICY FORMULATION, ADMINISTRATION AND POLICYMAKERS

Chair : B. Guy Peters (University of Pittsburgh)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Public bureaucracies are important actors in the policy process, and scholars of public policy need to understand better their role in making and delivering public policy. The concept of bureaucratic autonomy is useful in that understanding, and has been widely used in the literature on public policy and public administration (see Peters, 2022), but yet remains less specified than would be desirable. The term is taken to mean, in a rather common-sense yet useful manner, that public sector organizations are relatively unconstrained, and are capable of making their own decisions. To be more useful, however, a number of aspects of bureaucratic autonomy need to be specified:

What level are we talking about?–the institution as a whole, organizations, or individuals

Autonomy from what and whom?–politicians, private sector actors, superiors within the organization, what else

Decisions about what?–policy, budgets, personnel.

How formal does autonomy need to be? –can informal autonomy be as effective

How much bureaucratic autonomy?–the importance of accountability

The above list of dimensions might be extended, but the basic point should be clear. To use this concept successfully will require additional specification and the creation of “autonomy with adjectives” (see Collier and Levitsky, 1997) to be able to differentiate types of autonomy and understand their potential for explaining the behavior of individuals and organizations, and their impacts on policy choices. We believe that when fully specified the concept of bureaucratic autonomy can provide insights for comparative policy studies, both across countries and across policy areas.

The panel organizers will develop a framework paper for this panel containing a typology of bureaucratic autonomy based on the interaction of sources of control. We will circulate this paper to panel participants well in advance of the panel. We would welcome papers that elaborate (and criticize) this framework. We would especially welcome papers that will use the framework to evaluate the degree of bureaucratic autonomy in different settings

Collier, D. And S. Levitsky (1997) Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparativ Research, World Poltiics 49, 430-51.

Peters, B. G. (2022) Understanding Bureaucratic Autonomy: Existing Approaches and a Way Forward, Paper presented at Southern Political Science Association Annual Conference, San Antonio, TX

CALL FOR PAPERS

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Session 1

Wednesday, June 28th 08:00 to 10:00 (POD366)

Policy Ambiguity & Bureaucratic Autonomy

Luke Fowler (Boise State University)

(Virtual) Accounting for bureaucratic autonomy from local politicians by examining civil servants' ties to central politicians: Upper provincial governors in Iran and Pakistan

Guillaume Beaud (Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po))

Varieties of bureaucratic autonomy: A comparative analysis of experimentalist governance in the US, EU, and China

Iacopo Gronchi (University College London, University of London)

Managing State Capital: Political Control of Public Financial Institutions

Maxfield Peterson (Political Science)

(Virtual) The autonomy unexploited – the role of public servants in the Digitalization in Germany

Maximilian Nagel (Helmut-Schmidt University Hamburg)

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Session 2

Wednesday, June 28th 10:20 to 12:20 (POD366)

The Autonomy of Senior Public Servants

Katarina Staronova (Comenius University in Bratislava)

Marek Rybar (Masaryk University)

The New Limits to Politics: Common Pool Problems in the Knowledge-Based Economy Era

Roger Benjamin

APPLICATION OF A TYPOLOGY OF BUREAUCRATIC AUTONOMY ACROSS POLICY SECTORS AND LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT: EVIDENCE FROM EAST AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Justa Mwangi (University of Sussex)

Wilson Muna (Kenyatta University)

Tackling urgent issues in a policy vacuum: Bureaucratic autonomy and the governance of homelessness in Aguascalientes, Mexico

Raul Pacheco-Vega (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) Mexico)

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Session 3

Wednesday, June 28th 15:50 to 17:50 (POD366)

Bureaucratic Autonomy and Controversial Policy Issues

Céline Mavrot (University of Lausanne)

The Side Effects of New Public Management on Corruption: Deficiencies in Monitoring Public Companies

Júlia Miralles de Imperial Pujol (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

The Role of Bureaucratic Autonomy in Decisions to Add Oncology Drugs to Canada's Provincial Drug Plans

Daniel Cohn (York University)

Dynamics of public administration reform processes: contrasting top-down purity and bottom-up bricolage reform in New Zealand

Rodney Scott (University of New South Wales)

Flavia Donadelli (London School of Economics and Political Science)