P01 / Pandemic Shifts? The Non-profit Sector, Public Policy, and COVID-19

Topic : OTHER SECTORIAL POLICY

Chair : Meghan Joy (Concordia University)

Second Chair : John Shields (Toronto Metropolitan University)

Third Chair : Siu Mee Cheng (Toronto Metropolitan University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The objective of this panel is to understand the public policy role of non-profit organizations (NPOs) in the context of COVID-19, how this role was affected by pre-pandemic (non) policymaking on the NPO sector and identify new research agendas in the field of public policy on state-non-profit sector relations. NPOs are crucial social service delivery, policy advocacy, mutual support, recreational and expressive organizations yet as a sector, have not been a central focus of public policymaking practice and research. This panel welcomes both conceptual and empirical papers that seek to invigorate a research agenda in the field of political science and public policy on NPO-public sector relations.

The pandemic has brought social service systems, already weakened by decades of neoliberal austerity, into a state of crisis with devastating consequences for the most marginalized members of society. In this context of state failure to provide basic services and supports to all population groups, NPOs were relied upon by public sector agencies and residents alike to fill gaps on the frontlines. In some cases, core funding and human resource support, long advocated for by the NPO sector, flooded in from governments at all levels (Shields and Abu Alrob 2020; Lasby and Barr 2021). Evidence suggests that this support was ad hoc and uneven as it did not benefit all NPOs equally depending on size, degree of professionalization, and policy domain of focus. The NPO sector is now at increased risk due to COVID-19 burnout, an HR crisis driven by staff turnover and poor renumeration, negative inflation impacts on an already weakened funding structure, and the threat of a return to government austerity measures (ONN and AFO 2022). It is thus essential to acknowledge and understand how existing inequities within the NPO sector affected the state-NPO relationship during various waves of COVID-19 and as we move towards a post-pandemic period.

What is important here is that there was, in a period of crisis, a reinforced recognition that the state needed NPOs, and that state support enabled the sector’s capacity to reach and assist people in need. The mutual relationship between the state and non-profit sector in a time of crisis is not surprising to those who have long argued that in a mixed welfare model, the NPO sector has always been a significant social service provider and employer (Salamon 2015; Evans and Shields 2018). This fact has, in large measure, gone under the radar of both the state and the political science discipline (Joy and Shields 2020). In the Canadian context, there is no public policy and bureaucratic apparatus that coherently governs the relationship between the state and non-profit sector, despite fits and starts at the federal level (Laforest 2011). Furthermore, smaller organizations who specialize in advocating for and supporting marginalized populations in cities have been particularly under-examined (Phillips et al. 2021). This panel welcomes papers that study the unique nature of community-based NPOs and their care and mutual support role in the pandemic and beyond.

CALL FOR PAPERS

this Panel will only accept ONSITE presentations

The objective of this panel is to understand the public policy role of NPOs in the context of the pandemic, how this role was affected by pre-pandemic (non) policymaking on the sector and identify new research agendas on state-NPO relations. We are particularly interested in conceptual and empirical papers that explore the uneven impact of the pandemic on different organizations that make up the non-profit sector and that study the unique nature of community-based NPOs.

A non-exhaustive list of potential paper topics include:

· The health of NPOs in a context of neoliberal capitalism and new public management/governance and how

this impacted the sector during the pandemic

· State policymaking during the pandemic directed to the NPO sector as well as more broadly, such as new health and safety regulations and emergency employment support, and how this impacted the sector

· State policymaking in particular policy fields during the pandemic, such as immigration, housing, aging, childcare, food security, among others, and how this impacted the NPO sector

· The impact of the pandemic on NPO sub-sectors and the marginalized populations with whom they work (including, among others and in intersection, women, members of the 2SPLGBTQIA+ community, individuals and families in low-income/deep poverty, folks experiencing houselessness, newcomers/immigrants/refugees, youth, BIPOC communities, and older adults)

· Structural supports and public policies that prepare NPOs for future crises (i.e., climate change, financial instability, and other pandemics)

· Whether public policy theories clarify the dynamic and plural policy role of the NPO sector and its relations with government (including, among others, implementation and street level bureaucrats, governance/networks and advocacy coalitions, policy design and instruments, as well as critical theories)

· International comparisons of public policies and the NPO sector

Evans, B. and Shields, J. 2018. “The Third Sector, the Neo-liberal State and Beyond: Reshaping Contracting and Policy Advocacy” in C. Dunn, ed., The Handbook of Canadian Public Administration. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 489-500.

Joy, M. and Shields, J. 2020. “The Political Economy of the Non-profit Sector”. Ed. Whiteside, H., Canadian Political Economy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press,. 215-233.

Lasby, D. and Barr, C. 2021. Sector Monitor: The uneven impact of the pandemic on Canadian charities. Imagine Canada. Available at : https://imaginecanada.ca/sites/default/files/Sector-Monitor-The-uneven-impact-of-the-pandemic-on-Canadian-char

Laforest, R. 2011. Voluntary Sector Organizations and the State: Building New Relations. (Vancouver: UBC Press.)

ONN and AFO. 2022. State of the Sector During Uncertain Times Ontario. Nonprofit Network and Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario. Available at: https://theonn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Survey-2022-Policy-Report.pdf

Phillips, S.D. and Wyatt, B. (Eds.) 2021. Intersections and Innovations: Change for Canada’s Voluntary Sector. (Edmonton: Muttart Foundation). Available at: https://muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Intersections-and-Innovations-Change-for-Canadas-Voluntary-and-

Salamon, L.M. 2015. The Resilient Sector Revisited: The New Challenge to Nonprofit America, 2nd edition. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

Shields, J. and Abu Alrob, Z. 2020. COVID-19, Migration and the Canadian Immigration System: Dimensions, Impact and Resilience, A Research Paper of the Building Migrant Resilience in Cities (BMRC) Project. Toronto: York University, July. Available at: https://bmrc-irmu.info.yorku.ca/research-reports-2/

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Session 1

Wednesday, June 28th 15:50 to 17:50 (KHS335)

The Limits of Nonprofit Sector Resilience: Evidence from Canadian Nonprofit Sector Surveys During the Pandemic

John Shields (Toronto Metropolitan University)

Siu Cheng (Ryerson University)

Policy on the Frontlines: Non-profit Organizations and Age-friendly Policy During COVID-19 in Montreal

Meghan Joy (Concordia University)

Lived Expertise of Homelessness in Community-Engaged Research in Niagara, Canada

Joanne Heritz (Brock University)

Challenges of Non-Profit Organizations' advocacy during Covid19 pandemic: The case of domestic workers

Mauricio Hernandez-Estrada (Jade Propuestas Sociales y Alternativas al Desarrollo, México)

Raquel Aguilera (UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE YUCATAN)

Street Haven Women's Shelter Services During the COVID19 pandemic

Siu Mee Cheng (Toronto Metropolitan University)